

The Commands of Yeshua ~ Part 18

In my last post, we continued our new mini-series on the character traits that Yeshua expects us to possess concerning others by exploring His command to forgive and be reconciled with others. In this post, we are going to be looking at the Golden Rule.

Concerning Others ~ Part D

"Let your light shine before people, so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

6. The Golden Rule

"Always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that sums up the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12, see also Luke 6:31)

The **Golden Rule** paraphrases Leviticus 19:18, ***"You are to love your neighbor as yourself,"*** which Yeshua called the second-greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-31).

Yeshua commands us to treat others in the same way we wish to be treated. To love our neighbor as we love yourself. Love always requires action of some kind. It goes beyond feelings and emotions and causes us to get involved in the lives of hurting people all around us. To turn a blind eye, to walk on the other side of the road, means we have done the same to Yeshua. ***"The King will say to them, 'Yes! I tell you that whenever you did these things for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did them for me!'"*** (Matthew 25:40)

This is probably one of the most universally famous commands Yeshua ever said. With this commandment the Sermon on the Mount reaches its summit. This saying of Yeshua has been called ***"the capstone of the whole discourse."*** It is the topmost peak of social ethics, and the Everest of all ethical teaching.

We are to show mercy just as Yeshua has shown it to us. We are to forgive others in the same way Yeshua forgave us. We are to love others as Yeshua has loved us. We are to go the extra mile just as Yeshua has done with us on so many occasions. Yeshua tells us, ***"For I have set you an example, so that you may do as I have done to you."*** (John 13:15). Treating others as we want to be treated is doing what Yeshua would have done for them had He been in the same situation. He cares for those He has created, and He loves each one dearly. Too many people wait for others to act kindly toward them and never get around to demonstrating kindness toward others. Don't be one of those people!

It is not difficult to find this rule in Jewish teaching in its negative form; but there is no parallel to the positive form Yeshua said.

It is possible to quote rabbinic parallels for almost everything that Yeshua spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount; but there is no real parallel to this saying. This is something which had never been said before. It is new teaching, and a new view of life and of life's obligations. It is not difficult to find many parallels to this saying in its negative form. There were two famous Jewish teachers. There was Shammai who was famous for his stern and rigid austerity and there was Hillel who was famous for his sweet graciousness. The Jews had a story like this: "A heathen came to Shammai and

said, 'I am prepared to be received as a proselyte on the condition that you teach me the whole Law while I am standing on one leg.' Shammai drove him away with a ruler he had in his hand. He went to Hillel who received him as a proselyte. He said to him, 'What is hateful to yourself, do to no other; that is the whole Law, and the rest is commentary. Go and learn.'" There is the Golden Rule in its negative form.

Rabbi Eliezer came nearer to Yeshua's way of putting it when he said, "*Let the honor of thy friend be as dear unto thee as thine own.*" The Psalmist again had the negative form when he said that only the man who does no evil to his neighbor can approach God (see Psalm 15:3).

In 1973, as Governor of California, Ronald Reagan stated:¹

With freedom goes responsibility. Sir Winston Churchill once said you can have 10,000 regulations and still not have respect for the law. We might start with the Ten Commandments. If we lived by the Golden Rule, there would be no need for other laws.

Here are a few practical Golden Rules:²

1. If you open it, close it.
2. If you turn it on, turn it off.
3. If you unlock it, lock it.
4. If you break it, fix it.
5. If you can't fix it, call in someone who can.
6. If you borrow it, return it.
7. If you use it, take care of it.
8. If you make a mess, clean it up.
9. If you move it, put it back.
10. If it belongs to somebody else and you want to use it, get permission.
11. If you don't know how to operate it, leave it alone.
12. If it doesn't concern you, don't mess with it!

Application: The next time you see a person in need and get the urge to do something about it, ***do it*** instead of just thinking about it. Put your urge into action and make a difference in Yeshua's name. Think of what you appreciate others doing for you the most, and plan this week to do that for someone else. Random acts of kindness often have more impact than you could ever imagine. Let God guide you to be a positive and encouraging influence on those around you, and watch the difference it will make in your relationship with them.

Remember always the words of Yeshua: "***If you love me, you will keep my commands.***" (Yochanan 14:15)

In my next post, we will begin a new mini-series on the character traits that Yeshua expects us to possess concerning our calling.

¹ America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations.

² 6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths.