

The Sermon on the Mount
(Lesson 19)

Introduction:

1. This lesson is a study of the command Jesus gave in Matthew 7:12, known as "the Golden Rule."
2. Perhaps it is called the Golden Rule because of its great value -- it is compared to gold that is a very precious substance.
3. Unfortunately, gold is very scarce, and it seems that people who practice the Golden Rule are also scarce.
4. As a result of studying this passage, let us:
 - a. be impressed with the far reaching effects of the Golden Rule
 - b. determine with the Lord's help to put it into practice to the best of our ability.

Discussion:

I. THE MEANING OF THE GOLDEN RULE

- A. The Lord's words are easy to understand.
 1. In our dealings with other people we must put ourselves in their positions.
 2. We must determine how we would want to be treated.
 3. Then we must act accordingly.
 4. Caution: The way we would want to be treated must be based on proper principles.
- B. The Golden Rule explains what the Lord requires in the 2nd commandment (Matthew 22:39).
 1. Jesus had a discussion with a man in Luke 10:25-37 about what was involved in loving his neighbor.
 2. In the parable of the Good Samaritan,:
 - a. the priest and the Levite did not practice the Golden Rule
 - b. the Samaritan did practice it.
- C. The Golden Rule sums up many commands that relate to our dealings with other people.
 1. Jesus said, "*this is the law and the prophets.*"
 2. All the commandments in the Law of Moses and in the writings of the prophets that relate to dealings with other people are summed up in this one commandment.
 3. This is the point made in Romans 13:8-10.

II. FAILURE TO PRACTICE THE GOLDEN RULE RESULTS IN TRAGEDY AND THE GROSSEST KINDS OF SIN

- A. Cain did not practice the Golden Rule when he murdered Abel (Genesis 4:8).
- B. The members of the church in Corinth did not practice the Golden Rule when they ate the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-21).
- C. Other matters include envy, all kinds of unkind and rude behavior, slander, gossip, stealing, failure to pay debts, and all kinds of abuse.
- D. The root of all these sins is a failure to practice the Golden Rule.
- E. The way we apply the Golden Rule affects our relationships with God (1 John 4:20-21).

III. SOME MODERN PHILOSOPHIES CONTRADICT THE GOLDEN RULE

- A. Some feel that they should be able to treat others as they please without any regard for them, as illustrated by terrorists.
- B. Some feel that they should be treated better than they treat others, as illustrated by convicted murderers wanting life imprisonment instead of the death penalty.
- C. Some do not want to get involved with others ["I leave you alone, and you leave me alone"].
 1. This was the problem with the priest and the Levite.
 2. "The way we want to be treated must be based on proper principles."
- D. Some do not want to help others, but they expect others to help them and give them what they want [selfishness].
- E. These philosophies are very popular, but they directly contradict the Golden Rule.