

The Sermon on the Mount: A Reformed Exposition

Chapter 32: The Golden Rule

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Therefore 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 (Mt. 7:12).

In this verse, Jesus begins a new topic regarding how His disciples are to treat others. This is probably the most famous and most quoted saying of our Lord from the gospel accounts. This statement could be called the capstone or summit of the whole sermon. In fact, as far as it speaks of relations between men, it is the summit of all Christian ethics. This statement shows the genius and wisdom of the Mediator. He taught and spoke as no man has or ever will. With one brief statement, the Redeemer sets forth the whole moral law as it relates to our duty to man and the whole application of that law. If properly understood, this rule is like the Torah in a nutshell always ready to be contemplated and applied as we go through life. If this principle was applied biblically, consistently and habitually from regenerate hearts to all areas of life (individually, to the family, at work, between civil governments, etc..) it would transform society from one of conflict, hatred, confusion and enmity to one of peace, love and prosperity. Only when multitudes of people are converted to Christ and this rule is almost universally acted upon in this earth, will the golden age of the millennium be realized.¹ Before we examine this verse in detail there are some noteworthy introductory matters to consider.

First, the designation of this teaching as the “golden rule” is traditionally traced back to the Roman Emperor Alexander Severus (A. D. 222-35). Although this ruler was a pagan, he had heard this saying and was reputedly so impressed by the wisdom and comprehensive nature of it as a guide to ethical living, that he had it inscribed in gold on the wall of his closet. Apparently, he wanted to look upon it frequently to remind himself of it.

Second, an important matter of interpretation that needs to be considered relates to the word, “therefore,” which begins our passage. There is a great deal of discussion and disagreement among commentators and expositors as to whether this word points to the section which immediately precedes on prayer or whether it applies to much more. Some believe it is connected to the section on judging others and view the pericope on prayer in verse 7-11 as a parenthesis. Certainly, when judging others we want to apply the golden rule. Others believe that “therefore” applies the immediate context on prayer (7-11) because we should not expect good things from God if we mistreat our neighbors. Also, if God gives good things to His children should we not also imitate Him and be kind, merciful and righteous with each other?

¹ This statement presupposes a postmillennial eschatology (cf. Isa. 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:9; 32:15; 42:1-4; 44:3; 65:17-25; Ps. 2; 22:27-28; 72:1-17; 86:9; etc.; Dan. 2:35ff; 7:13-14, 27; Hab. 2:14; Mic. 4:1-4; Mal. 1:11; Mt. 12:20; 16:18; 28:18-20; Gen. 22:17-18; Rom. 4:13; etc.) and that we are already in the millennium (Rev. 20:1-10; Mt. 12:28-29; Jn. 12:31-32; Lk. 10:18-19; 22:26; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 1:18; Col. 1:13; Eph. 2:6; 2 Tim. 2:12). In other words, the kingdom “with power” began at Jesus’ resurrection and thus the millennium is not future. It runs from the resurrection until the second coming.

Although these kinds of arguments make sense, it is better to view this “therefore” as leading into a kind of epilogue or concluding statement or summary saying of all the ethical teachings regarding our duty toward man. With this thought in mind we could say that our Lord is stopping for a moment to pull together and reemphasize the most prominent theme of the discourse as a whole. This makes sense when we consider the fact that all evangelical scholars would readily admit that the golden rule does fit perfectly with the ethics of the beatitudes (5:3-10), the discussion on fulfilling the law and the prophets (5:17-48), the teaching on being salt and light (5:13-16), the requirement to forgive others (6:14-15), and the imperatives on unjust, unfair judgment (7:1-5). All of these teachings are now brought together in a comprehensive and memorable summary of Christian ethics. This verse 12 is the exclamation point to the challenge of “greater righteousness than the scribes and Pharisees” of 5:20. They treated others like dirt and themselves as princes. The disciples must treat others as they themselves would like to be treated. After this conclusion, the rest of chapter seven (vs. 13-27) is *primarily* a call for a decisive response instead of focusing on further instructions on the ethical requirements of discipleship.

