

“Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”

(Mt 7:12)

Have you ever experienced a thirst for something infinite? Have you ever felt in your heart a consuming desire to embrace immensity itself?

Or perhaps, deep down, you've felt dissatisfied with what you do, with who you are. You'll be happy to know that there is a formula for achieving the fullness you long for, a way of life that won't leave you regretting how you spent your day.

One Gospel phrase in particular makes us stop and think. As we grasp something of its meaning, it fills us with joy. It captures everything we should do in life and sums up the laws that God has inscribed in the depths of every human heart. Listen:

“Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”

This is the “golden rule” that Christ brought, although it was already widely known. For example, the Hebrew Scriptures include it, and Seneca, the ancient Roman author and philosopher, also knew of it. In Asia the Chinese thinker Confucius taught it. This shows how close it is to God's heart, how he wants all people to make it the basic rule of their lives.

The passage forms a neat turn of phrase—it sounds like a motto:

“Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”

Let's love each neighbor like this, every neighbor we meet during the day.

Let's imagine we are in others' circumstances and treat them as we would want to be treated if we were in their place.

The voice of God from within will suggest how to express love appropriately in each situation.

Are they hungry? Let's say to ourselves, "I am hungry," and give them something to eat.

Are they being treated unjustly? So am I.

Are they in darkness and doubt? I am, too. Let us speak words of comfort and share their suffering, not resting until they find the light and experience relief. This is how we would want to be treated.

Do they have a disability? I want to love them to the point of almost feeling their infirmity in my own body and heart. Love will suggest a way for me to help them feel no different from others and, indeed, that they have received an added blessing, because as Christians we know the value of suffering.

And let's continue to love everyone, not drawing any distinctions between those we find pleasant and those we do not, between young and old, friend or enemy, fellow citizen or foreigner, beautiful or not. The Gospel includes everyone.

I can almost hear the murmurings, and I understand. Perhaps my words seem simplistic, but what a change they demand! How distant they are from our usual ways of thinking and acting!

Take courage; let's try it!

A day spent like this is worth a lifetime. In the evening we won't even recognize ourselves. A joy never felt before will fill our hearts, and we will experience new strength. God will be with us, since God stands by those who love.

Fulfilled days will follow, one after another.

From time to time we may slow down, be tempted to get discouraged or want to stop. We may want to go back to the way we lived before ...

Instead, no! Take courage! God's grace is there for us.

Let's always begin again.

By persevering, we will see the world around us slowly change.

We will understand that the Gospel makes life more interesting. It lights up the world, gives flavor to our existence and contains a principle for resolving all our problems.

We will not be satisfied until we have communicated our extraordinary experience to others: to those friends we feel will understand, to our relatives, to anyone with whom we feel the urge to share it.

Hope will be born yet again.

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