LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 7 (Part 4) :12-14 - The Golden Rule

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7. We are continuing in our study here in the scripture, the Sermon on the Mount. We're getting close to ending this, but then of course we'll just move on in chapter 8 once we do. But we're in verse 12, Matthew 7 and verse 12.

We're going to take about three verses here today and see what the Lord has for us. Begin reading with me. It says, So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. For this sums up the law and the prophets. Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction.

And many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it. That's where we're going to stop. Let's pray. Open our hearts, Holy Spirit, to your word and speak to us.

Guide us and direct us in wisdom for we ask it in the name of Christ our Savior. Amen. You guys probably recognize this first verse that we're looking at here this morning here in verse 12 as the golden rule. It's something that a lot of people, even those who don't read the Bible or don't go to church or even frankly care about God, would recognize, you know, the golden rule. You know, do to others what you would have them do to you.

What you might not know about the golden rule is that it had really been around a long time before Jesus first gave it here in the Sermon on the Mount. In fact, I don't know if you're aware of it, but most cultures who have a written record of sayings and proverbs and stuff include some variation of the golden rule. In fact, it was Confucius, not that I, you know, exalt his stuff at all, but he is credited with having said, do not do to others what you do not wish done to yourself. And there was a Jewish rabbi about 10 years before Jesus made this statement here in the Sermon on the Mount who made a similar statement. He was, in fact, asked to sum up the law.

In fact, a Gentile challenged him and said, can you give me a quick summary statement of the law? Which you can imagine, that's a pretty challenging thing to do. But Rabbi Hillel, very, very famous rabbi

said, what is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else. Isn't that interesting? And he basically gave that as a summary statement of the entire Old Testament law.

What appears to be unique about the way Jesus gave this statement is he's the only one who did it in the positive tense. Every other reference is in the negative tense. Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you. That's a negative. We call it a negative tense.

Jesus said, do to others what you would have them do to you. Now, maybe you hear that today and you're kind of thinking, well, what's the difference? Aren't you kind of dancing on the head of a pin here? Not really. In fact, when you give it in the positive tense, you'll notice that it really expands the rule greatly.

If I had a son and I said to him, hey, when you go to school, son, you're bigger than a lot of the kids, and I want you to do something for me. When you go to school today, I don't want you to hurt anyone. Do not hurt anyone when you go to school today. Now, I can say that, and that might even be a legitimate thing to say as a father to a son. Do not hurt anyone.

But I want you to notice how that becomes much larger if I were to say to him, son, when you go to school today, I want you to do good to everyone you come in contact with. Wow, isn't that huge? I mean, didn't that just expand? It's one thing. If you tell somebody to not do something, basically they just have to do nothing to fulfill that command.

I mean, he could sit home. You could sit home and look at the ceiling and not do something. But when you tell somebody to do something, now you're telling them to take an active, purposeful role in it. And that is what Jesus is giving us here in the golden rule when he says, do to others what you would have them do to you. It's an action thing.

It's a purposeful, you got to step out and do it. Right? You see the difference between just telling somebody don't do that or telling someone do this? It puts it in a whole different sort of perspective. Jesus is again telling us to go and do to others.

And that's a challenge, isn't it? I got to thinking what life would be like if we actually did it. This is one of those interesting Bible verses. I mean, just imagine if we actually did it. Wow.

I mean, the world would be utopia. If we did it here at Calvary Chapel, it'd be a pretty cool church. If we even did it for a day, 24 hours, wouldn't that be amazing if all of us could absolutely without fail for a

24 hour period, be a grand day. We'd be talking about it for years that we would do to others exactly as we would have them do to us. You stop to think what would it be like?

Well, for one thing, we would always be there for other people. Always. We would never be uncaring in anything we said or did. We would never be cruel to anyone else. We would always think the best of others because we always think the best of ourselves.

We would be fiercely loyal. We wouldn't forget about or drop away from people's lives. We would be incredibly patient. We would be always forgiving and we would be lavishly generous. If we really, truly treated other people the way we ourselves want to be treated or the way we actually treat ourselves, suffice it to say, it would be an amazing place to live.

Never been there myself. Kind of like to go there, but it's a desire of people and it has been for a long time. Those of you who are old enough to remember the 1960s, and there's a few of us here still left, but back in the 1960s when the protest songs were big on the radio protesting the Vietnamese war, there was kind of another flip side of that protest movement and it was the love movement, you know? So you had make love not war, something like that. Yeah.

