

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “The Golden Rule” Luke 6

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 6:27-36

1. Categories of people to God

Jesus addressed His sermon of Luke 6 to His disciples. He distinguished His disciples from the sinners. Do His teachings apply to all people or only to the Christians? How do we apply His teachings to other people today? Let us learn the category of people in God’s viewpoint. In God’s eyes there are only two groups of people; those who are in His grace [God’s children] and those who are outside of His grace.

a. God’s children: Disciples of Jesus = Christians

Although the people of Israel was a chosen people of God, apparently Jesus favored a select group of His followers, i.e. the Christians and gave them the teachings of this chapter. Did He categorize the rest of the people of Israel as “the sinners?”

b. Sinners

. God’s definition of sinners is those who do not know God, hence are outside of His grace.

. Jesus declared that He came to “call the sinners to repentance [Luke 5:32],” i.e. all Israelites and Gentiles who did not know God, to bring them to God’s grace. The chosen people of God by blood line had to be brought into God’s family through the blood of His own Son.

1) Those who treat the Christians badly [v. 28, 29]

. This is a category of people, both Christians and non-believers, who are selfish and seek to take advantage of the Christians for their self-interest.

2) Those who are innocuous or beneficial to the Christians [v. 30, 34]

. This is a group of people who are not against the Christians. They are most people you mingle with and are your neighbors. God often works in their lives for furtherance of His work and for the benefit of His people. The gospel mission is largely targeted to this group of people.

2. Who are the enemies of God?

a. “Enemies” [ekstros: v. 27, 35]: Who were the enemies according to Jesus and the NT?

1) Satan: Satan is God’s enemy who opposes God. He wants to have the place of eminence instead of God in this world. Those who side with Satan and work for Satan’s cause have made themselves “enemies of God” [Matt 13:25, 28; Matt 22:44; Luke 1: 68-71]

2) Religious hypocrites: Both John the Baptist and Jesus called the hypocritical Pharisees and Scribes as “brood of vipers [Matt 3:7, 12:34, 23:33],” who lead souls of men to destruction, hence God’s enemies who could not escape God’s condemnation.

3) Those who live in sin without God: Romans 5:10

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

b. Is the Christian enemy the same as the enemy in National Military Strategy (NMS)?

- Nowhere in the Bible we find the Roman military referred as “the enemy.” Jesus did not come to save the nation of Israel from their colonial occupier as a political leader. He came as the Savior of all mankind from their enemy -- Satan and their sinful past.

- A nation's enemy and God's enemy are two distinct definitions. However, the Christians' prayer is that America fights against the forces who are the enemies of God.

3. 'Golden Rule' on how to treat others

Jesus taught His disciples the 'Golden Rule' for treating ALL categories of people. He taught them even to love the enemies, knowing they are enemies of God. He taught them to treat people as God treats them. The fundamental premise behind His teaching is that God's children are ambassadors of God in this world, hence they need to show His divine goodness and mercy to this sinful world to help bring them into God's grace [v. 36].

a. Golden rule: Do unto others what you would want them do to you.

- 1) Apply your standard of good behavior to yourself first.
- 2) Avoid hypocrisy.
- 3) Have the mind of God towards all people -- heart of compassion and mercy

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? [Matt 5: 44-46]

b. How was this teaching accepted and practiced by early Christians?

- Many Christians willingly suffered for their faith under severe persecution.
- Enemies of Christians were often fellow Jewish people. We can see why Jesus taught His disciples to love their enemy -- to help them repent and come back to God's grace and truth. Instead, the Jews were persecuted much throughout the history.

And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. [Romans 11: 23-25]

c. How does the Golden Rule apply to the Christian living today? Is the Golden Rule a burden to you or do you count it a 'privilege' to apply it in your life?

d. Is there a time limit to God's Golden Rule?

Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds. [Romans 2: 4-6]

- God's Day of Wrath is coming and sinners will no longer enjoy God's mercy and long-suffering.
- God's forbearance and long-suffering towards sinners will cease when the Lord comes with His people. It will be a time of God's wrath and His chosen people will sit on the judgment seat with Christ.

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. [Revelation 3:21]