

“God’s Real Golden Rule”

Matthew 7:12

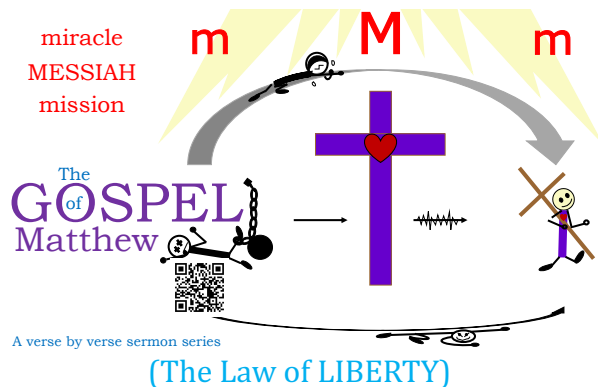
September 21, 2025

INTRO: What is your favorite biblical truth...
that is **not** in the Bible?

How about “the golden rule”? Today’s going to be a teaching-preaching...

PRAYER

CONTEXT: In some ways, “context” is the word of the day!



BIG IDEA: Golden-rule-loving...
is the key to kingdom-of-God living!

PREVIEW:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Christ's PEARLS | / Context | / Scripture |
| 2. Christ's PREACHING | / Content | / Silver |
| 3. Christ's POINT | / Construct | / Server |

TEXT: Matthew 7:12

*Therefore, in everything, treat people the same way
you want them to treat you, for this is
the Law and the Prophets.*

T/S: What do you think is the most important word in “the golden rule?”
(A: “Therefore”)

I. Christ's PEARLS

Therefore, in everything,

1. “Therefore” emphasizes & links:
 - a. Christ's CONTEXT
 - b. Christ's Connections
 - c. Christ's Clarity
 - d. Christ's Commands
 - e. Christ's Commissioning
 - f. Christ's Christianity
 - g. Christ's Church

2. “everything” unites & creates universal application!
 - a. PAST ALL of Christ's past words (2 Tim. 3:16)

VIDEO 1: “We Studied The Law in the Bible”

b. PRESENT ***ALL of Christ's current teachings***

- The Sermon on the Mount
 - **VISION:** 5:1-12
 - **MISSION:** 3:15 & 5:20
 - **FUSION:** 7:12
- **BE God's kingdom citizens!**

VIDEO 2: *"Jesus Fulfilled vs. Abolished the Law"*

c. FUTURE **ALL of creation's contexts...**

- **Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:1; Rev. 22:21**
- **Genesis. 3; John. 3; Rev. 3**

II. Christ's **PREACHING**

T/S: Remember... Jesus' most recent teaching & preaching.

VIDEO 3: *"Why Jesus Said Do Not Judge"* (Christ on Relationships)

This is where the unbiblical title for biblical teaching comes into the family of God's focus & faith...

*Therefore, in everything, **treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.***

NOTE: per the preaching & teaching of GOD, Jesus The Christ:

- The best/golden preaching is teaching...
- The best/golden teaching is preaching...
- Look for the GOLD & contrast all silver & bronze!
- **DON'T MISS CHRIST'S DEFINING DEFINITION**
 - Wanting to fulfill all righteousness w/ Him
 - Wanting God's kingdom to come...
 - Wanting God's will to be done...
 - Proactively living & loving like Christ...
 - BE-ing the Law & Prophets to others...
 - See Matthew 22:37-40

VIDEO 4: *"What Is The Golden Rule?"*

Romans 3:21-24

(cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

21But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

The “golden rule’s” gold comes from GOD’s vertical love, NOT man’s horizontal goodness!

That’s the POINT!

III. Christ’s POINT

*Therefore, in everything, treat people the same way
you want them to treat you, for this is
the Law and the Prophets.*

If you want His kingdom to come & His will to be done...
You will want others to glorify God and be saved eternally...
You will want them to also love you too as kingdom citizens...
You will want others to live out the Law & the Prophets...
You will want the world to *exemplify the Law of Christ.*

VIDEO 5: *“What Is The Law Of Christ?”*
(Gal. 6:2 & 1 Cor. 6:9 & John 15:12)

**THE LAW OF CHRIST IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST
BE-ING LEARNED & LIVED OUT!**

REVIEW:

REMEMBER: Jesus has been ALL about His guardrails!

- Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of this world
- Righteous vs. Unrighteous
- Heaven vs. **Hell**
- Sufficient righteousness vs. insufficient...
- Confrontations & Conviction
- Truth & Love vs. Lies & Lusts
- Hearing & Heeding vs. *Twisting & Perverting*
- Walking dssw vs. Talking
- The “Legits” vs. the Hypocrites
- His GOLD vs. the dross, wood, hay & stubble
- His Church vs. Satan’s crowds (see Rev. 2-3)
- Ch. 7’s UPCOMING ETERNAL WARNING
and defining distinction between the good
trees of heaven and the bad trees of hell are
divided based on fruit production or the
lack thereof...
- **Matthew 25:31...** *The goats are damned for
NOT DOING what constitutes kingdom of God
living!*

**THE LITMUS TEST FOR CHRISTIAN
LEARNING AND LOVING IS CHRIST-LIKE
LIVING AND LASTING!**

Golden-rule-loving...
is the key to kingdom-of-God living!

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Christ's PEARLS | / Context | / Scripture |
| 2. Christ's PREACHING | / Content | / Silver |
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CLOSE:

The “golden rule” is NOT to be “nice”
to people because you would like
people to be “nice” to you...
NO!

The “golden rule” is Christ’s & Christianity’s miraculous
VISION... MISSION. FUSION!
(YESTERDAY WITH MOSES WAS A GREAT EXAMPLE.)

