

Live the Golden Rule

do unto others
as you
would have
them
do unto you



Christopher News Notes

“DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU.” That’s the Golden Rule, and it is a familiar ethical principle in many cultures and religions. When you put the Golden Rule into practice, you not only make this a happier world by contributing to the good order of society, but you become a more attractive person yourself. People respond warmly to politeness, civility, and human warmth.

In our Christopher Leadership Course, we divide the Golden Rule into nine “Personality Rules.” If lived sincerely, each one of them will enhance your personality and make you a more positive and appealing human being.

1. Show Genuine Appreciation

“Give thanks in all circumstances: for this is the will of God.” —1 Thessalonians 5:18

Dave Thomas, the founder of the Wendy’s fast food chain, wrote, “When Grandma Minnie told me I was adopted, I felt my stomach turn. Why hadn’t anyone told me sooner?”

Thomas’ mother had died of rheumatic fever, and his late father had probably never even known of his existence. Instead of feeling sorry for himself, Thomas said, “Adoption made it possible for me to get Grandma Minnie Sinclair’s love, care, and affection. Had I not been adopted by her, I could have ended up as a ward of the state or been raised in an orphanage.”

To express his gratitude and encourage others, the successful businessman added special insurance coverage and financial assistance to employees’ benefits if they adopt a child. He also created the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, which helps find permanent homes for children in foster care.

2. Give Compliments

“Let love be genuine.” —Romans 12:9

Truthful praise brings added joy to anyone’s life. Ann Nelson told this story in *Ladies Home Journal*: “One of my closest friends is a woman who, when I first met her, intimidated me into shyness. Then one day, while we both waited to pick up our children from school, I admired her earrings and remarked that I’d always wanted to have my ears pierced but lacked the courage. Nothing to it, she assured me.

“On impulse, I asked if she would come with me for moral support. Horrified as soon as I’d blurted out the request, I sat there awaiting a polite refusal. Instead, we met at the mall the next day, first for a piece of morale-building cheesecake and

a good conversation, then to visit the earring store. We’ve been fast friends ever since.”

3. Point Out the Good in Others

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” —Matthew 5:16

Affirm the good you see in other people. When two Atlanta policemen were paralyzed in a shooting, 40,000 people attended a fundraising picnic for them. One of the wounded officers, J.J. Biello, a 15-year veteran, said, “You could actually feel the love in that park.” Among the people at the picnic were seven people that Officer Biello had put in jail. One gave him roses and said, “Do you remember me? You booked me, but you were fair. You helped straighten out my life.”

4. Follow Generous Impulses

“Live as children of light.” —Ephesians 5:8

Just as you like to be warmly accepted, look for ways to welcome those around you. A receptionist at the Diocesan center in Victoria, British Columbia is a blind nun who has come to see her blindness as a blessing. Sister Barbara Schindler received training to get along better as a blind person. In the process, she enhanced her positive attitude that responds openly to every sign of kindness. “You learn about people from the inward beauty expressed in their voice, their attitude, and their courtesies,” she said.

5. Develop Tolerance and Respect

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble.” —Romans 12:17

Sister Helen Prejean says people are more than the worst thing they have ever done. She became a friend and spiritual advisor to a young black man on death row in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. In her book *Dead Man Walking*, Sister Helen examined the process that preceded his execution.

“I don’t feel guilty for having compassion for people who are condemned to death for killing other

Christ, the Master Teacher

Christ was the Master Teacher although...
He never had a teacher’s degree...
He never attended college...
He never heard of educational methods...
Yet...

Christ was the Master Teacher because...
He used events, experiences, and the language of the people...
He knew how to love others...
He was a role model...
He shared the faith...
He prayed to His Father for help...
He gave Himself for others...
And...

You can follow in the footsteps of Christ the Great Teacher
If you live the faith...
You teach from knowledge...
You relate faith to life experiences...
You are willing to be a continual learner...
You teach with love, humility, commitment...
You sow His seeds in the hearts of others.
—Elaine Michaels, “Sowing Seeds for Christ”

people...As followers of Jesus Christ we reaffirm His way of compassion which calls us to overcome hatred with love and to forgive rather than avenge ourselves on those who harm us.”

Her opposition to the death penalty is rooted in her belief that “it dehumanizes all of us.”

6. Practice Kindness

“Just as you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to Me.” —Matthew 25:40

Elizabeth Cody Newenhuyse wrote in *Today’s Christian Woman*: “The other day, a rather shabbily dressed young woman walked by our house while I was working in the yard. I literally thought to myself, ‘Be kind.’ I smiled and said hello, and she gave me a beautiful smile in return. It just lit up

her face. It was a small but significant encounter, because it represented a victory over my old negative pattern of judging people by external appearances.

“When you’re tempted to think or act critically,” the writer continued, “stop and consciously substitute a positive response. Pay a compliment. It may seem artificial at first, but after a while, it will become a habit, and a God-honoring habit at that.”

Jan van Ruysbroeck, a medieval mystic, wrote, “Be kind, be kind, be kind, and you will soon be saints.”

7. Ease the Burdens of Others

“Bear one another’s burdens.” —Galatians 6:2

A former Director of The Christophers once shared the following thoughts on our power to make a positive difference in the world: “Maybe you can’t feed hungry millions around the globe. But you can see to it that the undernourished in your neighborhood or town get enough to eat. Maybe you can’t provide jobs for the hardcore unemployed. But you can examine your attitude toward sharing your knowledge and skill with someone who has neither.

“Maybe you can’t be a delegate at international peace talks. But you can be a peacemaker in your own family—and pray and work for peaceful communication between people of different racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds. Maybe what you do is just a drop in the bucket. But you can keep in mind that God has given you a mission in life that He has

given no other. Millions of drops can fill the bucket.”

8. Act Cheerfully

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

—Nehemiah 8:10

Seven students from New York’s Archbishop Molloy High School volunteered to visit Justine Reisman, a five-year-old with autism, twice a week for an hour or more of therapy. Using techniques developed by Barry and Samahria Kaufman of The Option Institute, the young students cheerfully accepted Justine just as she was. They made no demands and encouraged any response: a word, a smile, or a small gesture. According to Laura Reisman, Justine’s mother, their cheerful presence produced results and “prospects for the future are very good for Justine...In the healing process, the most important ingredient is to be able to sustain a loving and accepting attitude.”

9. Learn to Smile More

Katherine and Dr. William Magee are the founders of Operation Smile International. A volunteer organization, it offers surgical services to persons with cleft lips and palate deformities. The surgery improves not only their appearance, but also their ability to eat, speak, and smile. This life-giving work transforms lives by enabling patients to hope for a brighter tomorrow.

It brings to mind the poem by John Jarvis:

“Smile a little, smile a little,
Be for earth a leaven,
And perhaps you’ll give another
Just a little glimpse of heaven.”

Practicing the Golden Rule is one sure way to help make this a better world, to be a positive force for good. It is also a good way to follow the words of Jesus Christ: *“In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”*—Matthew 7:12


**“It’s better to light one candle
than to curse the darkness.”**

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