

Matthew 7:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Analysis

Jesus articulates the Golden Rule: 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets' (Greek: πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς, 'therefore all things whatever you wish that people would do to you, thus also you do to them'). This positive formulation ('do unto others') exceeds negative versions ('don't do to others what you don't want'). It requires proactive love, not merely avoiding harm. 'This is the law and the prophets' summarizes all biblical ethics in this principle of active, empathetic love.

Historical Context

Various ancient teachers articulated negative Golden Rule - Confucius: 'What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.' Rabbi Hillel: 'What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary.' Jesus' positive formulation is more demanding - active benevolence rather than passive non-harm. This became foundational Christian ethic, summarizing love of neighbor (Leviticus 19:18) in universal, practical terms. It applies across all relationships and situations.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the positive formulation of the Golden Rule differ from merely avoiding harm?
2. What does it mean practically to treat others the way you wish to be treated?
3. How does empathy for how we wish to be treated shape ethical behavior toward others?

Interlinear Text

Πάντα	οὖν	ὅσα	ἅν	θέλητε	ἵνα	ποιεῖτε	ὑμῖν
all things	Therefore	G3745	whatsoever	ye would	that	do	to you
G3956	G3767		G302	G2309	G2443	G4160	G5213
οἱ	ἄνθρωποι	οὕτως	καὶ	ὑμεῖς	ποιεῖτε	αὐτοῖς·	οὗτος
G3588	men	so	and	ye	do	to them	this
	G444	G3779	G2532	G5210	G4160	G846	G3778
γάρ	ἐστὶν	ὁ	νόμος	καὶ	οἱ	προφῆται	
for	is	G3588	the law	and	G3588	the prophets	
G1063	G2076		G3551	G2532		G4396	

Additional Cross-References

Luke 6:31 (Parallel theme): And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Leviticus 19:18 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

1 Timothy 1:5 (Word): Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

Micah 6:8 (Parallel theme): He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Malachi 3:5 (Parallel theme): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Ezekiel 18:21 (Word): But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.