Just look around at the crowds today...
By contrast, see Satan’s silver, lookalikes.
God & His Word describe them as:

VOMMIT... MESSES. PHONIES!

Therefore, to the glory of God, share His grace & Gospel love...

BE holy!

BE righteous!

BE the golden rule...

BE the God-glorifying Church...

BE the faithfully obedient family of God...

BE the army of the Almighty's ambassadors...

BE the courageous & compassionate

witness to the world.

Amen & AMEN!

Let us ALL... TOGETHER...

AS 1 FAMILY, WITH 1 FAITH, & 1 FOCUS

BE God's gold, **NOT Satan's silver!**

PRAYER

WORSHIP: *When The Kingdom Comes & Story Of My Life*

STUDY NOTES:

◀ Matthew 7:12 ▶

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
3956 [e]	Πάντα Panta	All things	Adj-ANP
3767 [e]	οὖν oun	therefore,	Conj
3745 [e]	ὅσα hosa	as many as	RelPro-ANP
1437 [e]	ἐὰν ean	if	Conj
2309 [e]	θέλητε thelēte	you might desire	V-PSA-2P
2443 [e]	ἵνα hina	that	Conj
4160 [e]	ποιῶσιν poiōsin	should do	V-PSA-3P
4771 [e]	ὕμῖν hymῖn	to you	PPro-D2P
3588 [e]	οἱ hoi	the	Art-NMP

444 [e]	ἄνθρωποι, anthrōpoi	men,	N-NMP
3779 [e]	οὕτως houtōs	so	Adv
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	also	Conj
4771 [e]	ὕμεῖς hymeis	you	PPro-N2P
4160 [e]	ποιεῖτε poieite	do	V-PMA-2P
846 [e]	αὐτοῖς· autois	to them.	PPro-DM3P
3778 [e]	οὗτος houtos	This	DPro-NMS
1063 [e]	γάρ gar	for	Conj
1510 [e]	ἐστίν estin	is	V-PIA-3S
3588 [e]	ὁ ho	the	Art-NMS
3551 [e]	νόμος nomos	law	N-NMS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj

3588 [e]	οἱ hoi	the	Art-NMP
4396 [e]	προφηται. prophētai	prophets.	N-NMP

Everything/ALL

Topical Lexicon

Comprehensive Scope in Scripture

πᾶς permeates the New Testament, signaling totality—sometimes absolutely, sometimes with contextual limitation—yet always underscoring the exhaustive reach of God’s purposes. From the opening genealogy of Matthew to the last benediction of Revelation, the word anchors declarations about creation, fall, redemption, judgment, worship, and daily conduct.

Creation and Divine Sovereignty

- [John 1:3](#): “Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made.”
- [Colossians 1:16-17](#) highlights Christ as the cohesive center “in whom all things hold together.”
- [Hebrews 1:3](#) portrays the Son “sustaining all things by His powerful word.”

Here πᾶς magnifies the universal scope of divine rule; nothing escapes the Creator’s authority or sustaining care.

Universal Human Condition

- [Romans 3:23](#): “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- [Galatians 3:22](#) affirms that “the Scripture imprisoned all under sin.”

The fall is total; therefore the need for salvation is likewise universal, preparing the reader for the next theme.

The Inclusive Reach of Salvation

- [John 3:16](#): “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
- [Acts 2:21](#); [Romans 10:13](#) echo Joel: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- [1 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#) stress God’s desire that “all” be saved and come to repentance.

πᾶς therefore bolsters the missionary mandate, guarding against narrow exclusivism while honoring the necessity of faith.

Christ’s Absolute Authority

- [Matthew 28:18](#): “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”
- [Ephesians 1:22](#) declares that the Father “put all things under His feet.”
- [Philippians 2:10-11](#) envisions universal homage: “every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

The term assures believers that every sphere—cosmic, terrestrial, demonic, human—is subject to Christ.

Worship and Obedience of the Church

- [1 Corinthians 10:31](#): “whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”
- [Colossians 3:17](#): “whatever you do... do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
- [Hebrews 13:15](#) urges perpetual praise: “the fruit of lips that confess His name.”

πᾶς invites comprehensive devotion; no task lies outside the realm of worship.

Unity and Diversity within the Body

- [1 Corinthians 12:13](#): “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.”
- [Ephesians 4:6](#) speaks of “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

The word underlines both the inclusiveness and the mutual responsibility believers share.

Pastoral and Ethical Exhortations

- [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#): “All Scripture is God-breathed... so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.”
- [1 Peter 4:8](#): “Above all, love one another deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”
- [1 Thessalonians 5:18](#): “Give thanks in all circumstances.”

Such uses press the comprehensive claims of discipleship on every sphere of life—thought, attitude, and action.

Eschatological Fulfillment

- [Revelation 21:4](#): “He will wipe away every tear... there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.”
- [Revelation 5:13](#) pictures “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth” praising the Lamb.

παντα frames the consummation: total renewal, total worship, total justice.

Interpretive Observations

1. Context can restrict the extent (e.g., [Matthew 2:3](#) “all Jerusalem” denotes widespread agitation, not mathematical totality).
2. Collective uses (“all the people,” [Luke 3:21](#)) may emphasize representative solidarity.
3. Distributive shades appear in commands like [Matthew 5:11](#) (“all kinds of evil”) and [1 Timothy 6:10](#) (“all kinds of evil”), guarding against simplistic universalism.

Discernment therefore requires reading the immediate setting alongside the broader canonical message.

Historical and Intertestamental Background

In the Septuagint παντα frequently translates Hebrew kol, reinforcing covenant declarations such as “all the earth is Mine” ([Exodus 19:5](#) LXX). Jewish liturgy employed the term to proclaim divine kingship, a backdrop that heightens New Testament confessions of Jesus’ lordship over “all.”