Third, it is important to note the similarities and differences between the “golden rule” and other ethical maxims outside of Christianity. We read in the Talmud about a Gentile that wanted to become a proselyte to Judaism who asked the great Rabbi Shammai to explain the law to him so quickly that he could do so standing on one leg. The challenge was curtly refused. Consequently, the Gentile immediately went to Shammai’s rival Rabbi Hillel and asked the same question. Hillel replied, “Don’t do to your neighbor what is hateful to you. This is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary” (b. Sabb. 31a). This statement is similar to the golden rule, but it is put negatively while Jesus’ statement is positive and thus is more comprehensive. A common modern secular maxim similar to Hillel’s saying is “You can do whatever you like as long as you don’t hurt anybody in any way” (i.e. physically, emotionally, economically). When the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle was asked how men should relate to their friends, he is reported to have said, “As we would desire that they should bear themselves toward us” (Diogenes Laertius, Lib. V. 21). The Chinese philosopher Confucius said, “Do nothing to your neighbor which afterward you would not have your neighbor do to you” (Mahabhartā XIII.5571). It is reported that Buddha once said in one of his ethical utterances, “the motive of all our actions should be pity or love for our neighbor” (Max Muller’s Science of Religion, p. 249).

That statements similar to the golden rule can be found in extra-biblical literature should not surprise us. All men, we are told by Paul, “show the work of the law written upon their hearts” (Rom. 2:15). Everyone, by virtue of their creation in the image of God have moral motions and abiding concepts of ethics. Moreover, the Bible makes it clear that unbelievers can, in a certain sense, do good (1 Ki. 21:27-29; Mt. 5:46; 7:11; Lk. 6:33; Ac. 28:2; Rom. 2:14). Reformed theologians refer to this as civic goodness. But, in spite of the similarities, there are a number of crucial underlying fundamental differences between the golden rule and heathen ethical sayings.

One major difference is that all non-Christian religions and philosophies view such a rule through humanistic eyes, apart from Jesus Christ and His work. They believe that man can do such deeds in their own strength, apart from a work of sovereign grace. Men can print the golden rule on cards, calendars and monuments and can recite it and even memorize it; but, apart from the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and His work of sanctification upon the heart, society as a whole will never embrace it and internalize this principle. Moreover, without the blood of Christ and work of the Holy Spirit, God does not accept or bless man’s attempts at ethical living.

Besides separating this rule from Christ's redemptive work, unbelievers also have no real connection between this saying and our duty to love and obey God (that is, the duties of the first table of the law). Modernists, atheists, Buddhists and others are happy to embrace the principle of the golden rule; but without it being connected to our love and duty toward God, they cannot tell us why it must be obeyed. Their humanistic platitudes about love toward humanity without the philosophical, theological and ethical foundation of an inerrant, inspired Bible are arbitrary, non-provable, and inconsistent with their own presuppositions. The Savior made it very clear that our love toward God is the first commandment (Mt. 22:38); that everything else in life is secondary. Our treatment of our fellow human beings must flow out of a complete trust in God and a genuine love in our hearts toward Him. The secular humanist and modernist may speak words that are very similar to the golden rule, but their ethic is rooted in self-worship, idolatry and human autonomy and not a love of Christ.

The unbeliever separates the golden rule from God's moral law revealed in Scripture and thus ends up with pragmatism, utilitarianism and autonomous ethics. Jesus says that, properly understood and applied, the golden rule is a summary of all the moral or ethical teachings of the law and the prophets. Consequently, we must take the golden rule as, "Whatever you (that is, you Bible-believing Christians who fully accept the authority of all the moral laws found throughout the whole Old Testament) want other people to do to you (that must not contradict, violate, abrogate, or impugn the moral teachings of Scripture) do so also for them." With this in mind we see why the golden rule, which is universally known in the West, doesn't really work with unbelievers. Because pagans are slaves to sin and have an unbiblical, anti-Christian worldview, they may want people to do things to them that are unscriptural. The radical Islamist believes he is doing backsliding Muslims a favor by blowing them up. The Mormons who slaughtered the non-Mormons at the Mountain Meadows Massacre in 1857 believed that they were helping these people atone for their sins. Unbelievers may want their neighbor to violate certain moral laws because they are wicked or their concept of ethics is perverted. By connecting the golden rule to the moral teachings in the law and prophets, our Lord connects subjective desires to objective transcendent truths. Without this connection the golden rule is rendered antinomian by its subjectivity. A man's unbiblical, unreasonable and wicked desires can never render conduct which in itself is moral, righteous or good. Consequently, only treatment that accords with biblical morality, which I desire from another person, is that which I am bound to do to another. When an unbeliever says they like the golden rule, they are simply nodding to an abstraction divorced from God's holy law, which they hate. Tragically, that is the bottom line. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

