

Is the Golden Rule Your Chosen Rule?

“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you . . .”
(Matthew 7:12, NASU).

All of us have a philosophy by which we live. We may not even be aware of it. However, if we analyze our behavior, we will soon see a way of thinking inherent in our treatment of others.

There are three general rules by which people live. I am not the first to relate them. In fact, they have been delineated by others—and those others have probably done a better job. As we compare them, realize that the *names* of the philosophies are manmade (yes, even the “Golden Rule”), but this in no way takes away from the fact that they are biblical portrayals of human attitudes and behavior.

The “Golden Rule” — *“Do unto others as you would have them do to you.”* Jesus, of course, uttered these words and lived them. This rule, if followed, would rid the world of much anguish and strife. Wars, divorces, etc., would decrease proportionately as people put this rule into practice. It is *the* best rule by which to live, but the one most difficult to follow. Each of us must make a conscious choice to make this our guiding principle in interpersonal relations. The benefits in peace of mind alone are worth the effort.

The “Silver Rule” — *“Do not unto others that which you do not want done to you.”* While this philosophy is good to a certain point, it is more of a passive quality of personality than the first. It also carries the idea of doing good to those who have done good to you first. Jesus pointed out that this was already being practiced by the religious people of the day (Matthew 5:46). Christian behavior is grounded in unconditional love—love that acts *in spite* of the recipient’s attitude rather than as a result of it (Romans 13:8).

The “Iron Rule” — *“Do unto others before they do unto you.”* This has also been paraphrased as *“might makes right.”* This philosophy is, in essence, the worldly spirit of power and aggression. It will take the practitioner to the depths of degradation of himself and others. Good will NOT come forth from it. Just as the practice of the “Golden Rule” would result in a decrease of wars and divorces, etc., this rule is the cause of these things. Pain and heartache will always be its fruit, but people continue to follow it.

A better world begins with me—and a better me begins with a conscious choice to practice the “Golden Rule” in all my relationships.

—Lance Cordle