Ministry Applications

- Evangelism: Since God commands “repentance unto life” for all ([Acts 11:18](#)), the Church proclaims Christ universally.
- Discipleship: “Teach them to observe all I have commanded you” ([Matthew 28:20](#)) grounds holistic obedience.
- Stewardship: Believers manage “all things” entrusted by God ([1 Timothy 6:17-19](#)), recognizing His ownership.
- Pastoral Care: Comfort flows from promises like [Romans 8:28](#)—“in all things God works for the good of those who love Him.”

Summary

παντα threads through Scripture as a golden strand of totality: creation originated by God, humanity universally fallen, salvation redemptively offered, Christ sovereign over every realm, and final restoration encompassing every tear and every tongue. Rightly

understood, the word summons the Church to proclaim, believe, and obey God's all-encompassing gospel with confident hope and comprehensive devotion.

◀ 2309. theló ▶

Lexical Summary

theló: To will, to wish, to desire, to intend

Original Word: θέλω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: theló

Pronunciation: theh'-lo

Phonetic Spelling: (eth-el'-o,)

KJV: desire, be disposed (forward), intend, list, love, mean, please, have rather, (be) will (have, -ling, -ling(-ly))

NASB: want, wish, wishes, wanted, willing, desire, wants

Word Origin: [apparently strengthened from the alternate form of [G138 \(αἰρέομαι - choose\)](#)]

1. to determine, i.e. choose or prefer
2. (by implication) to wish, i.e. be inclined to
3. (sometimes adverbially) gladly
4. (impersonally for the future tense) to be about to
5. (by Hebraism) to delight in
{literally or figuratively; as an active option from subjective impulse; whereas G1014 properly denotes rather a passive acquiescence in objective considerations}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

desire, be disposed toward, intend

Thel'-o or thel'-o or in certain tenses theleo thel'-eh'-o, and etheleo eth-el'-eh'-o, which are otherwise obsolete; apparently strengthened from the alternate form of [haireomai](#); to determine (as an active option from subjective impulse; whereas [boulomai](#) properly denotes rather a passive acquiescence in objective considerations), i.e. Choose or prefer (literally or figuratively); by implication, to wish, i.e. Be inclined to (sometimes adverbially, gladly); impersonally for the future tense, to be about to; by Hebraism, to delight in -- desire, be disposed (forward), intend, list, love, mean, please, have rather, (be) will (have, -ling, -ling(-ly)).

see GREEK [haireomai](#)

see GREEK [boulomai](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 2309 *thélō* (a primitive verb, *NAS* dictionary) – to desire (wish, will), wanting what is *best* (*optimal*) because someone is *ready* and *willing* to act.

[2309](#) /*thélō* ("to desire, wish") is commonly used of the Lord extending His "best-offer" to the believer – wanting (desiring) to birth His persuasion (faith) in them which also empowers, manifests His presence etc. [See 2307](#) (*thelēma*).

[Note the close connection between *faith* ([4102](#) /*pístis*, "God's inbirthed *persuasion*") and this root (*thel-*, [2307](#) /*thélēma*); cf. 2 Cor 8:5-7 and Heb 10:36-39).]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. verb

Definition

to will, wish

NASB Translation

am...willing (1), am willing (3), delighting (1), delights (1), desire (14), desired (4), desires (4), desiring (2), intended (1), intending (1), like (3), maintain (1), mean (1), mean* (2), please (1), purposed (1), refused* (1), unwilling* (11), want (52), wanted (15), wanting (3), wants (8), will (5), willed (1), willing (15), wills (4), wish (24), wished (7), wishes (16), wishing (4), would (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2309: ἐθέλω

ἐθέλω, see [θέλω](#).

STRONGS NT 2309: θέλω (only in this form in the N. T.; in Greek authors also [ἐθέλω](#) (Veitch, under the word; Lob. ad Phryn., p. 7; Buttmann, 57 (49)));

imperfect ἤθελον; (future 3 person singular [θελήσει](#), [Revelation 11:5](#) WH marginal reading); 1 aorist ἠθέλησα; (derived apparently from [ἐλεῖν](#) with a fuller aspiration, so that it means properly, to seize with the mind; but Curtius, p. 726, edition 5, regards its root as uncertain (he inclines, however, to the view of Pott, Fick, Vanicek, and others, which connects it with a root meaning to hold to)); the Sept. for [נָחַץ](#) and [רָצַח](#); **to will (have in mind) intend**; i. e.:

1. to be resolved or determined, to purpose: absolutely, [ὁ θέλων](#), [Romans](#)

[9:16](#); τοῦ Θεοῦ θέλοντος if God will, [Acts 18:21](#); [ἐάν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ](#). (in Attic [ἐάν θεός θέλῃ](#), ἣν οἱ Θεοὶ θέλωσιν (cf. Lob. as above)), [1 Corinthians 4:19](#); [James 4:15](#); [καθὼς ἠθέλησε](#), [1 Corinthians 12:18](#); [1 Corinthians 15:38](#); [τί](#), [Romans 7:15f, 19](#); [1 Corinthians 7:36](#); [Galatians 5:17](#); with the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 20:14](#); [Matthew 26:15](#); [John](#)

