

196. Golden Rule

By Arland Steen

Opening

Jesus gave the perfect rule for human relations and personal conduct. We call it the Golden Rule, a name it got somewhere around the seventeenth century. Near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ summed up a series of profound thoughts on human conduct by saying...

Supreme Scripture

Matthew 7:12 (NKJ): *12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

Jesus taught us to do two things in developing relationships with others:

- (1) Decide how you want to be treated
- (2) Begin treating others that way
 - you would not want a neighbor to steal your tools, so do not take his
 - you would not like to be struck by a reckless driver, so do not drive recklessly
 - you would want a helping hand in time of need, so help others in need
 - in industry, we would not want the person upstream from us polluting the river, so we should not do it to the person downstream from us
 - in the workplace, we would not want to be oppressed, so we should not oppress our employees

If applied, this principle would remove the need for armies, jails and prisons; problems would be relieved, the burden of government reduced and the productive energies of all people released. This principle would revolutionize society. It is the foundation for all social relationships.

Nordstrom Practices the Golden Rule

A poster in a Nordstrom department store: “The only difference between stores is the way they treat their customers.”

Excerpts from an article about Nordstrom:

“True words are cheap but Nordstrom lives up to this credo. The Seattle-based specialty realtor is the company to beat where customer service is concerned. Nordstrom’s sales people are attentive; never clingy. When you walk in the door they appear in a few minutes and if you say you’d rather browse on your own, they vanish. If gift-wrapping your purchase may take a few minutes, you’re likely to be handed a voucher good for a complimentary cappuccino in the stores’ cafe. Even billing errors, which are quite rare, are corrected kindly and quickly. All this means that Nordstrom doesn’t have customers. It has fans.”

A research firm out of Washington, DC says this about customers:

“Most customers won’t complain to management if something goes wrong with a purchase but the average customer will tell between nine and sixteen of his friends and acquaintances of his bad experience. Some 13% will tell more than twenty people if something went wrong in the store. More than two out of three customers who have received poor service will never buy from that store again. And worse, management will never know why. Every company is bound to

goof now and then but from the customers perspective what's important is that the company respond.

[Example of man who waited 45 minutes for a return to be processed. He finally told the sales clerk, 'If I were in Nordstrom doing this, I would have been out of here within 5 minutes.' Since Nordstrom is very close-mouthed about its customer service policies, I can only speculate how they might have handled the man's problem but I have a hunch they would have seen his complaint as a chance to win back his business, which isn't as difficult as it sounds.]

95% of dissatisfied customers will buy from a store again if their problems are solved quickly. Even better they will each tell eight people of the situations happy ending. The trick for managers and sales people is to give customers ample time to offer feedback on the service they receive."

Observations From The Above:

- (1) Their speed at correcting the problem
- (2) Management is the last one to discover there is a problem. Friends are told first.
- (3) Bad news is told to more people than good news is.
- (4) Nordstrom fully accepts the integrity of the customer without making them feel guilty.
- (5) These people policies come from the top.

(Instead of putting others in their place, put yourself in their place.)

It is time for us in the Church to meet and exceed the reputation Nordstrom has in customer service.

Humans Are Similar To God

Genesis 1:26 (NKJ): *Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...*

J. I. Packer: *We are carefully crafted reproductions of Him.*

J. Oliver Buswell in *Systemic Theology: When God made man, He communicated to him qualities in Himself.*

I believe there are several ways we are made in the image of God, but the one I want to highlight now is the fact that we both possess deep longings.

In Hosea 11:8, God laments the waywardness of His children in moving terms (NKJ): *8 How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. 9 I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror.*

The rich, passionate language suggests the existence within His personality of a reality not easily defined as merely an emotion. It is deeper than that. With all the intensity of His being, God is longing for the restoration of relationship with His children.

The psalmist describes himself, too, as a personal being who deeply longs.

Psalm 42:1 (NKJ): *As the deer pants [a desire so intense that it is audible] for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.* Both God and man have the capacity to long deeply.

5 Ways You Want Others To Treat You

1. You want others to encourage you.

(There is no better exercise for strengthening the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.)

Your best friends are people who believe in you, encourage you and lift you up.

Teaching self-reliance does not mean lack of encouragement.

Story of the father whose goal was to have his son catch the ball ten times in a row. After 8 or 9 times, his father would throw the ball in such a way that it was impossible for the boy to catch it.

The son did not follow his father in his business because he felt he never could match up to his father.

2. You want others to appreciate you.

(“The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.”) (William James)

J.C. Staehle, after analyzing many surveys, found that the **principal causes of unrest among workers** were the following, listed in the order of their importance:

- (1) Failure to give credit for suggestions
- (2) Failure to correct grievances
- (3) Failure to encourage
- (4) Criticizing employees in front of others
- (5) Failure to ask employees their opinion
- (6) Failure to inform employees of their progress
- (7) Favoritism

Notice that every single item has to do with failure to recognize the importance of the person.

They will respond to you the way you perceive them. The problem many times is that we don't say what we think about people. We think they are great but we don't tell them. It is of no value to them.

3. You want others to forgive you.

Almost all emotional problems come from unresolved conflicts and the fact that we haven't developed the right relationships with people and most of the time it is in the area of forgiveness - totally releasing us of guilt.

The Capital of the World, a short story, by Ernest Hemingway:

No one could really say why he ran away. Or perhaps he didn't, but was kicked out of his home by his father for something foolish that he said or did. Either way, Paco found himself wandering the streets of Madrid, Spain with hopes of entering into a profession that would most likely get him killed – bullfighting. Those who train under a mentor have a good chance of surviving this profession, but Paco's memory of his mistakes and guilt over what happened blindly drove him to this one-way street to suicide.

But that was the last thing his father wanted, which is why he tried something desperate which he desperately hoped would work. There was little to no chance that he would be able to find Paco by wandering the streets of Madrid, so instead he put an advertisement in the local

newspaper El Liberal. The advertisement read, "Paco, meet me at the Hotel Montana at noon on Tuesday. All is forgiven! Love, Papa."

Paco is such a common name in Spain that when the father went to the Hotel Montana the next day at noon there were 800 young men named Paco waiting for their fathers...and waiting for the forgiveness they never thought was possible!

Two great marks of a Christian are:

- (1) Giving
- (2) Forgiving

Instead of this, many times we pray the Irish prayer:

Irish Prayer

"May those who love us, love us;
And those who don't love us,
May God turn their hearts;
And if He doesn't turn their hearts,
May He turn their ankles,
So, we'll know them by their limping."

4. You want others to **listen** to you.

(Listening is...wanting to hear.)

A common fault as people gain more authority, is a lack of patience in listening to those under them. A deaf ear is the first indication of a closed mind. The higher people go in management and the more authority they wield, the less they are forced to listen to others. Yet, their need to listen is greater than ever. The farther they get from the firing line, the more they have to depend on others for correct information. If they haven't formed the habit of listening - carefully and intelligently - they aren't going to get the facts that they need.

5. You want others to **understand** you.

Discussion: How do you feel when misunderstood?

- (1) Alone (2) Frustrated (3) Resentment (4) Limited (5) Unappreciated