

Jesus Centred Lifestyle
How to Transform Our World for Good
(How to Live Out the Golden Rule)

Matt 7:7-12

Early in the sermon Jesus has said “I did not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil them” (Matt 5:17) showing that all was spoken in the scripture concerning the future Messiah who would bring in the Kingdom of God from heaven to earth was now fulfilled in Him. Now as we come toward the end of the sermon **He sums up the way He lived this out and the way He wants His followers (us) to live** in this direct, emphatic statement (known as the golden rule): **“Therefore do to others what you would have them do to you for this sums up the law & the prophets.”** (v12) Many religions had emphasized the negative form of this but Jesus turns it around in an entirely more challenging & positive way. It is not enough not to harm your neighbour you must actively help him. It is not enough not to steal you must give generously. It is not enough not to criticize you must pro- actively appreciate others and we are to do this to everyone including our enemies and those who persecute us, i.e. we are to do it expecting nothing in return!

How on earth can we live like this consistently day in & day out? Jesus gives some practical advice in v 7-11 on how we can **continually dwell in, receive & draw from the goodness of God** in order to do good to others (as we would want them to do good to us).

1. Recognize your dependence on your Father (Your need of His goodness) (v9-11)

A daily recognition that the only way I can live a life of purity, integrity, other centred love, etc is by drawing on the great grace & mercy of God!. Grace = **the goodness of God towards my debt / disqualification**. Mercy = **the goodness of God confronting human suffering / guilt**. I taste, see & experience His goodness **as I humbly ask / seek & draw from His Word / Spirit** (Psalm 34:8; 63:3-5). When we recognize He is Our Father & the Source of all our inner satisfaction we should want to return to Him again & again.

2. Pursue God with persistence (“Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking”)(v7)

Be persistent in asking, seeking, knocking for the **‘much more’** of the Kingdom that the Father wants to give you! Not primarily asking for things but for much more **wisdom, revelation, boldness, compassion** to release God’s life to others. As this becomes our relentless pursuit all other things are taken care of (6:33). Cf Luke 11:13 with Matt 7:11 – the greatest gift of all is the Holy Spirit. Jesus is talking about a lifestyle where we ‘keep on being filled with the Spirit’ so that we can keep passing on the fruit / power of the Spirit to others. This is how He lived (Acts 10:38) – dependent, passionately pursuing the Father and doing good to others! Tozer said: ‘You can have as much of His presence as you want!’ Are you a God chaser? Is He your total pursuit? Are you pursuing Him in team with others? Are you willing to go after Him when He feels ‘outside the house’? He promises great rewards to the God chaser (Jer 29:2-13; Heb 11:6).

3. Pray / Live with assurance (because He is good! (V11)

Faith is putting our **confidence** in the goodness of God! You can be assured that you will receive, find and doors will be opened by God when you pray according to **His will, believing** that He can do it and with a **burning desire** to see His will fulfilled (cf 1 John 5:14-15 ; Jam 5:16b-18) i.e. it is conditional. When we allow God to inscribe His will on our hearts it will affect others around us for good.

Life Application Questions

How to Transform our World for Good

Matt 7:7-12

- 1. If everyone lived by the golden rule (Matt7:12) how would this effect relationships in homes, communities, nations?**

- 2. Why is it so important to continually recognize our dependence on our Father?
What is the result of daily drawing on His goodness (grace / mercy)? (Psalm 34:8 ; 63:3-5)**

- 3. God our Father wants to give us so 'much more' of His Spirit / the good things of the kingdom. What does it mean to be a God chaser?
Discuss Tozer's statement:'You can have as much of God as you want.'" Do you agree?**

- 4. If Lynne is nearby I can ASK her, if she is in another room in the house I need to SEEK her out and if she is in a flat in the block & I didn't know (which happens quite regularly!) I have to go beyond asking, seeking & knock as well! Maybe you are in a season where you are struggling to connect with God. How does Jesus invitation encourage you? What does He promise? (Jer 29:11 ; Heb 11:6)**

- 5. How do we 'keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit'? How will this transform our relationships in all spheres of life? (Eph 5:18-21 ; 22- 6:9)**

- 6. Am I confident in the goodness of God whatever my circumstances? What conditions have to be met to see God's good will being fulfilled through my life to others? (1 John 5:14-15 ; James 5:16b-18 ; 2 Chron 7:14)**