The Golden Rule's Meaning and Purpose

The golden rule shows us that Christ not only came to tell us what we need to know and believe, but also how we are to live once we are Christians. We are to treat others and do for them whatever we would have them do to us. "In the ordinary intercourse of life, our conduct ought to be regulated by this maxim. We ought to treat others with the same respect, courtesy, and kindness, as we would wish to be treated by them. We must not subject others to those

slights and neglects, which, were we in their circumstances, and they in ours, we should feel to be undeserved and unpleasant.”²

This is a positive way of summarizing the whole moral law of God as it relates to man. It is essentially a recasting of what the Savior calls the second great commandment taken from Leviticus 19:18—“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:39)—which together with the greatest commandment—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart...” [Dt. 6:5; Mt. 23:37])—underlies all the ethical teaching of the law and of the prophets (Mt. 22:40). The brilliance of this rule is not only its comprehensive summary of our whole duty to man, but also that it implies an exhaustive application to every conceivable situation that may arise.

There are a number of things that this saying requires or implies. First, it requires a consciousness saturated with the moral precepts of Scripture. As we noted, the golden rule is not founded upon mere human opinion, but is rooted in what a sanctified mind (i.e. a mind trained by Scripture) believes ought to be done. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments” (1 Jn. 5:2). This means that we must do to our brother what is best for him according to the Bible. A godly Christian would want to be rebuked if he were guilty of a serious offense. Therefore, rebuking an erring brother biblically, in the proper manner and under the correct circumstances, fulfills the golden rule. Our desire to be treated in a certain manner must be in accord with biblical principles or human emotions, subjectivity, cultural mores and personal biases will be the controlling factor of this rule.

Second, this rule requires unselfishness on our part. The essence of biblical law and love is to treat others as well as or even better than we are willing to treat ourselves. As Paul says, “Love suffers long and is kind...does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil” (1 Cor. 13:4-5). “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each man esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4). The reason that the golden rule is so difficult for people is that because of sin, by nature, we are self-centered, selfish and egotistical. Consequently, people become very agitated and upset when they are slandered, insulted or maligned; but, they usually are not bothered when others are so mistreated. Jesus says that we need to step out of ourselves for a moment and place ourselves in the other person’s position and learn to be objective. If we do not like it when people gossip about us and say things that are not true, then we must not do it and also we must not even listen to it.

With this rule we put people on the same level as ourselves and as a result all biases, prejudices and class considerations should be eliminated. The rich man will treat the poor man with the same respect and fairness as his wealthy friends. The white man will be just as kind and loving toward African-Americans and Hispanics as his Caucasian acquaintances. If properly understood and consistently applied, this principle would lead to equal justice under the law. It would eliminate racism, class warfare and mistrust between various social groups.

Third, this rule eliminates self-deception and all unlawful self-justification for unkind, uncharitable behavior toward others. Because of sin men have become very adept at justifying their own biases, prejudices and dislikes toward others. They often treat others badly because of the presuppositions that they have accumulated throughout life. But, if we apply this rule to our thinking, we end up casting such self-deceptions and self-justifications aside. We ask ourselves, “How would I want to be treated, if I were in the same situation as this person?” This question requires us to put the best possible construction on a situation. It forces us to give other believers the benefit of the doubt. It requires us to be as patient and gentle as possible. It demands that we

² John Brown, *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord*, 1:311.

do for the other person what is spiritually in their own best interest. It completely eliminates any thoughts of revenge, payback or getting even.

Fourth, the positive formulation of this rule shows us that Christian love must be active and take the offensive. The rule is not simply “do not do things to others that you do not want done to yourself.” It encompasses that; but, being set in the positive form, it requires us to do acts of love toward others that otherwise we would not do. In other words, it is not merely a check upon crime, acts of aggressive or hateful words, but also a requirement to do good works in the name of Christ. If we were old and forsaken, living in a nursing home, would we not want visitors? If we had a medical emergency, would we not want help? It tells us to be a good Samaritan and reach out to help someone that we may not even like personally.

