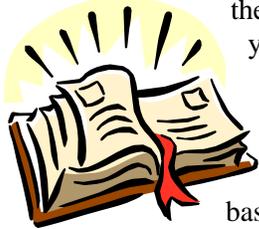




“The Golden Rule”



“So then, whatever you desire that others would do for you, even so do you also for them, for this sums up the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12 Amp) Through the years in common usage, the way we use this verse in conversation now is to say “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” This is called “The Golden Rule.”

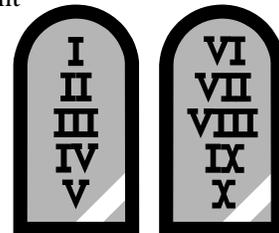


When Jesus spoke these words, the people understood that the words He spoke summed up the message of the entire Bible for all generations. There are 66 books in the Bible and each of them contains the same basic message – how to treat others and how they should treat you.

The Bible has three main categories. They are called the law, the prophets, and the gospel. The law includes the 10 commandments, the statutes (established rules) and the judgements (legal decisions), which the Lord our God commanded to be taught to all generations. Note: Please take a moment to turn in your Bibles at this time to Exodus 20:1-17. You will notice that verses 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 are the actual 10 commandments and the verses in between are explanations of what was stated. You will also notice that the first four commandments deal with our reverence we should give unto God, and the last six deal with how people should treat each other.

**Please note and think about this: The 10 Commandments were written on 2 pieces of stone by the finger of God. This is the only thing in the entire Bible that was written by God Himself. That’s how important they are!

Jesus summed up all 10 commandments in the Golden Rule in His answer to a lawyer who was trying to accuse Him. Jesus was asked, “What is the most important commandment in God’s law?” and His answer was, “The first and most important of all the commandments is this, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like (equal) to it, namely this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophet’s.’ ” (Matthew 22:37-40)

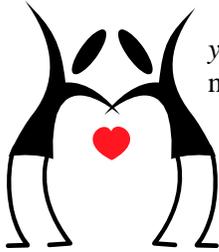


God gave the first commandment to His people, written on tablets of stone, when they were ready to enter the Promised Land. These Words from God were to be the basis of all of their words and actions, in their new home land, based on their love for God. God knew if they ever stopped loving Him, they would turn to other gods and be destroyed. He strictly commanded His people to keep these Words in their heart and diligently teach them to their children; to talk about these Words at home, when they go out, when they lie down, and when they get up; to write them on the doorposts of their house; and on their gates. They were even commanded to tie them for a sign (mark) on their hand, and to tie them between their eyes as a mark upon their forehead. The Jewish people took Him seriously and they literally made little leather cases (called phylacteries) and put a paper within that had these words from Deuteronomy 6:4 written on it as a reminder: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord.” They tied one little case on their hand, and one on their forehead with leather strings, and wore them continually. Some very orthodox Jews still do the same today.

(Cont'd)

Those words from Deuteronomy 6:4 are called the “Shama”, pronounced “Sh’mah” of the Jews because that is the first word of the first commandment in the Hebrew language which the Jewish people spoke. The great significance of this first line is that it set the Jewish people apart from all the other peoples of the world. All the other people at that time worshipped and prayed to many gods – of the sun, moon, earth, fire, water, etc. But, the Jewish people worshipped and prayed to only One God, who was and is the only God. This made the Jews different – especially because the Lord God required that they love only Him with all their heart, all their soul, and all their mind, every thing depended on it – their whole future hung in the balance, and it is the same for us today – nothing has changed, this law is still in effect.

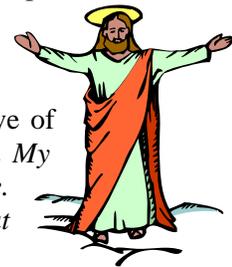
Jesus said in Matthew 5:17,18, *“Don’t think I came to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy (do away with them), but to fulfil them. For truly I say unto you, ‘Till heaven and earth pass, not one jot or one tittle (tiny punctuation marks) shall pass from the law, until all be fulfilled.’”* So, not only did Jesus include the law and the prophets in the gospel, in John 13:34-35, He added the second commandment to the first one; *“A new commandment I give unto you; That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one to another.”*



So, if we apply the Golden Rule, and do all things in love, we would fulfill all the law, the prophets and the gospel. But, how do we do it? We have to give the things we want from others out to them first. If you want a friend, be a friend. If you want love, give love —be loving till it squeezes out of you with every hug. Think loving thoughts about people, including yourself. Refuse critical, negative thoughts. Do kind things for people that are not expected of you. Do inconvenient things that require putting yourself out. Love is not convenient. It simply refuses to fit your time schedule, so throw away the schedule and replace it with love. Talk and act with other people the way you want them to talk and act with you. Be an example of what you want. They may not know how to be the way you want until you show them by your own actions toward them.

Romans 12:10 says, *“Being kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love – (as members of one family) – in honor preferring one another.”* Preferring means to lead the way for others: preferring the other person’s happiness over our own, preferring God’s blessing on another more than ourselves, desiring that our neighbor prospers more than we do, etc. When they see you doing that for them, they will do it for you. It’s a law, and it works. If you will begin to put this law into effect, you will see it come to pass, that the things you want will take place. That’s the reciprocal of the law of the Golden Rule. A reciprocal is something given in return – that is equivalent to what was first given.

When we love God and our neighbors as ourself, we are abiding in the love of Jesus, who said, *“If you keep my commandments, you shall abide (live) in My love; even as I have kept My Fathers commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (to overflowing).”* (John 15:10,11)



“The Golden Rule”

1. What is the basic message of the entire Bible?

2. What are the three main categories of the Bible?

3. How were the 10 Commandments written?

4. What were the words that set the Jewish people apart from all others?

5. What were these words always to remind them to do?

6. What was the commandment that Jesus added?

7. How do we apply the Golden Rule to our life?

8. When we love God and our neighbors as ourself what happens?

9. How do we say the Golden Rule now?

10. How do we abide in Jesus' love? (John 15:10)
(The answer to this question will be your memory verse)

MEMORY VERSE _____

“The Golden Rule”

1. What is the basic message of the entire Bible?

How to treat others and how they should treat you.

2. What are the three main categories of the Bible?

The law, the prophets, the gospel.

3. How were the 10 Commandments written?

By the finger of God.

4. What were the words that set the Jewish people apart from all others?

Hear, O Osrael, the Lord our God is one Lord.

5. What were these words always to remind them to do?

To always love God and follow His commandments.

6. What was the commandment that Jesus added?

To love one another as He has loved us.

7. How do we apply the Golden Rule to our life?

Give the things we want, in order to receive them back.

8. When we love God and our neighbors as ourself what happens?

We abide in the love of Jesus and our joy is overflowing.

9. How do we say the Golden Rule now?

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

10. How do we abide in Jesus’ love? (John 15:10)

MEMORY VERSE “If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”