

How to Obey the Golden Rule Matthew 7:12-14

What does it mean to do for others what we wish them to do for us? (v.12)

It means that instead of seeking to have others meet our needs — we devote ourselves to meeting their needs.

If I am called to meet others' needs — who's going to meet my needs? (vv.7-11)

It doesn't work to ignore your needs — you can't do that for very long.

But there's one word in v.12 which helps us see who's going to meet our needs — the word "so."

"So" (which can also be translated "therefore") shows that the reason we can obey v.12 is because of vv.7-11. It's because by faith in Jesus we are completely forgiven by God — and so we can take all our needs to God in prayer — and have our hearts satisfied in God — that we can focus on others' needs.

This helps us understand how v.12 "is the Law and the prophets." V.12 is all about our horizontal relationships — but the Law also talks about our relationship with God. But the "so" in v.12 points back to vv.7-11 — which has to do with our relationship with God.

But at this point Jesus anticipates two objections —

- It's hard to live this way!
- It's lonely living this way!

Why go on a road that's hard and only traveled by few? (vv.13-14)

This road IS hard — we have to battle indwelling sin, the pull of the world around us, and Satan himself.

And this road IS lonely — most others in our workplaces and neighborhoods are not living this way.

So why travel a hard, lonely road?

Jesus pulls no punches. He says it's because the wide, popular road leads to destruction — and the narrow, lonely road leads to life.

Life? Or destruction?

Take the hard, lonely road.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012

HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

Do you agree that we tend to focus on commands — and ignore the promises that empower those commands? If so — why do you think we tend to do that?

Do you agree that the "so" at the beginning of v.12 shows how we can have our own needs met? Why or why not?

In the past — when you have tried to serve others — have you tried to ignore your own needs — or have you intentionally taken all your needs to your Father?

In what situations do you find it most difficult to focus on meeting others' needs? Why do you think these situations are so difficult?

Do you agree that whenever we turn to the Father in Jesus' name — He will always meet our needs? Why or why not?

What did the Holy Spirit do in your heart through this passage?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.



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