The Old Testament has many examples of how the golden rule should be carried out in a positive way. “If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it” (Ex. 23:4-5). Laws such as this, which are rooted in the golden rule, not only make social relationships more pleasant, but also facilitate reconciliation in broken relationships. The cross of Christ not only reconciles men with God, but heals relationships between men and other men. The golden rule forces us to do acts of kindness that disarm our enemies. Our lives are not to be governed by our feelings, but rather by God’s holy law. The golden rule is exhibited in the Bible’s laws regarding the poor: “If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of your gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly, lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs” (Dt. 15:7-8). We are to have a charitable attitude toward poor believers and reach out to them in their need. The Christian with money is to respond positively and generously to a poor man’s request, even though he knows he will not receive any interest whatsoever.

The golden rule must extend beyond our actions even to our thoughts and attitudes. Solomon says, “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles” (Pr. 24:17). We do not want people to hate us in their heart and therefore we must guard our hearts against unlawful thoughts. As we noted in Matthew 5, Jesus speaks against adultery and murder in the heart by lustful, inappropriate thoughts and revengeful fantasies and imaginations. The golden rule extends to our minds. Holding grudges and lusting after another man’s wife or belongings is also strictly forbidden.

Fifth, the golden rule is so comprehensive and penetrating that it is an excellent guide to show us our sins and any areas of life in which we need sanctification. If we repeatedly meditate on this principle we will find ourselves habitually applying it to our own behavior. If we are sharp, harsh or unkind in our speech, we will see that we do not want to be spoken to in that manner and we will be convicted. If we are tempted to exploit one of our workers, we will put ourselves in their position and this will bring conviction and a proper response. If we have the bad, sinful habit of pointing out minor faults in others and making mountains out of molehills, then this rule should show us how unbiblical and unreasonable our behavior has been. We need to develop the habit of putting ourselves in other people’s positions, so that we can analyze our behavior and see if it is displeasing or offensive to others. The golden rule, as a summary of the whole law of God as it relates to man, should stand before us as a mirror showing us when we are good and when we are bad. This use will, of course, take study and practice. We cannot drift through life on autopilot, but must constantly be meditating on the law and analyzing our

thoughts, words and actions in light of it. The golden rule is the supreme call to self-examination. It takes the principle of self-interest and self-love and ties it to God's moral law and, as it were, makes it the handmaid of love and justice. The Holy Spirit, in conjunction with Scripture, takes the principle of looking out for number one (i.e. self) and turns it on its head so that our neighbor becomes the focus of our love, not self. This teaching is pure, inspired genius.

Sixth, the golden rule proves that, when it comes to ethics, there is an essential unity between the Old and New Covenant era. This point is proven by the reason or commendation given for this rule: "for this is the law and the prophets." Our Lord's standard for Christian morality with regard to our fellow man is not only the second table of the Ten Commandments and the moral case laws from the five books of Moses, but also the explanation and application of the moral law found in the prophetic books. This agrees with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:17ff, as well as the New Testament epistles. For example, Paul teaches that "love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10). "He who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8). In this context he not only quotes from every commandment of the second table, but also gives the identical summary of the law that Jesus did: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Rom. 13:9). In the book of Galatians Paul says virtually the same thing, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (5:14). James refers to this summary of the law (i.e. Lev. 19:18) as the "royal law according to the Scripture" (Jas. 2:8). If Christians fulfill it they "do well."

In our day, many people believe that the golden rule has replaced the law or that love and law are somehow incompatible. But nothing could be further from the truth. Love, biblically defined, simply states the law in a positive form and summarizes it. It is a comprehensive principle that encompasses the law and the prophets. People who argue that love contains its own moral compass or who, like the Beatles, say, "all you need is love," are being naïve. A general concept needs particulars to flesh it out. The reality is that love cannot be properly defined or even function without an objective moral standard. That is why Scripture does not say that "love is the end of the law," but that "love is the fulfillment of the law." Indeed, love and the moral law are intimately connected. Law without love remains a dead letter, an intellectual exercise, an unobeyed code. Only the Bible holds these two crucial things in harmony.