6:21 (where the meaning is, they were willing to receive him into the ship, but that was unnecessary, because unexpectedly the ship was nearing the land; cf. Lücke, B-Crusius, Ewald (Godet), others at the passage; Winer's Grammar, § 54, 4; (Buttmann, 375 (321))); [John 12:44](#); [Acts 25:9](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:18](#); [Revelation 11:5](#), etc.; with the present infinitive, [Luke 10:29](#) R G; [John 6:67](#); [John 12:17](#); [John 8:44](#); [Acts 24:6](#) (Rec.); [Romans 7:21](#); [Galatians 4:9](#) (here T Tr text WH text 1 aorist infinitive); with an infinitive suggested by the context, [John 5:21](#) (οὐς θέλει, namely, ζωοποιησαι); [Matthew 8:2](#); [Mark 3:13](#); [Mark 6:22](#); [Romans 9:18](#); [Revelation 11:6](#), etc. οὐ θέλω to be unwilling: with the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 2:18](#); [Matthew 15:32](#); [Matthew 22:3](#); [Mark 6:26](#); [Luke 15:28](#); [John 5:40](#); [Acts 7:39](#); [1 Corinthians 16:7](#); [Revelation 2:21](#) (not Rec.), etc.; with the present infinitive, [John 7:1](#); [Acts 14:13](#); [Acts 17:18](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#), etc.; with the infinitive omitted and to be gathered from the context, [Matthew 18:30](#); [Matthew 21:29](#); [Luke 18:4](#), etc.; θέλω and οὐ θέλω followed by the accusative with an infinitive, [Luke 1:62](#); [1 Corinthians 10:20](#); on the Pauline phrase οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, see ἀγνοέω, a.; corresponding to θέλω ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι, [1 Corinthians 11:3](#); [Colossians 2:1](#). θέλειν, used of a purpose or resolution, is contrasted with the carrying out of the purpose into act: opposed to ποιεῖν, πράσσειν, [Romans 7:15, 19](#); [2 Corinthians 8:10f](#) (on which latter passage cf. DeWette and Meyer; Winer's Grammar, § 61, 7b.); to ἐνεργεῖν, [Philippians 2:13](#), cf. [Mark 6:19](#); [John 7:44](#). One is said also θέλειν that which he is on the point of doing: [Mark 6:48](#); [John 1:43](#) (44); and it is used thus also of things that tend or point to some conclusion (cf. Winer's Grammar, § 42, 1 b.; Buttmann, 254 (219)): [Acts 2:12](#); [Acts 17:20](#). λανθάνει αὐτούς τοῦτο θέλοντας this (viz., what follows, ὅτι etc.) escapes them of their own will, i. e. they are purposely, wilfully, ignorant, [2 Peter 3:5](#), where others interpret as follows: this (viz. what has been said previously) desiring (i. e. holding as their opinion (for examples of this sense see Sophocles Lexicon, under the word, 4)), they are ignorant etc.; but cf. DeWette at the passage and Winer's Grammar, § 54, 4 note; (Buttmann, § 150, 8 Rem.). τάς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν it is your purpose to fulfil the lusts of your father, i. e. ye are actuated by him of your own free knowledge and choice, [John 8:44](#) (Winer's Grammar, as above; Buttmann, 375 (321)).

2. equivalent to to desire, to wish: τί, [Matthew 20:21](#); [Mark 14:36](#); [Luke 5:39](#) (but WH in brackets); [John 15:7](#); [1 Corinthians 4:21](#); [2 Corinthians 11:12](#); followed by the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 5:40](#); [Matthew 12:38](#); [Matthew 16:25](#); [Matthew 19:17](#); [Mark 10:43](#); [Luke 8:20](#); [Luke 13:8](#); [John 5:6, 35](#) (ye were desirous of rejoicing); ; [Galatians 3:2](#); [James 2:20](#); [1 Peter 3:10](#); followed by the present infinitive, [John 9:27](#); [Galatians 4:20](#) (ἤθελον I could wish, on which imperfect see εὐχομαι, 2); the infinitive is lacking and to be supplied from the neighboring verb, [Matthew 17:12](#); [Matthew 27:15](#); [Mark 9:13](#); [John 21:18](#); followed by the accusative and infinitive, [Mark 7:24](#); [Luke 1:62](#); [John 21:22](#); [Romans 16:19](#); [1 Corinthians 7:7, 32](#); [1 Corinthians 14:5](#); [Galatians 6:13](#); οὐ θέλω to be unwilling (desire not): followed by the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 23:4](#); [Luke 19:14, 27](#); [1 Corinthians 10:20](#); followed by ἵνα, [Matthew 7:12](#); [Mark 6:25](#); [Mark 9:30](#); [Mark 10:35](#); [Luke 6:31](#); [John 17:24](#); cf. Winer's Grammar, § 44, 8 b.; (Buttmann, § 139, 46); followed by the deliberative subjunctive

(aorist): **θέλεις συλλέξωμεν αὐτά** (cf. the German willstdu,sollenwirzusammenlesen? (Goodwin § 88)), [Matthew 13:28](#); add, [Matthew 20:32](#) (where L brackets adds ἵνα); ; [Mark 10:51](#); [Mark 14:12](#); [Mark 15:9, 12](#) (Tr brackets **θέλεις**); [Luke 9:54](#); [Luke 18:41](#); [Luke 22:9](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, § 41 a. 4 b.; Buttman, § 139, 2); followed by εἰ, [Luke 12:49](#) (see εἰ, I. 4); followed by ἤ, **to prefer**, [1 Corinthians 14:19](#) (see ἤ, 3 d.).

3. equivalent to to love; followed by an infinitive, **to like to do a thing, be fond of doing**: [Mark 12:38](#); [Luke 20:46](#); cf. Winer's Grammar, § 54, 4; (Buttmann, § 150, 8).

