

Lifelines

© 2025 by Dr. Ed Jordan

Pastor, Gwynn's Island Baptist Church, Gwynn, VA

January 16, 2026

Topic: The Golden Rule

The Golden Rule **By Dr. Ed Jordan © 2026**

My, how America has changed. When I was in public schools growing up, America was permeated with the “Golden Rule,” which stated: “Do unto to others what you would want them to do to you.” People you encountered from time to time would remind one another of the “The Golden Rule.” You would hear it in the stores you shopped, on the playground at school, from your parents, often times it was on the wall in classrooms, and teachers would remind everyone to live by the “Golden Rule.” It was a part of American daily culture, in the days when communities were filled with friendships, instead of hatred. The theme would surface in television shows like “Leave it to Beaver.” Even adults tried to work through problems with others, by treating the other person as they themselves would like to be treated by the other person.

Today I read Jesus statement expressing The Golden Rule in Matthew 7:12 (NASB95): “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Treat other people the way you want to be treated, model good behavior and character traits for others to encourage them to emulate honorable behavior, and model civil obedience to the laws of our country. What a novel idea! This does not eliminate criminals, but it does strengthen society.

Jesus had lots of good advice which He gave to us develop wise lifestyles and build healthy families and communities. If you want to harvest figs, you need to plant and cultivate fig trees. If you want to harvest apples, you must plant apple trees, or harvest them from another source of apple trees. In Luke 6:44 Jesus said: “For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.”

By their fruit you can identify the nature of the “tree” or human. Paul warns people in Galatians 6:7: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows (plants), this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit, shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

If you plant hatred, you will reap hatred; if your plant violence, you will have a harvest of violence. If you plant love, you will reap love. If you plant treating others well, others will treat you well. Love produces love, hatred produces hatred and bitterness. Obeying the laws creates a state of others obeying the law. Disregarding the laws brings chaos and punishment. It is not brain science, but it does require a brain, and using it.

Over the years, I have seen the Golden Rule change attitudes on both sides in relationships. But even when it doesn't change the other person who is being hateful, malicious, or destructive, it can help you remain calm and at peace within yourself. They can't change you unless you allow them to change you.

Think of someone who irritates you. Plan some ways that you can model to them the way you would like them to relate to you. Maybe they have never realized that treating others with love is kind of a neat experience. Model to them, and for them, the way you would like them to treat you in practical ways. It may impact them, it may not. But it will impact you! Do to others what you would

want them to do to you. Wouldn't it be nice to see more demonstrations of the Golden Rule in our neighborhoods?

The ball is always in our court. Jesus didn't say, "Make other people treat you right!" We really can't do that; they must choose to do it. But we can give them the idea or give them a living example of treating others honorably and with respect. We can model the "good life" for them, and pray that they will embrace living the "good life" as well.

Award-winning columnist Dr. Ed Jordan is pastor of Gwynn's Island Baptist Church, Gwynn, VA. He can be reached at szent.edward@gmail.com. Dr. Jordan's new book: "Doing Love! It can change your life!" can be purchased on Barnes&Noble.com or Amazon.com.