Anyway, all these songs came out on the radio, some of you guys might remember the old Jackie DeShannon song, what the world needs now is love, sweet love. You guys remember that? Some of you are going, what? Yeah, it was the 1960s. Leave me alone.

I was there. I don't want to talk about it. But that was what a lot of songs were like back in those days because there was this movement, there was this passion among the people, particularly the United States, we need more love. And I remember in the 1970s, one of a songwriter that I really admired back then, I'm not going to give his name, but anyway, he wrote a song called love is the answer. And anyway, and you know, I got to thinking about that.

I thought about the Jackie DeShannon song, what the world needs now is love, sweet love, and love is the answer. And all the myriad of songs that came out during that period of time telling us we need love, we need love, we need love. I got to thinking, you know what? They're not wrong, really. There really wasn't anything wrong with their message.

Now, their method was in error, but their message was good. The message of the world was we need more love. But you see, the problem with their method was they didn't consider two very important parts of that equation. One of them is we've got this stupid, sinful nature living within us that actually keeps us from being able to do it the way we would otherwise want to. And the other thing that the world, of

course, always factors out of the situation is God and his ability to enable us to love the way we're really supposed to love.

And so for the world, it became this message of the 60s and maybe the early 70s that everybody listened to and thought was great. And we all got behind it for a while and we're like, yeah, the world needs love. And then we didn't see it happening. And so we just kind of backed away. And we kind of went on to some other issues, you know, it's like, well, okay, guess we're not going anywhere with that one.

So we'll just kind of get on some other bandwagon for a while. And the reason that the train never left the station. It's because we are saddled with a sinful nature, and I would love, I mean, I would love to be able to love, I would love to be able to treat other people the way I want to be treated. I really would love to do that, but I have this, I'm so selfish. I'm so self-centered, and frankly, I don't mean to insult you, but you are too.

And we have this selfish ambition, and we can do it for a little while, maybe a minute or two, and then these things just kind of come over us. Our flesh just comes over us, and we want to live for ourselves, and we want to please ourselves and so forth, and we stop living to please other people. And we frankly have made the same mistake with the golden rule that the people in the 1960s made with the mantra of what the world needs now is love, sweet love, and that is, you know, we can go around quoting the golden rule all day long. You can quote the golden rule until you're blue in the face. It isn't going to make you any closer to being able to do it.

Here's the point, here's the point, in case I haven't made it yet. Anybody who is going around loving others as they want to be loved, treating others the way they want to be treated, that person is an individual who is doing that in the power of the Holy Spirit, because it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can love others the way they want to be loved, treat others the way that we would want to be treated ourselves. That's the only way it's going to happen. And what that tells us here, in no uncertain terms, is that what Jesus is saying to us here in the Sermon on the Mount is for believers. It's not for unbelievers.

This was never a message for the world. Go out and do to others the way you want them to do to you. I mean, it's a great and aspiring goal, but it isn't going to happen. It isn't going to happen apart from God, apart from Him working in our lives, and so forth. So we need the Holy Spirit living in our lives.

Once we have the Holy Spirit, guess what? Then I can do it. Then you can do it. So can we love other people? Can we treat other people the way we want to?

I got all mixed up. Can we love and treat other people the way we want to be loved and treated? The answer is yes. The question then is how? And the answer to that is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I'm going to go to 1 Thessalonians. Let me show you a passage. Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica. Look what he said. Now, about brotherly love, we do not need to write to you guys, he says.

Why? Look at this. For you yourselves have been taught by God how to love and to love each other. He says, in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. It's proven by the way they were living.

And then he says this, yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more. There's two things I want to bring out about this passage that I think is really important. Number one, Paul acknowledges that for people to really truly love, to treat other people the way they themselves would want to be treated is a work of God, through God, in our hearts where we are taught by God to do it. That's the first thing Paul acknowledges. If this is going to happen in your life, it's going to be the work of the Holy Spirit teaching you, empowering you, enabling you to be able to live that kind of love, to show that kind of attention, that kind of care and concern for other people, you know.

First of all, it's going to be the work of the Holy Spirit. But second of all, I want you to notice what he says at the very end of that passage. He says, yet we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more. And what that also tells us is that Paul is acknowledging the presence of that sinful nature which is always there and ready to erode that work of God in our lives to enable us to love people and to care about them the way we ourselves want to be cared for. Here's the point.

Can we now do it? Can we now love and care for people in a way that is in keeping with the golden rule, like we ourselves want to be loved and cared for? The answer is yes. Can we do it perfectly? No.

