**To Sum It All Up**

Matthew 7:12 So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets (ESV)

Here we come to one of the most famous verses in Scripture. This verse is often known as “The Golden Rule”. A simple statement, yet deep in its truth. Treat others the way you want to be treated. We have all heard that before. It comes from this verse—it comes from Jesus’ own mouth. But not only is this simple and easy to understand statement spoken by Jesus Himself, but the second part is the part we often leave out: “this is the Law and the Prophets”. Not only is this command so easy to understand, it is the epitome of all of God’s teaching in the Bible. Everything that God laid down in the Old Testament—every law—can be summed up in this. If you do unto others as you would have them do unto you, you will naturally be living out God’s commands.

All throughout the Old Testament there is law after law for the people of Israel to follow. Not just are there laws in the Old Testament, but other prophetic words and commands of God. When we look at each individual command that God lays out in Scripture we can trace it back to the need to love our neighbor and do unto them what we would expect them to do to us. Constantly throughout the Old Testament we see story after story of God reprimanding people for failing to treat others correctly. And treating others correctly falls back on our attitude and mindset. We will treat people the way we want to be treated if we live in love.

Matthew 22:36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” **37**And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **38**This is the great and first commandment. **39**And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **40**On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (ESV)

Jesus says later on in the book of Mathew that loving God and loving people is the sum of all that is written in the Old Testament. With that being said, we can understand that the “Golden Rule” here in 7:12 is essentially teaching us the same thing as what Jesus says later on. To do to do others what you would have them do to you is to love your neighbor as yourself. That phrase means the same thing: “as yourself”. “As yourself” simply means as if it were you. We all love ourselves right? Even if you say you don’t love yourself there are lots of things you would not appreciate if someone did them to you. And Jesus says, those things that bother you, don’t do them to others.

This shows us that the Golden Rule is, in one sense, a call to let go of hypocrisy. How hypocritical and judgmental we sometimes are of others, treating them a certain way out of spite, frustration or anger, but if they, or anyone for that matter, were to treat us the same, oh how offended we would be. Oh, how God hates hypocrisy, He hates unequal measures and weights.

In reality, hypocrites are simply people that lack the love of God in their heart. Because they do not have love for others they don’t treat others the way they would want to be treated but rather how they think that person ought to be treated. To obey the Golden Rule we need God’s love in our lives.