

DAY 2 – MATTHEW 7:1-2

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

We all know the Golden Rule. However, I don't know about you, but I don't always follow it like I should. Just think what the world would be like if we all followed it. What a different place it would be. It sums up all the law and the prophets because it is the ultimate statement on the fulfillment of love.

What does it have to do with our mind and conscience? Well, since your conscience is your alarm for wrongdoing, it should ring loudly when you are unloving to others. As with all things, we can find reasons to justify being far less than loving with others and this will stop our conscience from sounding the alarm. We all have people who rub us the wrong way or who irritate us. I can think of one in my life right now. She just irritates me. However, I love her and if she needed help, I would be there in a minute. Every time I get irritated with her, my conscience sounds the alarm and I have to repent. In this way, I never let my conscience be darkened in regard to my love for others. I stifle my irritation and treat her the way I want her to treat me – with kindness.

When we judge people, we usually begin to view and treat them differently. I have been the subject of judgment and I have judged. It didn't feel good either way. As a young, growing Christian, I was pretty sure I had the handle on holiness. Looking back now, I see how ridiculous it was and I am sorry about the way I treated those I judged to be less mature. In fact, I was the immature one and I revealed it by judging!

****Re-read the scripture and then journal about your experiences with judging and being judged. How have you changed? How do you want to change?*

The idea of the Golden Rule is wonderful. The first two words – in everything – is where the rubber meets the road. I have definitely experienced some situations where I did not want to treat someone the way I wanted to be treated. Why? Because they had hurt me, and I wanted to hurt back. I saw no reason to be kind to someone who had been cruel to me.

Did my conscience call out to me? Yes. However, honestly, there were times when I went ahead and hurt back. I was angry, hurt and ignored my conscience. When I hurt that person in return for them hurting me, it did not give me the satisfaction I thought it would. Just the opposite. It brought more pain because I knew I had sinned, and I done something to someone that I could not undo. You cannot unsay the hurtful words. You may apologize and ask for forgiveness, but the damage is done. They may forgive you, but a level of trust is damaged or gone.

Though we say we should forgive and forget, that isn't what happens. We forgive but we don't forget. Over time, the pain decreases, and we eventually stop thinking about the incident every time we see the person. But, in reality, we don't forget, and the pain may always remain to some degree. I learned a great lesson about ignoring the Golden Rule and about my conscience. I also learned that revenge is unpleasant to say the least and its fruit is bitter.

****Have you ever ignored the Golden Rule and hurt someone else? If yes, journal what it did to you and the other person. If no, thank God and continue to be kind!*