



## **The Sermon on the Mount Golden Rule and Narrow Gate**

### **Matthew 7:12 - The Golden Rule**

1. Take a minute to read v12 in a couple of different translations below. What are some of the differences that you notice between them? Which one resonates the most with you?

12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (NIV)

12 “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (NASB)

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

12 “Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them. Add up God’s Law and Prophets and this is what you get. (MSG)

2. A quick story ... many years ago while spending some time on the beach as a family, Nolan accidentally threw some sand at Mia while digging into the sand building a structure. Renee saw what was unfolding and told Nolan to be more careful, however; Mia upsetted by having sand thrown in her face, responded by grabbing a handful of sand and throwing it back at Nolan’s face. Renee shouted “Mia, don’t throw sand at Nolan!” and she quickly responded with, “but Mom, it’s the golden rule!!” While we were happy that she remembered a prior discussion that we had around the golden rule, it lacked a critical understanding of what Jesus was saying here.

a. How have we seen this verse misrepresented in our life?

b. Can you think of other “non-responses” (not reacting) that could apply for this in your life?

c. What spiritual gifts or disciplines do you see played out in the golden rule?

d. What areas do you see in your life (family, work, church, friends) that make living this way difficult?

3. There was a popular book that came out a couple of years back on “love languages” (5 Love Languages, Gary Chapman) that discusses the idea that not all people want to give and receive love in the same ways. It specifically notes five different expressions: acts of service, quality time, words of affirmation, physical touch, and receiving gifts

a. How might “love languages” provide a deeper consideration for the golden rule?

b. What challenges or difficulties have you experienced (or are experiencing) in loving others in your life? What are some of the things that help you when this is hard?

### **Matthew 7:13-14 - Narrow gate**

1. Take a minute to read v13-14 in a couple of different translations below. What are some of the differences that you notice between them? Which one resonates the most with you?

13 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (NIV)

13 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (NASB)

13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (ESV)

13-14 “Don’t look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don’t fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires total attention. (MSG)

2. Thinking both with spiritual aspects (and beyond), what are some “wide gate” (quick fixes) that we see in our culture? What are the “wide gates” that you find yourself getting stuck “going through”? What are some things that help you handle the tough choices?

3. What qualities and traits come about when we “do the hard work”?

4. What are some of the disciplines (spiritual or otherwise) that you find easy to do in your life? What are some of the harder ones?

5. Why do you think that “few people find it”? What do you think that says about us as people or us as a culture?

*Prepared by Jon Kovalik*