4. in imitation of the Hebrew יִצְחָק, to take delight, have pleasure (opposite by Buttman, § 150, 8 Rem.; cf. Winer's Grammar, § 33, a.; but see examples below): **ἐν τίνι**, in a thing, [Colossians 2:18](#) (**ἐν καλῷ**, to delight in goodness, Test xii. Patr., p. 688 (test. Ash. 1; (cf. **εἰς ζωὴν**, p. 635, test. Zeb. 3); [Psalm 111:1](#) (); [Psalm 146:10](#) ()); **ἐν τίνι**, the dative of the person, [1 Samuel 18:22](#); [2 Samuel 15:26](#); ([1 Kings 10:9](#)); [2 Chronicles 9:8](#); for [1](#), יִצְחָק [Chronicles 28:4](#)). **τινα**, to love one: [Matthew 27:43](#) ([Psalm 21:9](#) ()); ([Psalm 17:20](#) ()); [Psalm 40:12](#) ()); [Ezekiel 18:32](#), cf. [Ezekiel 18:23](#); Tobit 13:6; epp. to **μισεῖν**, Ignatius ad Rom. 8, 3 [ET]; **θεληθῆναι** is used of those who find favor, ibid. 8, 1). **τί**, [Matthew 9:13](#) and [Matthew 12:7](#) (from [Hosea 6:6](#)); [Hebrews 10:5, 8](#) (fr. [Psalm 39:7](#) ()). As respects the distinction

between **βούλομαι** and **θέλω**, the former seems to designate the will which follows deliberation, the latter the will which proceeds from inclination. This appears not only from [Matthew 1:19](#), but also from the fact that the Sept. express the idea of **pleasure, delight**, by the verb **θέλειν** (see just above). The reverse of this distinction is laid down by Alexander Buttman (1873) Lexil. i., p. 26 (English translation, p. 194); Delitzsch on [Hebrews 6:17](#). According to Tittmann (Syn., i., p. 124) **θέλειν** denotes

mere **volition**, **βούλεσθαι inclination**; (cf. Whiston on Demosthenes 9, 5; 124, 13).

(Philip Buttmann's statement of the distinction between the two words is quoted with approval by Schmidt (Syn., iii., chapter 146), who adduces in confirmation (besides many examples) the assumed relationship between **βούλομαι** and **Φελπς, ἐλπίς**; the use of **θέλω** in the sense of 'resolve' in such passages as Thucydides 5, 9; of **θέλων** equivalent to **ἡδέως** in the poets; of **βούλομαι** as parallel to **ἐπιθυμέω** in Demosthenes 29, 45, etc.; and passages in which the two words occur together and **βούλομαι** is apparently equivalent to 'wish'

while **θέλω** stands for 'will' as Xenophon, an. 4, 4, 5; Euripides, Alc. 281, etc., etc. At the same time it must be confessed that scholars are far from harmonious on the subject. Many agree with Prof. Grimm that **θέλω** gives prominence to the emotive element, **βούλομαι** emphasizes the rational and volitive; that **θέλω** signifies the **choice**, while **βούλομαι** marks the choice as **deliberate and intelligent**; yet they acknowledge that the words are sometimes used indiscriminately, and especially that **θέλω** as the less sharply-defined term is put where **βούλομαι** would be proper; see Ellendt, Lex. Sophocles; Pape, Handwörterb.; Seiler,

Wörterb. d. Homer, under the word **βούλομαι**; Suhle und Schneidewin, Handwörterb.; Crosby, Lex. to Xenophon, an., under the word **ἐθέλω**; (Arnold's) Pilon, Greek Syn. § 129; Webster, Synt. and Syn. of the Greek Testament, p. 197; Wilke, Clavis N. T., edition 2, 2:603; Schleusner, N. T. Lex. see under the word, **βούλομαι**; Munthe, Observations, phil. in N. T. ex Diodorus Siculus, etc., p. 3; Valckenaer, Scholia etc. ii. 23; Westermann on Demosthenes 20, 111; the commentators generally on Matt. as above; Lightfoot on [Philemon 1:13, 14](#); Riddle in Schaff's Lange on Eph., p. 42; this seems to be roughly intended by Ammonius also: **βούλεσθαι μὲν ἐπὶ μόνου λεκτεον τοῦ λογικου. τό δέ θέλειν καί ἐπὶ ἀλογου ζων**; (and Eustathius on Iliad 1, 112, p. 61, 2, says **οὐχ' ἀπλῶς θέλω, ἀλλὰ βούλομαι, ὅπερ ἐπίτασις τοῦ θέλειν ἐστίν**). On the other hand, Liddell and Scott (under the word **ἐθέλω**); Passow, edition 5; Rost, Wörterb. edition 4; Schenkl, Schulwörterb.; Donaldson, Crat. § 463f; Wahl; Clay. Apocrypha, under the word **βούλομαι**; Cremer, under the words, **βούλομαι** and **θέλω**; especially Stallb. on Platos de repub. 4, 13, p. 437 b. (cf. too Cope on Aristotle, rhet. 2, 19, 19); Franke on Demosthenes 1, 1, substantially reverse the distinction, as does Ellicott on [1 Timothy 5:14](#); Wordsworth on [1 Thessalonians 2:18](#). Although the latter opinion may seem to be favored by that view of the derivation of the words which allies **βούλομαι** with voluptas (Curtius, § 659, compare p. 726), and makes **θέλω** signify 'to hold to something,' 'form a fixed resolve' (see above, at the beginning), yet the predominant usage of the N. T. will be evident to one who looks up the passages referred to above (Fritzsche's explanation of [Matthew 1:19](#) is hardly natural); to which may be added such as [Matthew 2:18](#); [Matthew 9:13](#); [Matthew 12:38](#); [Matthew 15:28](#); [Matthew 17:4](#) (); (cf. [Luke 22:42](#)); [Mark 6:19](#); [Mark 7:24](#); [Mark 9:30](#); [Mark 10:35](#); [Mark 12:38](#); [Mark 15:9](#) (cf. [John 18:39](#)), [Mark 15:15](#) (where R. V. **wishing** is questionable; cf. [Luke 23:20](#)); [Luke 10:24](#); [Luke 15:28](#); [Luke 16:26](#); [John 5:6](#); [John 6:11](#); [John 12:21](#); [Acts 10:10](#); [Acts 18:15](#); [Romans 7:19](#) (cf. [Romans 7:15](#), its opposed to **μισῶ**, and indeed the use of **θέλω** throughout this chapter); [1 Corinthians 7:36, 39](#); [1 Corinthians 14:35](#); [Ephesians 1:11](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#), etc. Such passages as [1 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#) will be ranged now on one side, now on the other; cf. [1 Corinthians 12:11, 18](#). **θέλω** occurs in the N. T. about five times as often as **βούλομαι** (on the relative use of the words in classic writers see Tycho Mommsen in Rutherford, New Phryn., p. 415f). The usage of the Sept. (beyond the particular specified by Prof. Grimm) seems to afford little light; see e. g. [Genesis 24:5, 8](#); [Deuteronomy 25:7](#); [Psalm 39:7, 9](#) (), etc. In modern Greek **θέλω** seems to have nearly driven **βούλομαι** out of use; on **θέλω** as an auxiliary cf. Jebb in Vincent and Dickson's Handbook, Appendix §§ 60, 64. For examples of the associated use of the words in classic Greek, see Stephanus' Thesaurus under the word **βούλομαι**, p. 366 d.; Lightfoot, Cremer, and especially Schmidt, as above.)

