

The Golden Rule

Many years ago my body spontaneously developed a blood clot in the subclavian vein going to the heart. This was serious and life threatening. The doctors used an experimental drug to remove the 3 inch blood clot. The danger was great. My fellow elders came to pray for me and the Lord Jesus miraculously healed me. After I left the hospital, I was on an anti-coagulant drug for several years. The doctors were puzzled as to why the blood clot developed. I was a topic of conversation in the local medical circles. I went through many tests and nothing showed up except for a borderline condition called lupus. The Lord completely healed me even eliminating the scarring in the vein. It was a wonderful time of life as Jesus challenged me about who I was serving. The Lord comforted me with friends. One unknown person gave my family one thousand dollars to meet expenses. It was an unexpected gift. We did not ask, seek or knock on the gates of heaven, yet it was given at a time of need. This is what Jesus wants to talk to us about: giving, providing and opening doors for others. Jesus' next words in the Sermon on the Mount are,

Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. (NASB) Matthew 7:7-8

ASKING, SEEKING AND KNOCKING. Jesus' words are simple ones. His idea is easy to understand. If someone is asking, he/she will receive. If he/she is seeking, he/she will find it. If he/she continues knocking, someone will open the door. Jesus does not tell us who is doing the giving, providing or opening, but it is implied that God is doing it.

Jesus' three words: "ask, seek, and knock" have the idea of repetition and progression. He is talking about constant

asking, repeated seeking, and continuous knocking. This is not just one request or one knock. But it is not a demanding spirit either. Jesus

is talking about someone who is humbly pleading. Notice, Jesus does not use words like, "demanding," "insisting," or "crashing down the gate of heaven." His words remind us of an inferior asking a superior: asking, seeking and knocking.

Jesus is not giving us a basket of three or more wishes

that will all come true just as we want. This is not a promise to grant your request for riches, a girl friend, a new spouse, honor and respect, or power. In other passages of scripture, God has clearly told us that

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing

*in His sight. (NASB)
1 John 3:21-22*

This statement is almost identical to Jesus' statement here in Matthew. "Whatever we ask we

receive . . ." and then comes the condition, "because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." In 1 John 5:14-15 we read,

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we

Rich In This World?

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share . . . (NASB) 1 Timothy 6:17

ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (NASB) 1 John 5:14-15

Jesus assumes the one who is asking, seeking and knocking has a right relationship with God - a Christian who is obedient and desires His will. This is the one who by asking, seeking, and knocking will receive, find and have the door opened.

YOU HAVE DOUBTS? Jesus anticipates the doubters when he says,

... what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is good to those who ask Him! (NASB) Matthew 7:9-11

His proof that a holy God gives us good gifts is that even earthly fathers who are sinners provide good things to their children. God gives good gifts. He does not give us snakes, stones, or scorpions (Luke 11:11-13). This is a key lesson because there are times we ask for things that are not the best for us. Paul the apostle is an excellent example of this when he says,

Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." (NASB) 2 Cor. 12:8-9

Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" and he asked God to remove it. But God did not remove it because He wanted the best for

Paul - spiritual growth.

HEART OF THE MESSAGE! The heart of Jesus' message, the reason for verses 7-11, is discovered in verse 12. Jesus has been building to verse 12. His message about asking, seeking, knocking and the example of the father not giving stones instead of bread is explained in verse 12,

Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (NASB) Matthew 7:12

It is the Golden Rule. How do earthly fathers treat their sons? How does God treat us?

CONCLUSION. Christ's Golden Rule is not a magic rule that promises the favor we show others will be returned to us. The Golden Rule does not guarantee anything in return.

Jesus' Golden Rule is one sided. We are to give good gifts even if we receive nothing in return. Jesus' Golden Rule assumes our good gifts are holy gifts when He refers to the Law and Prophets.

Non-Christians like the Golden Rule. They may quote it, but they cannot fulfill it and neither can we. God is love. Every Christian needs to

walk in the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-22) in order to show Jesus' love to other Christians and non-Christians.

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (NASB) Gal. 6:10

Let's ask the Holy Spirit to make our hearts love like our Lord's heart (Rom. 5:5)!

