

The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)

Introduction: 2 Kings 7 – Four lepers apply the Golden Rule

I. **“So then” requires us to look back in the text, for the context (Mt 7:1-11)**

In the immediate context is that of judgment and asking for discernment

A. The Golden Rule provides the answer to what we ask God for

Ryle: *“it settles a hundred difficult points ...*

It prevents the necessity of laying down endless little rules”

B. The Golden Rule is linked to the grace of a generous Father

II. **The meaning of the Golden Rule**

What the Golden Rule is not and what it is

A. A common ethic of all religions

Negatively: Refrain from doing (silver rule, “live and let live”)

vs. positively: Proactively doing (The Good Samaritan)

B. Karma – what goes around comes around – give to get

The Golden Rule is a call to live by grace and love others

C. Keeping the Golden Rule

Atheists claim to love and keep the golden rule

God’s straightedge: The impossibility of keeping the golden rule ...

“In everything”

Christ kept the golden rule, perfectly

III. **How do we as Christians follow the Golden Rule**

A. Only as we are walking by the Spirit

Beware of a fallen application eroding into “live and let live”

Consider what the redeemed inner man wants done to him

B. It is a freeing law – Luther: *“He has laid the book in your own bosom”*

C. Applying the Golden Rule

Dealing with lost people

Correcting brethren in the church

Withholding judgment of others

Dealing with those who mistreat you (revenge and retaliation)

Serving others

Showing mercy to others

Giving to the needy

Visiting the sick

Courtesy in deferring to others (food, or any other idol)

In your words – especially to those closest to you

Be generous disciples following after your generous Father and generous Savior