Topical Lexicon

Overview

Strong's Greek 2309 (θέλω / ἐθέλω) describes volition—desire, intention, choice—appearing 209 times across the New Testament. The contexts range from God's sovereign purposes to the everyday wishes of people, making it a key term for understanding both divine initiative and human responsibility.

The Sovereign Will of God

God's will is portrayed as decisive and effectual. [Romans 9:18](#) affirms, "So then, He has mercy on whom He wills, and He hardens whom He wills." Creation itself reflects this freedom: "But God has placed the parts, every one of them, in the body just as He desired" ([1 Corinthians 12:18](#)). The same verb underlines God's gracious purpose in salvation: "He chose to make known to them the glorious riches of this mystery" ([Colossians 1:27](#)). Nothing thwarts His intent ([Ephesians 1:11](#) is a parallel idea, though using a cognate).

The Messianic Will of Christ

Jesus repeatedly reveals a deliberate, redemptive will. In [John 17:24](#) He prays, "Father, I desire that those You have given Me be with Me where I am." His earthly ministry displays compassion directed by personal choice: "I am willing; be cleansed" ([Matthew 8:3](#); [Mark 1:41](#)). Yet He submits His human will to the Father: "Yet not as I will, but as You will" ([Matthew 26:39](#); [Mark 14:36](#)). Christ's lament over Jerusalem exposes the tragedy of resisted grace: "How often I have longed to gather your children together... but you were not willing" ([Matthew 23:37](#); [Luke 13:34](#)).

The Spirit's Enabling Will

[Philippians 2:13](#) links divine and human volition: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good pleasure." Believers' sanctification is thus energized by the Spirit, aligning their desires with God's.

Human Will: Submission and Resistance

Scripture presents human volition as genuine yet accountable. Positive examples include the leper's plea, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean" ([Luke 5:12](#)), and the disciples' yielding, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself" ([Luke 9:23](#)). Negative instances expose rebellion: "You refuse to come to Me to have life" ([John 5:40](#)); "They wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him" ([John 7:44](#)).

Discipleship and Self-Denial

The call to follow Christ centers on a redirected will: "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" ([Matthew 16:25](#)). Leadership in the kingdom likewise depends on voluntary humility ([Matthew 20:26-27](#); [Mark 10:43-44](#)).

Pastoral and Epistolary Usage

Apostles appeal to the will for teaching, correction, and encouragement. Paul writes, “I do not want you to be unaware, brothers” ([Romans 1:13](#); [1 Corinthians 10:1](#)). He expresses pastoral preference: “I desire then that in every place the men should pray” ([1 Timothy 2:8](#)) and “I wish you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy” ([1 Corinthians 14:5](#)). Such uses show shepherds guiding but never coercing the flock ([Philemon 14](#)).

Eschatological and Judicial Dimensions

Free will meets divine judgment. Those “unwilling to work” face discipline ([2 Thessalonians 3:10](#)). Christ’s parables warn of eternal consequences: the citizens who “did not want Me to reign over them” are sentenced ([Luke 19:27](#)). Revelation depicts prophetic witnesses who “desire to harm” their foes but are restrained by God’s timetable ([Revelation 11:5-6](#)).

Theological and Ministry Significance

1. Compatibility of sovereignty and responsibility: God’s efficacious will coexists with meaningful human choices.
2. Christ’s redemptive willingness invites faith while exposing culpable refusal.
3. Discipleship is measured by a submitted will, not mere external conformity.
4. Pastoral leadership respects individual volition, aiming for willing—not coerced—obedience ([Hebrews 13:17](#) uses a related concept).

Historical Reflection in Church Teaching

Early catechesis emphasized voluntary faith and baptism, echoing [Acts 2:12](#). Reformation debates on free will and predestination often cited $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ texts such as [Romans 7](#) and [John 5](#). Evangelical missions have long appealed to [1 Timothy 2:4](#)—God “wants all people to be saved”—as impetus for global evangelism.

