

## What it doesn't say

Many people read this verse and understand something else, not what it really says. They think, "**As people treat me**, so I will treat them. If they treat me poorly, that's how I will treat them. But this verse does not give permission to mistreat others because they mistreat you (see **Rom. 12: 17-21**).

**1John 4:7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. God has the foundation of love. Those who are saved are 100% people who have taken love as the basis of their being, their character, their way of living and their way of treating others. **What we have to conclude is that sincerity and faith in the gospel of a loving God has to seriously affect a person's behavior**, if that person wants to be saved. Salvation is not, "I am saved, but I am going to stay the sinner I always was." To be saved, one rejects sin and sin in their own life. That is how being saved starts off. **The link between a character change and faith is so intense that failing to follow the pattern of love God gives us is denying the reality of faith within yourself.** For this, John can declare boldly, "If you don't love, you are not born again, and you don't even really know God"

**1John 3:18** My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; **but in deed and in truth.** **19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth,** and shall assure our hearts before him. The reality of our love has to be strong in our lives, or we are hypocrites and without Christ. Furthermore, this living, vibrant love within us is what gives us the assurance of our salvation. We are not saved by the work of love, but true salvation births us anew into a creature given over to love. Where that is not the case, the person is very ignorant of the basics of salvation, or just is not saved. Love is a fair sign of true salvation.

## God analyzes your treatment of others

**Matt 25:31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **32... and he shall separate them one from another,** as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: **33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. **34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:... **37** Then shall the right-

eous answer him, saying, **Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee?** or thirsty, and gave thee drink?... **40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, **Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.** **41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, **Depart from me, ye cursed...** **42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink...: **44** Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, **when saw we thee** an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? **45** Then shall he answer them, saying, **Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.** **46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

There is a positive and a negative side to this teaching. First, the positive is that it **must give us confidence when there is good conduct towards others in our life.** God is pleased when he sees this conduct in the lives and practices of his children. On the negative side, **the failure to do good works towards the brethren of Christ is the same as not being saved.** Caring, service, and love for them is where one sees the real evidence of saving faith in oneself.

Again we must strongly stress, good works does not procure salvation for anybody, but good works of love is a fair sign reinforcing a person is saved, i.e. when he has repented of sin and accepted Christ as his Savior, these good works are good signs that the person really is saved. It is a sign of salvation, not a means of salvation.

## The First and Second Commandments

**Matt 22:36** Master, which is the great commandment in the law? **37** Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.** **38** This is the first and great commandment. **39** And the second is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** **40** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

There are priorities in what God wants from us. These two points are the most important. Both are based on the love of God existing in a current form within our own character. **It is not cor-**

**rect pretending to love,** there must be sincerity, because God sees this as fraud as much as the pure rejection of love.

So our practicing of sincere love is a very important point in our life. Paul said, **1 Corinthians 13:1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and **! have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal** (a lot of worthless noise). Although we supposedly do great spiritual works for God, if we do not have this **spiritual basis of living love in our lives,** we are spiritually hollow, and of all that we achieve for God, **if we do not have love then God discards entirely everything we do as of no value.** We have done nothing for God.

**Love for brethren is love for God.** If we compare Matthew 25:31-46 with Mat 22:36-40, we see that God sees our love for the brethren as if he were currently going to God himself. Would you argue with God? Would you be mad at Him? Would you be verbally aggressive against God? "You would not. Well if you do it to one of your brethren, so God takes it as you would actually do that against Christ.

## Settle with the brethren before pretending to be spiritual

**Matt 5:23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there **rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;** **24** Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first be reconciled to thy brother,** and then come and offer thy gift. **25** Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Jesus made it a priority that we always carry our relationships with other Christians "cleanly." By this, I mean, there is no bad blood between two brethren. Read it well. If **a brother has something against you,** then it is your responsibility to fix this, or your worship and relationship with God becomes void. If you offend him, not if he offends you. You need to evaluate the impact of your actions on others, and prevent or fix any offenses.

## Compassion for others

**Eph 4:32** And **be ye kind one to another,** tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Our attitude should always be to do good to others, because God has done this to us first. The **love for one's own self** is a serious character problem according to the Bible. **To break this, we need to learn to "take ourselves out of considerations in the first place" in our thinking.** Selfless, dedicated, sacrificial service is what should mark every Christian's life. We have to see what impact we have on others, thinking of them first before ourselves. **We take away our selfishness when we give up our rights and privileges to serve and love others.** We communicate the essence of God to them through our actions, and this makes witnessing to them much easier. True love is when you sacrifice yours to see the well-being of others.

### Humility as a Base

**Colossians 3:12** *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*** **13** *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

Basically, God listens to the complaints of one person against another. If we do not want to be harshly judged because of other's complaints against us, we need to be extremely sensitive and responsive that we do not offend others. Treat all with love is the answer. To "put on" the character of humble, meekness, patience, etc. is to behave like Christ, and to be a blessing to others, fulfilling our purpose here on earth.

**Philippians 2:3** *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

The solution to a lot of problems is to just take our own selfishness out of the picture, and accept and practice others are better than us, and humbly serve others. On this foundation, the motive and practice of glory for oneself is removed.

### Kindness and Kindness

According to **Colossians 3:12-13** (above), we must demonstrate kindness towards others. The idea is to do good deeds towards others and also be kind, have courtesy and show high respect to others. This is independent and without consideration of how they treat us, we treat them as God wants everybody to treat each other.

### Never return evil for evil

**Romans 12:17** *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.* **18** *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.* **19** *Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves,** but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* **20** *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.* **21** ***Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.***

We must understand that evil and sin are our enemies, and not people. If we practice returning what people do to you we have fallen into an evil practice ourselves. Let's "win" by doing well to everyone.

### A Spiritual Shortcut

The golden rule, like the two commandments of we saw above, are spiritual shortcuts. **These two rules are simply easier than endless rules for each type and particular of behavior.** If you follow these shortcuts, you already have a very clear how-to in how to conduct yourself.

### Conclusion

The principle here is, first, to decide how you want others (including God) to treat you. This must be the same as how God wants us to treat each other. If you want evil (sadism) then you want God to treat you the same. Of course you do not want that from God. We want others and God to treat us well. So this is how you should equally treat others.

## The Golden rule

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**Matt 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.***

Our relationships with other people are a serious problem in almost everyone's life. We have quarrels and contentions and bad relationships with others, and this is the "very fabric" of life. The problem with all of this is that **God sees the reality of your faith through the changes made in you,** and these changes are more important in terms of your relationships with others in this life, especially with your brethren in Christ. Furthermore, **God's purpose for us is to minister to God, to be a blessing to others.** That is why salvation is a moral change, a real change. Because of this, we must be proactive in doing good to others, not reacting to how they treat us. Read the context: Luke 6: 27-36