

# The Golden Rule

## Variations of the rule

- Hillel – don't be cruel
- Epictetus – do not inflict suffering on others
- Isocrates – control your anger
- Socrates – be consistent
- Aristotle – do what you want others to do
- Confucius – treat others as you would like

Only the last two apply it positively –  
Aristotle / Confucius

- We can fulfill the negative form by doing nothing. The positive requires action.
- Even Aristotle / Confucius emphasize the relation to fellow man.
  - We should...
  - Treat others...
- Popular modern variation: 'Do unto the other feller the way he would like to do to you, and do it first' – E. N. Westcott

# How can we know the best way to treat people?

- Mt.7:12, Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. [Lk.6:31]
  - Famous saying of Lord, but neglected
  - This general rule measures our duty by our self-love

# I. What Does Mt.7:12 NOT Teach?

1. Most important thing in life: serving others.  
[Mt.22:37-40 ... Ro.1:14-15]
2. Doing good to others pays in the end.  
[Lk.6:38]
3. Honesty is the best policy. [When it costs?]  
[Gn.39 ... Mt.26 ... Ac.12]
4. Refrain from doing evil to others.  
[Lk10 ... Mt.5:21 ...]
5. Be a people-pleaser.  
[Ex.32 ... 1 Sm.15 ... Jn.12:42f. ... Ac.5]

# Conclusions

- Golden rule does not require us to do whatever someone wishes. Mt.20:23
- We help those who will not work by NOT giving to them. 2 Th.3:10
- We help some by correction though it may displease them. Gal.6:1

I. What Does Mt.7:12 NOT Teach?

II. What Does Mt.7:12 Teach?



# Therefore...

- Jesus is discussing moral duties
- He summarizes with an inclusive precept
  - E.g.: Mt.5:44, love your enemies
  - Mt.5:48, based on nature of God
- Mt.6:12, 14 – forgive us as we forgive others
- Mt.7:1 – careful with judgments (Jn.7:24)
- Illustrated – Ac.28

# All things...

- The breadth of the commandment
- No reasonable area of life is excluded

# You want men to do to you...

- Do not begin with the other person, but with yourself
  - What would I want / need in this situation?
- Many neglect the command because of pride, hatred, indifference

# You want men to do to you...

- The action
- Useless to feel kindly if fail to act / respond

## 1 Jn.3:16-18

- 16: cross is supreme illustration of love  
Ro.5:6-8
- 17: heart [= 'innards'] – moving force  
behind benevolence
- 18: prove it. Ja.2:14-17

Love alone is no better than faith alone

# Do also to them

- 'Also' = in this manner, thus
  - What we would ask, we should do
  - Do I think as much of others as I do of self?
  - The measure of our duty is self-denial and devotion. Mt.22:39, second greatest commandment...

# For this is the law and the prophets

- Mt.5:17, Jesus came to fulfill the law and prophets
- Ja.2:8, royal law (the king of laws) settles many difficulties: 'If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well'
  - Not necessary to memorize endless rules
  - Ro.13:8, he who loves another has fulfilled the law
  - Ex.23:4, did Lord want Jews merely to return an ox on the loose?

I. What Does Mt.7:12 NOT Teach?

II. What Does Mt.7:12 Teach?

III. Putting The Law Into Practice

# 1. Social relationships

- Many books written on ethics, morality, social skills...
- May be summarized by this short command
  - Many think education will solve man's ills
  - Gal.5:14, For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself



## 2. Economic relationships

- Ro.12:17, Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men
  - Business deal: 'I got the best of him'

### 3. Family relationships

- Dt.24:5, When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken
  - Very opposite of selfishness

## 4. Church relationships

- Lk.6:42, How can you say to your brother, Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye
  - Do not assume the worst about others