

“Do unto others... as you would have them do unto you.” Matthew 7:12

I think this is the first verse from the Bible I knew “by heart.” The passage was drilled into me by my mom. Given that I was a “handful” (her words) I suspect I needed to hear this passage repeatedly. Now, many years later, I can still remember that when I first heard it, it made me pause (briefly) and think. Even though I was a child, who wanted to play with other kid’s toys, it made sense in a very rudimentary way, that I should treat my sister’s stuff well, because I expected her to take good care of my toys. Maybe the common sense-ness of the “golden rule” is why this verse has counterparts in many of the great religions of the world. Confucius said “What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to other,” and Islam teaches, “That which you want for yourself, seek for mankind.” In many ways the Golden Rule is a kind of common sense which is the essential ethical foundation for a healthy human community. But, to quote my dad, it is “easier said than done.” Maybe the Apostle Paul said it best “That which I would do, I do not; and that which I would not do, I do” (Romans 7:19). Or, perhaps “All sin... and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). The rule is still golden and worthy of our best efforts even though we tarnish it on a regular basis.

Reflection Questions:

- How do you feel when you are treated unfairly?
- What do you do to treat others fairly?

Family Activity:

Everyone take turns and share one thing that you wish everyone would do for each other in your home and in the world. What are the similarities? How can you begin living more harmoniously? What areas do you need to change? Everyone pick one of your items and come up with a plan on how to support each other in doing it.

Teenage Activity:

Give some examples of the Golden Rule in action with your friends at school. Make a list of things that happen with your friends that are in conflict with the Golden Rule. How can you become a positive influence with your friends by your example?

Adult Activity:

How does the Golden Rule impact your daily life? Are there days when following it seems more difficult or easier? Do you find that most people follow the Golden Rule? Choose one specific thing you can do to live the Golden Rule. Live it.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to live more harmoniously in your kingdom by...