Ministry Application

- Evangelism: Present the gospel as divine invitation that requires a willing response ([Revelation 22:17](#)).
- Counseling: Address conflicted desires with [Romans 7](#) realism and [Philippians 2:13](#) hope.
- Leadership: Encourage ministries that seek volunteers rather than conscripts ([2 Corinthians 8:10-11](#)).
- Worship: Model prayer after Christ—submitting personal desires to the Father’s will.

Conclusion

$\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ reveals the heartbeat of Scripture: a sovereign God who wills to save, a Savior who wills to serve and sacrifice, a Spirit who wills to sanctify, and people called to align their wills with His.

◀ 4160. poieó ▶

Lexical Summary

poieó: To make, to do, to act, to cause, to work

Original Word: ποιέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: poieó

Pronunciation: poy-eh'-o

Phonetic Spelling: (poy-eh'-o)

KJV: abide, + agree, appoint, X avenge, + band together, be, bear, + bewray, bring (forth), cast out, cause, commit, + content, continue, deal, + without any delay, (would) do(-ing), execute, exercise, fulfil, gain, give, have, hold, X journeying, keep, + lay wait, + lighten the ship, make, X mean, + none of these things move me, observe, ordain, perform, provide, + have purged, purpose, put, + raising up, X secure, shew, X shoot out, spend, take, tarry, + transgress the law, work, yield

NASB: do, make, done, doing, made, did, does

Word Origin: [apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary]

1. to make or do

{in a very wide application, more or less direct; properly refers to a single act thus differing from G4238}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

to make or do

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see GREEK [prasso](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. word

Definition

to make, do

NASB Translation

accomplished (1), act (4), acted (3), acting (1), acts (2), appointed (3), away* (1), bear (5), bearing (1), bears (3), become (1), bore (1), bring (1), bring...to pass (1), bring about (2), bringing (1), brings forth (1), call (1), carried (1), carries (1), carry (1), cause (3), causes (2), causing (1), commit (2), commits (2), committed (4), composed (1), consider (1), created things (1), dealt (1), did (33), did...do (2), do (170), does (16), does...do (1), doing (38), done (43), establishing (1), execute (4), exercises (1), expose* (1), formed (1), formed a conspiracy (1), forms (1), gave (4), give (4), gives (1), giving (1), have (2), have kept (1), having (1), held (1), indulging (1), keep (3), keeps (1), kept (1), made (38), make (47), makes (7), making (9), observe (2), offer (1), offering (1), perform (4), performed (8), performing (7), performs (1), practice (5), practices (11), practicing (1), present (1), proceeding (1), produce (3), produced (1), produces (2), producing (1), provide (1), put (1), satisfy* (1), setting (1), show (2), showed (1), shown (1), spend (1), spent (4), took (1), treat (6), treated (1), weaker (1), worked (1), working (1).

Topical Lexicon

The Dynamic Scope of ποιέω in the New Testament

Chosen by the inspired writers almost six-hundred times, ποιέω stands behind an enormous range of activity—creation, covenant obedience, miracle, sin, worship, pastoral labor, and eschatological consummation. Whether rendered “make,” “do,” “produce,” “practice,” or “cause,” the verb always stresses purposeful action. Its frequency and flexibility show that biblical faith is never mere contemplation but an embodied, God-directed way of life.

Creation and Providence

In [Acts 17:24](#) Paul declares to the Athenians, “The God who made the world and everything in it is Lord of heaven and earth.” By echoing [Genesis 1](#), ποιέω locates the gospel within God’s creative sovereignty. [Hebrews 1:2](#) likewise credits the Son “through whom He made the universe,” uniting cosmology with Christology. Even the angelic proclamation of [Revelation 14:7](#)—“Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of waters”—shows that creation language remains evangelistic and eschatological.

Covenant Obedience and Moral Choice

Jesus presses ποιέω into ethical service: “Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” ([Matthew 12:50](#)). The Sermon on the Mount culminates with the wise man “who hears these words of Mine and does them” ([Matthew 7:24](#)). Paul applies the same verb to civil righteousness—magistrates reward “the one who does good” ([Romans 13:4](#))—and James cites it for whole-law obedience ([James 2:10](#)). Thus ποιέω links hearing and doing, confession and conduct.

Sin and Lawlessness

Negative uses expose rebellious practice. [John 3:20](#) notes that “everyone who does evil hates the light,” and [1 John 3:4](#) equates “practicing sin” with lawlessness. [Romans 1:32](#) indicts a culture that “not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who do them.” The same verb that celebrates obedience unmasks depravity, sharpening moral accountability.

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The Gospels spotlight ποιέω for the Savior’s redemptive mission. Jesus testifies, “The works the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works I am doing—bear witness about Me” ([John 5:36](#)). His earthly ministry is summarized in [Acts 1:1](#) as what He “began to do and to teach,” an unfinished program extended through His body, the church ([Acts 1:8](#)). John piles up the aorist forms to catalog specific signs (for example [John 2:11](#); 9:6; 11:45), culminating in the narrative’s purpose statement: “Jesus performed many other signs... that you may believe” ([John 20:30-31](#)).

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[Hebrews 7:27](#) contrasts Christ’s once-for-all offering with priests “who did this daily.” In 9:25 the Levitical high priest “entered annually to make atonement.” ποιέω highlights both repetition under the old order and finality under the new. The cleansing accomplished (ἀμαρτιῶν ποίησας) situates Calvary as decisive divine action.

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Luke summarizes missions reports with ποιέω: “They described all that God had done through them” ([Acts 14:27](#)). Paul defends his apostleship by reminding the Corinthians, “Did I commit a sin... because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? I humbled myself... so that you might be exalted” ([2 Corinthians 11:7](#)). The verb frames both the content and the method of gospel labor.

