

The Golden Rule

“Treat others as you want to be treated” is a familiar saying. Maybe you have heard it in a little different way. One of the teachers at our elementary school says, “If you are nice to others, they will be nice to you.” Other examples are, “Do to others as you want them to do to you” and “What goes around, comes around.” Did you know that Jesus spoke the words that we call the Golden Rule?

Right after choosing His twelve disciples, Jesus was preaching to a large group of people who had come to hear Him and to be healed. Jesus told the people that the poor, the hungry, and the sad are blessed because they will be filled and will be happy because the kingdom of God belongs to them. He told the believers to love their enemies, to even do good to those who hate them, and to pray for those who are mean to them. Then He taught the Golden Rule, saying, “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31).

What does this mean? In our home when children are arguing, we hear, “But he did that to me” or “she did that first.” It feels easier to give an excuse for our bad behavior when we point out what someone else has done to us. But, this isn’t what Jesus teaches. Jesus clearly explains that even when people do bad things to us, we want to do good to them. We want to behave, not like others behave, but in a way that we want others to be toward us. That can be hard to understand and it can be hard to do. Sometimes it helps to think: “What if I was that person? How would I want to be treated?” If we act toward others in a way that we would want them to act toward us, then we are following the Golden Rule.

If you are like me, you might find it much easier to be nice to your friends than to someone who is not nice to you. Perhaps Jesus taught this lesson for people like you and me because He knew that it would be hard for us to treat people nicely who are not being nice to us. Jesus also explained that even ungodly people are nice to those who are nice to them. They love those who love them. He knew it was more difficult to love our enemies.

We also find it easier to do good things if we think we will get something in return. If your sister wants to wear one of your shirts, it might not be easy to say, “Sure, that shirt looks nice on you!” It is easier to say, “You can wear it if I can wear your boots.” It can be easy to expect something back for good that we do. But again, this isn’t what Jesus teaches.

Jesus says, “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” (Luke 6:35). Jesus explains that God is kind even to those who are evil. As God’s children, we desire to do the same. We want to treat others as we want to be treated. Even though people might treat us poorly, when we believe our sins forgiven and walk as children of God, our reward is great! We can get to heaven! We don’t need any reward for our kindness on earth. Our reward is in heaven.

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VISIT ABOUT THESE:

1. Open the Bible to Luke 6:31. If your Bible has both red and black writing, what does the red writing mean? What color is the writing in Luke 6:31?
2. Is it easier to do good to your friends or to those who aren’t very nice to you? What might help you to be good even to those who aren’t nice to you?

3. Read the words to song of Zion #195 with an adult. Discuss what it means in the second verse when it says, “His love is like a sign.”

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