

Matthew 7:12

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.

Matthew 7:12 KJV

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

Matthew 7:12 NIV

"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:12 NLT

I opened my Bible app last night and this was the verse for the day. It struck me different than I have thought of it before. It is not that I was thinking of it wrong, just I had mostly thought of it in the context of retaliation, rather than doing good and good works. Although I understood what the last part of the verse was meaning, I thought these other translations clarified the message a little better than the King James Version.

I would like to be more like that and do good and kind things for others because I appreciate it when others care for me. It reminds me of the times when my wife or children have brought me a drink on a hot day, or made a smoothie for me to enjoy. Not because they had to, but they were attentive to my needs. Oh to be more like that. Imagine what it would be like in a congregation if everyone was that way! Building each other up in word and deed; not because they had to, but because they wanted to.

Is this something we teach our children? I know some families naturally are more tended that way, so it must be partially in the teaching of the home. However, it is one of the Christian attributes. Or we could say, like the verse says, the whole of the Christian faith. It was the essence taught in the Old Testament law.

That being said, it should be something we put into practice. It is something that gets rusty with disuse and becomes more and more difficult.

Today we live in a self-centered world. By in large, people look out for themselves first. That is not entirely wrong, we are to take care of what God has entrusted to us, but life is more than that. A true Christian lives his or her life for God and others. When this teaching is lacking in people, one begins to look at the content of their heart. What is causing them to not do good to others? What is causing them to be self-centered?

It may help us see the context of what Jesus was saying if we read the preceding verses. There He was talking about the Father giving good gifts to us. He has given us more than we deserve.

We could spin a lot of thoughts off of this verse, but maybe the best is to let it soak and settle into our hearts; asking ourselves what we can do for someone else today, not because we have to, but because we love them, and want to see them smile.