So we are encouraged to do it more and more. We're encouraged to walk in it more and more. And I like the fact that Paul just doesn't leave it there with, gee, I'm really glad you guys are loving, but let's keep it up. We always have to remember that that work of sin is always just waiting to choke out the work of God in our lives. But there's another interesting statement that is made by our Lord here.

In this passage concerning this call to treat others the way we want to be treated, it comes at the end of verse 12. Would you look with me in your Bible? At the end, the very last part of verse 12, Paul says, this

is Jesus speaking, for this sums up the law and the prophets. Isn't that amazing? He says that to follow the golden rule, to really truly follow it, sums up the law and the prophets.

It's a summary statement of all the law and the prophets. Man, wouldn't that reduce the size of your Bible? If the law and the prophets were basically not there, but instead was just the golden rule. Well, why are the law and the prophets there? Because we can't keep the golden rule perfectly, but it is a summary statement, and what it basically says is, if you and I loved and treated other people the way we want to be loved and treated, there wouldn't be the need for all these rules, all these rules of conduct, all these little things about, don't do this, don't do that.

Don't hit your brother that way. Don't treat him. Don't say that word to her. And we, you know, we do that as parents, don't we? We're constantly giving rules to our kids about what they can say, what they can't say, what they can do, what they can't, you can't do, and we have to make all these rules.

Why? Because the sinful nature is constantly asserting itself, and we feel like we have to kind of always keep putting up rules for the kids. Isn't it great if our kids just kept the rule? They just kept the rule? Treat your brother like you want to be treated.

You wouldn't have to say anything else. You'd never have to, like, parent from that point on. But that's just not reality, is it? That's why Paul said to the Thessalonians, hey, you guys are starting to walk in this, and we can see this, and this is great, you're loving your brothers, but don't rest on your laurels, keep moving, keep going, do it more and more. Sums up the law and the prophets.

Now in verse 13, Jesus goes on, look with me, to say, enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate, your Bible may have a different word there, but the Greek actually does mean small, is the gate, and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Well, what's this all about? This is an interesting couple of verses. Well, Jesus is telling us in these verses that there is a path or a road, depending on whatever, that leads to life, and there is a path or a road that leads to destruction.

But where they lead isn't the only difference between them. You'll notice that they have one other very differing, in fact, opposite characteristic. One of them is wide, and that means it's easy to get onto, it's easy to find, and it's easy to walk down. The other one is narrow and very hard to find or to go down. So there's a different characteristic, and they lead in two completely different directions.

So this idea of the narrow gate, notice that Jesus says, he tells us to enter through the narrow gate. Well, this narrow gate, I got to thinking about the narrow gate, and I got to thinking how much it actually

defines our Christianity in so many ways, but I want to bring up three different ways this morning and the rest of our time that I'm going to give you here of how the narrow gate defines kind of who and what we are as believers. I'll put these on the screen for you so you can see them. First of all, the narrow gate defines our faith, and we're going to talk about how that happens, but it also defines our lifestyle, and that means how we live, how you and I live on a daily basis. And then thirdly, the narrow gate defines Jesus himself, and we'll talk about that here in just a second.

But let's do the first one, how it defines our faith. And when I'm saying how it defines our faith, what I mean is the faith that is ours through Christ is a narrow faith, and I want to show you why or why it is specifically defined that way. It's best expressed through a wonderful passage in Ephesians, one of my favorite, chapter 2, verses 8 and 9, for it is by grace you've been saved, and this, Paul writes, not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. And this is why our faith is narrow it is a faith that does not come by doing good being a good person it's a faith that comes as a free gift of God now you and I are used to hearing that all the time do you know that that's what sets us apart from other world religions you know people once in a while will ask about all the different world religions you know what about all the other world religions you know how do you guys know that Christianity is the true one you know you got all these other world religions going on and stuff like that you know you know it's interesting about all those world religions as opposed to Christianity every single one of them promises something for something in other words you have to you have to attain you have to be good enough and whether it's going around and knocking on people's doors and handing out leaflets or whether it's just being a good person and that's of course far and away the biggest explanation from people how do you get to heaven just go out and ask a stranger just go out and ask somebody who doesn't really read the Bible or know God just ask him hey you know do you think there's a heaven if they say yeah I think maybe there's a heaven then ask him this question how do you get there are you going you know what they're gonna say to you they're gonna say well I hope so you say well what's your hope based on well I hope I've lived a good enough life right doesn't that sound familiar you know what that is that's salvation by works that's salvation by being good enough do you know that's not what Christianity teaches but you know that's what every other world religion teaches essentially that you by your effort by your good works by your deeds you got to measure up you got to be good enough Christianity doesn't and that's what sets us apart and you know what else it's what makes us narrow narrow from the standpoint that there's an interesting thing that's tacked on to the end of this verse did you notice the last few words it says so that no one can boast in other words Christianity takes boasting out of your ability nobody can stand as a Christian say I'm going to heaven because I'm good can't do that you can't say I'm going to heaven because I have lived a good life I haven't lived a good life in fact to become a Christian I have to confess that I haven't lived a good life