It is rather ironic that evangelicalism's attack on the Old Testament moral laws either through dispensationalism or Charismatic mysticism has actually done much to destroy the biblical concept of love. Love is no longer seen as treating people in accordance with the moral law, but rather treating people in a manner that makes them feel good or that caters to their emotions. This antinomian concept of love has been the death of discipline in many churches. If a female church member gets pregnant out of wedlock, then the church sponsors a baby shower and celebrates her sin. If a woman leaves her husband without just cause (i.e. he is not committing adultery or beating her), then the church offers to get her an apartment to give her time to "cool off."

Love is no longer connected to law in any way, so it is generally seen as being nice or speaking softly with deep emotion and an expression of concern. While speaking softly and acting concerned are good in certain contexts, if people are not directed to obey God's moral law, then counseling, preaching and giving advice are a waste of time and even harmful. This modern disconnect between love and biblical morality is one of the main reasons that evangelical churches have embraced secular psychology in their counseling. Without biblical love, men *will not be confronted* by God's voice speaking in Scripture. Therefore, they turn to humanism or clinical psychology. We need to understand that living a life of love means nothing less than

being totally submitted to God's moral law by the process of the sanctification bestowed through Christ's work. As Paul says, "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5).

Applications and Implications

The golden rule has a number of very important things to say to us as to how we are to think and how we are to conduct our lives. Let us turn our attention to some of the things this passage is telling us that we have not already considered.

First, it tells professing Christians to stop having a negative view of God's moral law. People tend to view the law as purely negative, as something that only says, "Do not do this or that." But what our Lord is emphasizing here is that the law is a very spiritual, positive thing for living our lives. As Paul says, "The law is holy, just and good" (Rom. 7:12). The law not only shows us our sin and leads us to Christ and tells us what we must avoid doing; but, also tells us the positive side of morality. It tells us how to love our neighbor. It teaches us to help our poor brethren. It instructs us to be a good Samaritan. It shows us that morality has a positive side that is active and reaches out to others. It even instructs us to love our enemies. Jesus did not give the New Covenant church an ethic superior to that of the Old. Instead, He refuted human additions to it and used it as the platform for His own ethical teachings. When the law is viewed from the perspective of justification, it is something that slays us because we cannot keep it perfectly (Rom. 7:9). But once we are saved, it is our guide book of Christian love. It is the light that guides our path (Ps. 119:105) and tells us how to love. The real spirit and purpose behind the moral law was to instruct a people, already redeemed from sin and set apart by God, on how to love God with their whole heart and their neighbor as themselves. Possessing God's enscriptured moral law is a privilege. It is a wonderful and blessed thing.

By tying this principle to the law and the prophets our Lord is once again setting the true Christian ethic in opposition to that of the scribes and Pharisees. They claimed to believe in and follow the law, but they really did not love others. They clung to a self-centered religion where deeds were done in a mechanical manner and where human traditions had obscured their understanding of the law. Their focus was not on helping others and ministering to the poor outcasts of society. Instead they were elitists who viewed religion as a way to advance oneself in society. They treated people in their inner circle with kindness and charity while outsiders were treated like dirt. They proved the point that religion without Christ and without love becomes little more than a country club where those who belong pat each other on the back.

Second, as part of our application of this verse we must avoid a modern misuse of the golden rule. It is very common today in evangelical circles to hear a convoluted application of this passage. People say that the command to do unto others as we would have them do unto us requires us first to love ourselves. Therefore, they argue, that the key to loving others and obeying the golden rule is to first focus on our own self-esteem. In other words, we need to nurture self-love before we turn our attention to our neighbor. The pop-psychology view of this verse must be rejected for the following reasons.

(1) Such a view is read into the passage because the point is that our love must be selfless. It must not be turned in toward self, but must be directed outward toward others. Our Lord assumes that people already are self-centered, self-focused and that they need to apply what is already there to our neighbors. We need to be willing to make sacrifices in our own lives and focus less on our own desires, wants and needs to help others. The proselytizers of the self-

esteem gospel have turned this verse upside down. Self-love is actually a great obstacle in the way of doing our duty to our neighbor. Our problem is not that we do not have enough self-love or self-esteem, but that we have too much. We need to be more caring, considerate and loving toward other people.

