

“The Godly Rule!”
Ephesians 4:32

Introduction:

1. You’ve Probably All Heard Of The Golden Rule:
 - Learned It As A Child!
 - “Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You!”
 - This Is Good Advice!
 - It Even Reflects What Jesus Taught Us In The Gospels:
 - Matthew 7:12 - “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them!”
 - Luke 6:31 - “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise!”
 - The Golden Rule Is A Good Rule To Follow!
 - Especially For Christians!
 - Did You Know That Some Have Thought They Could Improve Upon This Rule?
2. You’ve Probably Never Heard Of The Platinum Rule:
 - Supposedly More Valuable / Important Than The Golden Rule!
 - Just As Platinum Is More Valuable Than Gold!
 - Proposed By Tony Alessandra:
 - “Treat Others They Way They Want To Be Treated!”
 - But He Uses This Rule In More Of A Business / Marketing Sense!
 - To Get More Customers / Clients / And Their Money!
 - Just Do For / Say To Them Whatever They Want!
 - But Is This The Best Rule To Follow?
 - For Christians? For Families? For The Church?
3. Tonight – I Want To Focus On Another “Rule” We Find In The Bible!
 - It Is Like The Golden Rule – But Goes Even Deeper!
 - Down To The Very Source Of How / Why We Are To Treat Others!
 - This Rule:
 - Is Found In A Very Familiar Verse!
 - Ephesians 4:32 - “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you!”
 - This Rule Is The Godly Rule!
 - It Describes How Christians Are To Treat Others & Especially Each Other!
 - The Godly Rule Is: “How I Treat Others Needs To Reflect How God Treats Me!”
 - Let’s Look At The “Godly Rule” More Closely Tonight!

1. The Call To This Godly Rule!

- Ephesians 4:32 - “And Be Ye Kind One To Another!”
 - This Entire Verse Is A Command / A Call To Every Christian! To Each One Of Us! To Have A Certain Kind Of Character! Need To Know:
- The Importance Of This Rule!
 - We Are Told To **“Be”** This Kind Of Believer!
 - Why Is This So Important?
 - Because When We “Become” More Of What We Are To “Be” – It Shows A Difference!
 - Different Than What Others Do & Say – Especially When They Are Offended!
 - Verse 32 Is A Big Difference From Verse 31!
 - “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice!”
 - Christians Are Not To Be Like The Rest Of The World!
 - Be Different!
 - Not To Be More Of The Same!
 - This Rule Is Important!
 - The Intention Of This Rule!
 - We Are **Each** Told To “Be” This Kind Of Believer!
 - “Be Ye!”
 - This Is Something That Needs To Be Intentional In Our Lives!
 - Something That We Focus On!

- Something That We Work At!
- Because It Is Not Something Natural!
- **IE**: Like Training For A Marathon!
- Why Are We To Be Intentional?
- Because It Is Our Duty To Have This Kind Of Character!
 - To “Put Away” The Negative Vices Of Verse 31!
 - To Put On The Positive Virtues Of Verse 32!
 - Let These Fill Our Life!
- Imagine What It Would Be Like:
 - If Everyone Was Intentionally Working On The Character Found In Ephesians 4:32!
 - Everything In Verse 31 Would Be Transformed!
- But Even When Others Are Not:
 - It Is Still Our Duty! Be Intentional!
- The Involvement Of This Rule!
 - We Are Told To “Be” This Kind Of Believer – **“To One Another!”**
 - The Character We Are To Have:
 - Is Personal!
 - But It Is Not To Be Private!
 - No – It Is To Be Very Public! Shown To Others!
 - It Is Not Whether You See Yourself With This Character!
 - It Is Whether Others See You With This Character!
 - Or More – Whether God Sees You With It!
 - How Do Others See You?
 - Kind? Tenderhearted? Forgiving?
 - Neighbors / Community / Church / Family!
 - How Does God See You?
- Every One Of Us Is Called To This Godly Rule!
 - “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you!”

