

Activating the Golden Rule

Matthew 7:7-12

Introduction

Most of us have heard of the Golden Rule: do to others what you would have them do to you. While anyone can operate by this principle and experience the benefits of interacting with others in this manner, this principle holds a special uniqueness for the believer. When we treat others the way we desire to be treated, good things often come back to us in return. Yet the Golden Rule also directly affects God's activity in our lives. He is actively involved in the process of ensuring that what we give to others "boomerangs" or circles back in our direction. God desires that we operate according to this concept because He does not want us to live selfish lives, to be self-absorbed, or even narcissistic. He wants us to be other oriented, self-less, and giving of ourselves, despite the reciprocation of our good deeds – just like He is with us.

Even though God wants to release "good gifts" on our behalf, God requires us to petition Him for what we want even as we illustrate that we are willing to give to others. He tells us to ask, seek, and knock. Part of our participation in this process is our willingness to ask, and sometimes *keep asking*, for that which we desire. He also tells us to "give and it will be given" (Luke 6:38). Another part of our participation in this process is our willingness to give to others. He wants us to actively look to Him and expect Him to meet us with the love that we are showing to others.

While living a life for Christ does not guarantee that all will go our way or according to our plan, God is compassionate and always has the best in mind for His children, as a good father would. When we meet the condition of pouring out to others, we align ourselves to experience God's best in a greater way.

Getting Started

1. Take a moment to reflect on God's goodness. In what ways does God show compassion to His children?
2. Do you tend to be more naturally oriented towards others or oriented towards self?

Let's Get Personal

1. Are you conscious to meet the needs of others in light of the needs that you desire God to meet for you? Is it possible that a blessing you desire is withheld based on your treatment of others?
2. We learned that God commands us to take an active role in asking for God's blessings. This asking, seeking, and knocking is a continual part of the Christian experience. Why do we as Christians tend to give up hope in praying?
3. Have you previously realized that you have the ability to affect how God releases His compassion in your life?
4. The Golden Rule even applies to your enemies. How do you normally treat those who mean you harm?

Take the Next Step

1. In what ways can you intentionally give to others in the very areas that reflect your specific need?
2. Have you given up on something you were praying for? Have you been specific with your prayers? Have you prayed consistently for the desires of your heart? Since God clearly asks us to pray for that which we desire, what changes will you make in your prayer life after hearing today's sermon?
3. Is there someone in your life with whom you can demonstrate the Golden Rule? Practice the Golden Rule by consciously deciding to treat people with mercy and grace this week even when they don't deserve it.
4. Want to dig deeper? Look at 1 John 3:22, Luke 6:38, or Luke 11:7-13.

Renew Your Mind

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you..." Matt. 7:12
