**Gold or Platinum?**

“Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.” This is one of the timeless principles Jesus taught in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 7:12). From the early 17th century men have referred to this wonderful maxim as The Golden Rule.

In recent years, men with far too little reverence for the Deity of Christ and an inflated regard for their own intellect have dared to suggest that Jesus missed the mark. They have proposed a “new and improved” version they call The Platinum Rule: “Treat others as they want to be treated.”

There is another maxim in academia: publish or perish; I get it. I know there is a lot of money in management training and self-help books. But if these self-styled intellectuals really understood what Jesus was teaching, they would realize that their petty objections are unfounded.

**The Golden Rule is all about empathy.** Jesus’ statement is a continuation of the verse before. God does what is in our best interest, *therefore,* we must do what is in the best interest of others. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus praises those who, when they encountered folks who were hungry, thirsty, naked, lonely, sick and in prison, they fed them, clothed them, invited them in and visited them. They did for their fellow man what they would want done if they happened to be in similar circumstances. Empathy. Jesus’ version is perfect; no changes please.

**The Golden Rule is predicated on devotion to Jesus’ teachings.** Some have expressed concern that the command of Jesus could actually be harmful if the practitioner had some twisted terroristic value system. But what I want has never been the standard of acceptable behavior. A dozen verses later, Jesus stated that building our lives on His teachings gives us a foundation of bedrock. Ignoring His teaching is like building on sand and the spiritual consequences are devastating. Conform your values to His will, then treat others as you would want to be treated. Perfect.

**I should want others to do what is best for me.** A child has disobeyed his parents, but he is confident that he doesn’t want to be punished. A drug addict sincerely wants you to give him cash. “Treat others as they want to be treated” is not Platinum, it is seriously flawed. Jesus’ disciples don’t always give their children what they want, they give them what they themselves would want from their loving parents if they were still children. Christians don’t enable self-destructive behavior of drug addicts, they do their best to offer the beneficial assistance they themselves would want if they had a dependency problem. “Treat people the same way you want them to treat you” means to do what is best for them. No editing required. Perfect.

I’m all for management philosophies and communication models that can enhance business effectiveness. What I find absurd is overt criticism of divine directive. To reject a platitude of Plato would be of no consequence but one belittles the absolute truth of the King of kings and Lord of lords to his own peril. We all will one day stand before Him in judgment (Acts 17:31). I would hate to be one who had made a living teaching that His sermon on the mount just didn’t measure up.

Jesus alone has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). He has all authority (Matthew 28:18) and he doesn’t need any input from me. Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by Me.” When He tells me to treat others as I want to be treated, that’s exactly what I intend to do.

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