(2) Scripture often describes self-centeredness, egotism and self-love as part of the essence of sin. Instead, we need to affirm everything in us which is part of our creation in the image of God, while denying the perversion and depravity that affects us because of the fall. Self-preservation and care for oneself is perfectly normal and part of our being. However, sin has perverted self-preservation and made us selfish, self-centered and uncaring about others. Consequently, what Jesus requires is that we must love our neighbor with the same normal, healthy concern that we have for self. He obviously is not asking us to love them with a perverted, obsessive, corrupt kind of love. The concepts set forth in the self-esteem gospel are essentially derived from modern pagan culture and not divine revelation.

Third, the consistent application of this passage to society would have a profound impact on our culture. It would force the civil government to abandon the politics of guilt and pity and would teach them to treat rich and poor alike. The police would not fabricate or ignore important evidence in criminal cases. Business men would stop lying and exaggerating about products to bolster sales. Useless and adulterated products would disappear from the market. Dishonest debtors, con-artist salesmen and telephone/computer scams would no longer exist. Whites would no longer mistreat blacks and blacks would cease their enmity against whites. Immigration policies would be made more fair, equitable and merciful while welfare policies based on state theft would be abandoned and repeat felons executed. Those who are rich would not take economic advantage of the poor; they would seek to improve wages and working conditions as best they could without state coercion. The poor would cease looking to the state as a hired thief to take from the rich for their benefit. Everyone would stop supporting politicians who believe that murdering unborn babies is ethical. Moreover, doctors would cease murdering the pre-born and would do everything they could to protect all babies. A vast number of practices in business and government which are corrupt, yet in our day have ceased to be considered improper, would be cast aside as wicked and loathsome.

Just think about how revolutionary this principle would be for the family. As self-centeredness and egos are set aside for the benefit of helping a husband or wife, marital arguments would radically change. No longer would people fight to win an argument or retain their own rights. Instead they would stop contention and seek to analyze problems using only the Bible as the ultimate source of authority. Husbands obviously do not enjoy being yelled at or bullied and thus they would seek out a gentler, more composed manner of discipline and communication. Wives certainly do not like being disobeyed or nagged and would seek to be more submissive, respectful and responsive to their husbands. We need to remember that Jesus did not say do unto others as you think they deserve. He did not say to do unto others as you would like them to do to you if you think they have earned it. The golden rule should make Christian households places of peace and happiness. Husbands would love their wives and wives would respect and obey their husbands. Parents would be careful not to neglect their children or provoke them to wrath. Children would be careful to listen to their parents, honor them and obey them.

It would also be a great blessing in the church. No longer would church leaders attempt to impose their own ideas and traditions upon the flock. They would cease trying to bind men's consciences to man-made holy days and other popish trash. Men and women in the church would

cease and desist from all malicious gossip and slander of other Christians. People would no longer look out only for their own interests, but rather would concern themselves with the health of the church as a whole. Church members would no longer assign malevolent motives to others or assume the worst over minor faults and personality differences. Abusive language, unjustified accusations, factionalism and sinful schisms would be a thing of the past. Believers would be slow and careful to assign guilt and would follow Matthew 18:15ff. They also would be quick to forgive a repentant brother. In theological controversies equivocations, deceptions, malignant insinuations and all unnecessary *ad hominem* attacks would cease. The church would be a true example of Christian love to the world.

We need to examine ourselves to determine if we have been faithful to the golden rule. Do we treat the brethren with the same fairness, courtesy and kindness that we desire to be treated by others? Are we as concerned with the reputation of other believers as we are for our own? Do we help spread or even listen to slanderous reports about others or are we concerned to safeguard their good name? Do we refrain from bitter, abusive speech with our own wives, husbands, children and co-workers? If we habitually neglect or violate this rule, are we not acting like antinomians no matter what our profession? It is time that we reflect upon this rule and think about it as we go about our daily activities. This is the path of godliness; this is the only way to be a salt and light to culture. It is the only way that people will listen to us as ambassadors of Christ.

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