2. ***The Character Of This Godly Rule!***

- Ephesians 4:32 - Gives 3 Specific Character Qualities!
- First: Character Of Kindness!
 - “Be Ye Kind!”
 - How You Function With Others!
 - What Does It Mean Here To Be Kind?
 - It Is An Active Goodness To Others!
 - It Is Wanting & Working For The Best For Others!
 - Luke 6:35 - “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is **kind** unto the unthankful and to the evil!”
 - Just Like God Is Good & Kind!
 - Even To The Unthankful & Evil!
 - We Are To Be Good & Kind!
 - How Are We To Be Kind?
 - In Our Everyday Dealings With People!
 - In Your Words – What / How You Say Things!
 - In Your Actions – Gentleness / Courtesy!
 - Philippians 2:3 - “Let each esteem other better than themselves!”
 - Do You Have The Character Of Kindness?
 - What You Are Known For?
 - In Words / Actions?
 - Are You Good / Gracious / Gentle / Grateful / Giving?
 - Probably Towards Some – But All?
 - It’s Hard!
 - Right! Needs To Go Deeper!
 - Not Merely External / Superficial!
 - That’s Why Another Quality Is Given!
- Second: Character Of Tender-Heartedness!

- “Be Ye – Tenderhearted!”
 - How You Feel About Others!
- What Does It Mean Here To Be Tender-Hearted?
 - A Fervent Feeling For Others!
 - To Truly Want What Is Best For Others!
 - Even / Especially Those Who Are Hard To Be Kind To!
- 1 Peter 3:8-9 - “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: / Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing!”
 - “Pitiful” – Full Of Pity! An Inward Attitude!
 - Inward Affection / Tender Mercy!
- How Are We To Be Tender-Hearted?
 - Even Harder Than Kindness!
 - Kindness – External! This – Internal!
 - It Takes A Proper Thought Life!
 - Toward Others!
 - A True Humility! A Right Understanding Of Ourselves Before God & Others!
 - Pride Says:
 - I’m Better!
 - I Don’t Deserve This Treatment!
 - I Have My Rights!
 - Humility Says:
 - They Are Better!
 - They Deserve Better Treatment!
 - Their Rights Are More Important!
 - 1 Peter 5:5 - “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble!”
 - Can We Do This? Not Without:
- It Takes A Proper Prayer Life!
 - To Have The Right Feeling Toward Others – Pray For Those Who You Struggle With!
 - Even Enemies! Matthew 5:44 - “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you!”
 - With Enemies - What About Each Other? James 5:16 - “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed!” (Of Faults!)
- Do You Have The Character Of Tender-Heartedness?
 - How Do You Truly Feel Toward Others!
 - Even / Especially Those Who Are Hard To Get Along With? Those Who Offend?
 - Is There Compassion / Concern / Care?
- It’s Hard!
 - Even With The Proper Thought / Prayer Life!
 - Right! Needs To Go Deeper!
 - Another Quality!
- Third: Character Of Forgiveness!
 - “Forgiving One Another!”
 - How You Forgive Others!
 - What Does It Mean Here To Forgive?
 - To Pardon / Free From Faults!
- According To Pastor John MacArthur - “Forgiveness brings complete freedom from the past and from bitterness in the present. When you study the Bible there is a lot in it about forgiveness. In fact, there are 75 word pictures for “forgiveness” in the Bible.” – He Gives Us Just A Few Of Them:
 - To forgive is to turn the key, open the cell door and let the prisoner walk free.
 - To forgive is to write in large letters across a debt, “NOTHING OWED.”
 - To forgive is to pound the gavel in a courtroom and declare, “Not Guilty!”
 - To forgive is to shoot an arrow so high and so far it can never be found again.
 - To forgive is to take out the garbage and dispose of it once and for all, leaving the house fresh and clean.
 - To forgive is to loose the anchor and set the ship free to sail.