and I have to further confess there's nothing I could do about it nothing and then I come to God and I go would you help me and he says yes if you will accept on your behalf what my son Jesus did for you on the cross you will be saved and then I say then what do I got to do is nothing that's that's it what yeah you just accept it well now there's got to be something I got to do I mean tell me what I got to do what I got to do I got to memorize some like half the Bible or what do I got to do tell me what I got to do listen no it is not from yourselves Paul writes it is not something you can do you can't be saved by yourself that's what sets Christianity apart that's why it's narrow it is the narrow door because you know what there are people in this world and they are the majority who will not put up with Christianity because it takes away from them the right to boast and pride demands that they boast look what I've done look what I've earned and that whole self-made man nonsense look what I've done look what I've earned for myself and some people they're just incensed at the idea that God's going to you know just refuses to accept them the way they are they don't like that idea they hate that idea and we tell people you know what they say well why doesn't God just accept me the way I am because you're a sinner he can't abide sin well that makes me mad I that hurts my feelings I don't think I like your God he refuses to accept me as I am right and then they get all just well I don't want anything to do with this if your God can't accept me as I am remember the remember Jesus told that story about the wedding banquet that a king was having for his son and he invited a bunch of people and they made all kinds of excuses about why they couldn't come and then he told his servants to go out and to invite the rabble and they did and it says the wedding hall was filled and they were celebrating but it says that there but as each person came to the wedding banquet to the celebration they were given wedding clothes to wear and there was one man who refused to put on wedding clothes he insisted that he appear before the king and in the presence of all these people in his own garb and the king came to the man he said how did you get in here without wedding clothes and it says that he turned to his servants and said tie the man hand and foot and throw him out that man is the majority of the people who look at Christianity and they say no stinking way am I going to submit to a belief system that says God won't accept me as I am he's just gonna have to well okay but you're not gonna like the result see Christianity teaches us that we need to come to terms with who we are confess it before God and that he will then forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness but you know what where's the boasting in that what are you gonna boast in you know I bet I'm a bigger sinner than you are I mean is that what we're gonna boast in I bet God forgave me for more junk than you that's dumb there's nothing that's nothing to boast in you know boasting is removed isn't it that's why it's narrow that's why it's small that's why people don't want to go there it assaults their pride and get their feelings hurt yeah next we want to look at how the narrow gate defines our lifestyle basically what I'm talking about is how we live let's just read the verses again verses 13 and 14 remember Jesus said enter through the narrow gate for wide is the gate and

broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through that way but small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find that okay now we come to this narrow gate and we realize that now that once we're saved how does it affect our lifestyle how does it affect how we're living today well let me put up a passage another passage from a little bit later on in Matthew Jesus says in Matthew chapter 16 if anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever wants to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for me will find it and and and this kind of defines the way we live our lives in Christ it's the life that we live it's the narrow way and it runs completely contrary to the world in which we live because the life that we live as a Christian is a life of self-denial I'll tell you why in a second but the life that the world lives is what that's treating yourself you deserve it right after all is not what the world tells us you deserve it you deserve a little pampering and they'll tell us we deserve everything from a vacation cruise to a piece of chocolate whatever they happen to be selling at the time but why should you buy their product and indulge in it because you deserve it and boy did we believe that message and it runs contrary to who and what we are as Christians in our walk with Jesus because our life in Christ is not about indulging the flesh it's about resisting those things and denying the flash but why why is that Jesus wants us to live this life of asceticism and I mean am I supposed to get a whip and beat myself and lay on concrete at night when I sleep because that's good for you you know you don't want to be comfortable and no no no no no you know why Jesus tells us to deny ourselves why as a believer were called to self-denial because he knows something that you and Forget sometimes you can't serve two masters, and if you're living a life of treating yourself then self is master And you're not going to serve Jesus that way Right you can't serve two masters So either it's you or him and so Jesus says if there's a true genuine work going on in your life Of my spirit then you're gonna see that Emphasized in this narrow particular way that you're living and what that way is is living that life of self-denial You're and that doesn't mean again that we're weird about it And we go live a monk lifestyle on a on a hill somewhere, and we don't have telephones It's talking about just simply not living to please Self it's not living putting myself as the goal of I just want to be happy You hear that mantra in the world all the time I mean and even among Christians I have Christians come to me and say pastor Paul. I just want to be happy You know what that's the world talking Jesus never promised us that we were gonna be happy.

