

THE GOLDEN RULE  
**A Pastor's Perspective**

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:..." Matthew 7:12.

Overseeing the Lord's flock requires a lot of patience. If only the members could fully grasp this "**Golden Rule**."

The **Golden Rule** goes beyond being courteous one to another. It demands that we put our brothers and sisters first, always before our wants and wishes.

Pastors, with love in our hearts, want to think that all persons in the congregation consider themselves as servants to and for others.

But here, the key word is "**servant**." Thus, we are thinking; yea, even restricted to those within the church body. Servants recognize their Master and show up when the church meets.

Yet, servants are servants, even when the church doesn't meet. And, of course, Pastors love it when a servant of the church engages the "**Golden Rule**" in their daily life. But, the church body is where the "**rule**" has its operation of fellowship.

The practicality and full application of the "**Golden Rule**" can only be truly administered within the Local New Testament Church. Clearly, Jesus taught the same in the "**Beatitudes**" that run through the ending of chapter 7.

Beginning in Matthew 5, Jesus said, "**And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when His disciples came unto him: He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, "BLESSED ARE THE (poor, mourners, meek, hungry & thirsty, merciful, pure, peacemakers) for they shall be called the children of God"**

Jesus taught the "**Golden Rule**" to His serving disciples; His church, which, began before Pentecost. Paul agrees. "**And God hath set some in the church, first apostles...**" (1st Cor. 12:28).

Notice how and when the church was organized. Christ ordained the brethren; even, participating in church ordinations of baptism and the Lord's Supper, during His personal ministry and years before Pentecost.

Therefore, when a Pastor looks at the "**Golden Rule**" he sees it fully operating within the body of Christ, the church. After all - even though it is our goal, we don't expect the person down the street to have Bible study and attend services.

Neither, do we count on his offering to keep up the building and support missionaries.

No, it's the body that does these commissioned teachings. The members of the church apply the "rule" in its initial and fullest meaning. Church members are the ones that "put up" with other church members, "preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). Pete, down the street, could care less about church.

Of course, the world remains courteous, itself, but goes no further. So, don't expect the guy two blocks over to look at the teachings of Jesus in the manner of a church member. He can't until his presence is in the next assembly and, the next, and the next, and...

Only the Holy Spirit led body of Christ is the **salt** and **light** of the world (Mt 5:13, 14). Jesus taught His disciples to have love for their enemies; which, cannot be accomplished unless one submits to one Master.

Therefore, the final conclusion a Pastor comes to, is evident: Church members, alone, have been given this "Golden Rule." That's where all the other ingredients, necessary to form a Spiritual "lump," are located.

"**Many,**" according to Matthew 7:22, "**will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,**" (notice the reiteration of 'Lord'). But, Jesus professed, "**I never knew you.**"

Understanding Matthew 7:21-23 is much like utilizing the "**Golden Rule.**" There are too many attempting to do Christ's teaching on their own, outside the body of Christ; while, Jesus is clearly saying that they will not inherit the kingdom of God (v21) nor apply to "Rule" properly.

It is in the Servant's heart to listen to the Holy Spirit as He speaks: "**for, with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,**" Romans 10-:10. The heart is where all service - that of the "Golden Rule" and church membership, present honor and give glory to God. The heart is where faith begins, and the heart is where work progresses. In John 14:15, Jesus said, "**If ye love Me, keep My commandments.**"

Pastors expect all church members to observe the "**Rule.**" Do all observe? In our experiences, the answer is no. Yet, members are in the proper place to learn when they miss the mark. And, there's a reward for church service, too.

In Luke's account of the **Beatitudes** (6:20-49), and after giving instruction on love for our enemies, being merciful and not judging, Jesus goes on to say, "**For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.**"

And, we wonder why some never grow in the service of the Lord. If only we would understand that, what begins with us, comes back to us in measurable amounts. If it doesn't come back, we never gave it in the first place. **Amen?**