- To forgive is to grant a full pardon to a condemned and sentenced criminal.
- To forgive is to loosen a strangle hold on a wrestling opponent.
- To forgive is to sandblast a wall of graffiti, leaving it looking brand new.
- To forgive is to smash a clay pot into a thousand pieces so it could never be put back together again.
- He Says: “Those are just some of the word pictures in the Bible about forgiveness. Forgiveness is a marvelous, virtuous, liberating, loving attitude and act. It makes sense to forgive. It is healthy. It is wholesome. It is liberating. It is sensible. It relieves tension. It brings peace. It solicits love. And again I say, it is man at his noblest. It is his glory to overlook a transgression!”
- Colossians 3:12-13 - “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; / Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye!”
 - This Is Where It Must Begin! Forgiveness!
 - This Is The Key – Forgiveness Is The Key:
 - To How We Feel About Others!
 - Tenderhearted!
 - To How We Function With Others!
 - Kindness!
- Do You Have The Character Of Forgiveness?
 - Some Are Easy To Forgive!
 - Others Are Very Hard To Forgive!
- How Can We Forgive Those Who Are Hard To Forgive?
 - Thankfully, Ephesians 4:32 Doesn’t End Here!

3. ***The Cause Of This Godly Rule!***

- Ephesians 4:32 - “Even As God For Christ’s Sake (Or In Christ) Hath Forgiven You!”
 - Thankfully – God Doesn’t Leave Us Alone To Try To Generate These Qualities On Our Own!
 - Otherwise Never Happen!
 - Never Fully Function With Kindness!
 - Never Fully Feel With Tenderheartedness!
 - Never Fully Forgive!
 - Never Fully Be Free!
 - Gives To Us: The Foundation Of our Forgiveness!
 - The Forgiveness That God Has Granted / Given To Us!
 - We Can Function As God Functions!
 - In Kindness!
 - We Can Feel As God Feels!
 - Tender-Hearted!
 - We Can Forgive As God Forgives!
 - “Even As God In Christ Hath Forgiven!”
 - In Order To Keep This “Godly Rule”:
- Remember The Great Need Of Your Own Forgiveness!
 - God Has Forgiven You – Because You Needed It!
 - From Your Sins / Failures / Offenses / Unfaithfulness!
 - Think How Much You Needed God’s Forgiveness!
 - Think How Much He Has Actually Forgiven!
 - Colossians 2:13 - “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses!”
 - When You Struggle To Keep The Godly Rule:
 - “Be Ye Kind One To Another, Tenderhearted, Forgiving One Another!”
 - Remember: God Has Forgiven You Freely!
 - In Christ! Why Jesus Was Sent!
- Rejoice In The Great Extent Of Your Forgiveness!
 - God Has Forgiven You – Not Just Of 1 Or A Few Sins!
 - No - Psalm 103:3 - “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases!”
 - When You Struggle To Keep The Godly Rule:
 - “Be Ye Kind One To Another, Tenderhearted, Forgiving One Another!”
 - Rejoice In: God Has Forgiven You Fully!
 - In Christ! Why Jesus Was Sacrificed!

- Reflect The Great Gift Of Your Forgiveness!
 - God Was Generous With His Forgiveness!
 - As We Should Be / Can Be!
 - Albert Barnes - When It Comes To Forgiveness - ‘There is No Danger of Carrying It Too Far!’
- When You Struggle To Keep The Godly Rule:
 - “Be Ye Kind One To Another, Tenderhearted, Forgiving One Another!”
 - Reflect That God Has Forgiven You Faithfully!
 - Never To Bring Up **Your** Sins Again!
 - In Christ! Jesus Is Your Salvation!

Conclusion:

1. This Needs To Be Your Focus!
 - When It Is:
 - This Stops Being A Rule & Becomes A Reflection Of The Love & Forgiveness You Have Received From God!
2. So Let Us Keep The Golden Rule!
 - But Go Even Deeper!
 - And Reflect This Godly Rule!
 - Ephesians 4:32 - “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you!”

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