

"Do To Others..."

The Lord gave me a yardstick by which to measure every relationship in my life. It is easy to understand, and easy to apply if I have the will to do so. It involves no complicated formula; it is with me every wakeful hour. Its strength is in direct proportion to my weakness; binding me with cords of my own weaving, or freeing me as I free my own heart. It comprehends my whole duty to man.

While yet a child I learned it as: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you;" but later I found it is properly stated: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12, see Luke 6:31)

"All things" is very broad. This includes my driving on the highway, selling a rifle, working for an employer, living with my wife, writing to my brethren, or about them.

Whatsoever ye would -- is not "whatsoever they do." This rule does not depend on the other fellow -- it is determined in my own heart. How would I like to be treated? The rule is so reasonable, so unquestionably just, that it defies objection. It asks no pound of flesh, because its regulator would give none. It prescribes fair, honest treatment, because the party of the first part desires such. Self-interest, which so often blinds me to my duty to others, becomes the very indicator of those duties. God made the rule, but I am left to apply it -- with the intensity gendered by man's most powerful inner force, self-love. "No man ever yet hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it..." (Eph. 5:29)

"Do ye even so --" Lenski comments: "what we would like to have men do to us, whether they do that to us or not, we are to keep doing (poieite, durative) to them." Till seven times? Nay, but until seventy times seven. This regulates conduct, but it is far more than a law of "doing" -- it is a basic principle of attitude, of under-lying motive, which demonstrates itself in what we do.

"The law and the prophets" Jesus said; making it clear that this is no new rule, but one inherent in God's will for man in all times. Further, this clearly relates the rule to the giver of law, emphasizing the external authority of God. Those who seek to limit the "whole duty of man" to humanitarian obligations seem to miss this all-important point. I Jn.3:14-f clearly relates our love for our fellow man with our prior love for God. Because He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (Vs. 16) "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (Vs. 23)

Christians are in a position to understand and apply the "Golden Rule", as are none others. But the sad fact is that many so-called Christians make little practical application of this rule in their life, and seem a bit embarrassed if the preacher uses it as a text. Until we learn well the "second table of the law" (Matt.22: 39) we preach the "gospel" (?) in vain.

-by Robert F. Turner

Pointed Perceptions

The Psalmist said, "This is the day which the Lord has made, Let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24). This passage causes us to reflect upon an attitude that we ought to have each day of our lives! But how can that be? How can we have such a positive feeling of joy each day? We have trials, sorrows, temptations, heartaches, pains, disappointments, needs, etc. Joy in the midst of all these struggles? Some may think it to be impossible, yet we find the key to such a positive outlook in I Cor. 4:17-18: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:17-28).

- by Perry Hurst

The Decision Has Been Made

The die has been cast. The decision has been made. I have stepped over the line. I won't look back, let up, slow down, or back away.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, mundane talking, and cheap giving.

I no longer need preeminence or popularity. I don't have to be first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, walk with patience, serve in prayer, and labor with power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my Guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and spoken up, for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me.

- by Bob Moorehead

Achieving Our Full Potential

Every Christian should be concerned with reaching his/her maximum potential in service to the Lord. It is understood that we all have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:6), but it should, nonetheless, be the goal of every disciple to accomplish the maximum for the Master.

The Scriptures frequently warn about developing any sense of complacency or self-satisfaction in our spiritual work. The Laodicians were rebuked for imagining that they were "rich, and increased with goods, and hav(ing) need of nothing," when, in fact, they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). Paul warned that no one should ever "think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Romans 12:3). He personally exhibited the correct attitude when he said: "I count not myself to have apprehended, but . . . I press toward the mark for the prize" (Philippians 3:13-14).

So, how do we achieve our full potential? Some seem to think it is the duty of others to see to it that they are completely utilized in God's work. These are the ones who sometimes complain that they 'aren't being used' or that their talents are not being fully recognized. They assume that it is the burden of the local church (perhaps the elders in particular) to make sure they are totally employed.

There is no doubt that congregational leaders should be providing opportunities for service to every member. In reality this makes the church more efficient and effective. But, is it ultimately someone else's job to keep you busy in the Kingdom?

We believe the answer is, No. In the final analysis, you will be accountable for your own productivity in God's vineyard. If you don't feel busy enough, then it is within your power to do more. Use your own initiative to find and engage in the important work that needs to be done. Look for areas that you feel are somewhat neglected – and then get busy filling that void. Be sensitive to people who need help or things that are not getting fully accomplished.

Bottom line: Get busy! It's up to YOU to do all you can for HIM. Think!

- by Greg Gwin