He said we'd be full of joy and We'd be constantly in trouble if we're living for him, but Happiness That's such a fleeting thing anyway. It goes up and down and you know with what happens to be going on in your day God wants to do a lasting fulfilling joy in your life that nothing no circumstances can take away But mere happiness that's not the goal Because happiness is something people talk about who are living lives for themselves I Am looking for a way, that's what the person that wants to be happy does I'm looking for a way every day to please myself to make myself happy To make life a little more bearable

You know because I just want to be happy There's so much more to life than being happy So Our our life in Christ is narrow in that we're not doing what the rest of the world's doing they're living to please self And we're living to please him That's why he's asking you and I to deny Self so that we can give to him But I want to live for you. You know I want to live my life for you I want to live to please you and he already says to you, and I when we say that he says well But I got news for you. You can't please yourself at the same time You can't live to please yourself if you really truly want to live to please me Those two are incompatible Well, do you think that's going to be a popular thing in the among the world you think you think people are gonna? Go yeah sign me up for that one No, not at all so it's gonna be a very narrow sort of an expression or definition And finally we're gonna look at how the narrow gate defines Jesus himself, and this is of course pretty easy just because Jesus is the narrow gate I Mean that that does make it a lot easier, and it's probably expressed best in John chapter 14 verse 6 where Jesus said I am the way and the truth and the life and No one else is the way and no one else is the way comes to the Father except through me Did you see what Jesus just said?

Did you get it? Did you get the message? Do you know that the religious world? Hates this verse Yeah, the religious world the spiritual world hates this verse because it's so Exclusive oh you Christians you guys think that if you don't we don't accept your precious Jesus nobody's gonna be going to heaven Hey listen, I didn't say it. He did And what he said was I am NOT a way I am the way I Am NOT a truth I am the truth And I am NOT a way of life.

I am the way to life and Listen if you haven't picked up what I've said up to this point. Let me say it clearer. No man comes to the Father except through me Jesus says That's it. Oh The world hates that You guys are so narrow Yeah, okay It's because Jesus really didn't leave us remember at the very beginning of this we talked about the two paths There's only two paths one to life one to destruction. What are you gonna do?

Oh, but I would rather choose to believe that all paths lead to God That's just such a comforting thing to say isn't it all paths lead to God doesn't matter doesn't matter whether you're going after Buddha, you know, or You know Allah or doesn't matter what you call God doesn't matter what church you go to doesn't matter if you even go to church You're just seeking to be a good person. You want to know more about you know, the the Spiritual realities of the universe it all ends up in the same place Not according to Jesus He says I'm the only way I'm the only path and by that definition it is narrow and What did Jesus say about the narrow path? Few find it Very few find it What does he say about that other path that says all paths lead to God when it really doesn't he said? Oh, that's an easy way to go. Anybody can go that way That's simple just sit on your hands and do nothing or believe a bunch of nonsense and you'll head down

that direction So I suppose the next time somebody comes up to you and says you Christians you're so narrow you can say well Yeah, we kind of are I guess at least as it defines our faith because there's no boasting and that's something you're not gonna like and As it defines our lifestyle We're called to live our lives for Jesus not for self and that pretty much goes against the crowd So that's a narrow thing.

And then lastly, yeah, I guess that probably does define Jesus because he is the only way There is no other way to have life except for him So yeah, I guess narrow is probably the good definition In fact, it's the one Jesus gave now, of course, they mean it a different way, but you know what I mean The way to life is narrow The road to destruction is wide and easy The question is Which road are you on because there's only two to take and If you choose to reject The narrow way because of all of the aforementioned reasons, it's too narrow Then you are on the other path you are on the other road, there's just no two ways about it and that's Just because Jesus didn't leave us any other choices Even though we may want more choices. There are none You You