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The Lord's Supper command employs ποιέω: "Do this in remembrance of Me" ([Luke 22:19](#); [1 Corinthians 11:24-25](#)). Here doing equals commemorating the covenant meal, binding liturgical practice to Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and ongoing presence.

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Revelation repeatedly warns of counterfeit deeds (13:13-16) and commends faithful ones (22:14-15). God "will make all things new" ([Revelation 21:5](#)), translating ποιέω into cosmic renewal. [Romans 9:28](#) quotes Isaiah to promise that the Lord "will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness," showing that divine action will culminate history.

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Representative Passages by Theme

Creation: [Acts 17:24](#); [Hebrews 1:2](#); [Revelation 14:7](#)

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In every dimension of redemptive history—from the making of the cosmos to the making of disciples—ποιέω anchors Scripture's call to active, obedient faith.

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◀ 3551. nomos ▶

Lexical Summary

nomos: Law

Original Word: νόμος

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: nomos

Pronunciation: NO-mos

Phonetic Spelling: (nom'-os)

KJV: law

NASB: Law, laws, principle

Word Origin: [from a primary nemo "to parcel out" (especially food or grazing to animals)]

1. law (through the idea of prescriptive usage)
2. (genitive case) regulation
3. (specially) of Moses (including the volume), also of the Gospel
4. (figuratively) a principle

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

law.

From a primary *nemo* (to parcel out, especially food or grazing to animals); law (through the idea of prescriptive usage), genitive case (regulation), specially, (of Moses (including the volume); also of the Gospel), or figuratively (a principle) -- law.

HELPS Word-studies

3551 *nómos* – law. [3551](#) (*nómos*) is used of: a) the Law (Scripture), with emphasis on the first five books of Scripture; or b) any *system* of religious thinking (theology), especially when *nomos* occurs *without* the Greek definite article.

[3551](#) /*nómos* ("law") then can refer to "the Law," or "law" as a general principle (or *both simultaneously*). The particular sense(s) of [3551](#) (*nómos*) is determined by the *context*.

Topical Lexicon

Definition and Scope of "Nomos"

In the New Testament the noun νόμος ranges from the specific Mosaic legislation to any binding norm, principle, or power that governs conduct. Context determines whether it denotes the Pentateuch, the whole Hebrew Scriptures, civil statutes, a spiritual principle ("the law of the Spirit of life," [Romans 8:2](#)), or even an alien power ("the law of sin," [Romans 7:23](#)).

The Law in Old Testament Foundations

1. Covenant Setting: [Exodus 19–24](#) presents the Law as the charter of Israel's covenant relationship. Obedience brought blessing ([Deuteronomy 28:1–14](#)); disobedience incurred curse ([Deuteronomy 28:15–68](#)).
2. Tripartite Function: Though Scripture itself never partitions the Law, conservative theology observes moral (permanent ethical duties), ceremonial (sacrificial and ritual), and civil (judicial) elements, all finding unity in revealing God's holiness.
3. Pedagogical Role: [Galatians 3:24](#), "So the Law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith", underscores its preparatory nature.

"Nomos" as a Title for Scripture

Jesus and the apostles often use "Law" for the entire Tanakh. [Luke 24:44](#) refers to "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms." [John 10:34](#) cites [Psalm 82:6](#) yet introduces it with, "Is it not written in your Law?" Likewise, [1 Corinthians 14:21](#) prefaces [Isaiah 28:11–12](#) with "In the Law it is written."

The Law in the Ministry of Jesus

1. Fulfillment, Not Abolition: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them" ([Matthew 5:17](#)). Jesus

deepens the Law's intent by exposing heart-level sin ([Matthew 5:21–48](#)).

2. Summation in Love: [Matthew 22:37–40](#); [Matthew 7:12](#); the twin commands to love God and neighbor “hang” the whole Law and the Prophets.

3. Corrective Authority: Repeated “You have heard... but I say to you” contrasts rabbinic distortions with the Law's true demand.

The Law in Acts and Early Church Controversies

[Acts 15](#) records the Jerusalem Council debating whether Gentile converts must keep the Mosaic Law. Peter's confession (“Why, then, do you test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke...?” [Acts 15:10](#)) and James's citation of Amos affirm salvation by grace, with only a few prohibitions ([Acts 15:28–29](#)) to preserve fellowship. Paul's arrest scenes ([Acts 21–28](#)) reveal tensions between Jewish Law-keepers and the gospel mission.

Pauline Theology of Law

1. Universal Condemnation: “Through the Law comes awareness of sin” ([Romans 3:20](#)). Both Jew and Gentile stand guilty ([Romans 2:12–24](#)).

2. Inability to Justify: “A man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ” ([Galatians 2:16](#)).

3. Provocation of Sin: The commandment, holy and good, nevertheless occasions transgression in Adamic hearts ([Romans 7:7–11](#)).

4. Crucifixion With Christ: “Through the Law I died to the Law so that I might live to God” ([Galatians 2:19](#)).

5. New Principle of Life: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death” ([Romans 8:2](#)).

6. Ongoing Moral Norm: [Romans 13:8–10](#) teaches that love, expressed in the Decalogue's neighbor-directed commands, “fulfills the Law.”

The Law in Hebrews and the New Covenant

Hebrews contrasts Levitical regulations with the priesthood of Christ. “The Law appoints as high priests men who are weak, but the word of the oath... appoints the Son, who has been made perfect forever” ([Hebrews 7:28](#)). Shadow gives way to substance ([Hebrews 10:1](#)). Yet the promise of [Jeremiah 31:33](#)—“I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts”—is realized, not rescinded ([Hebrews 8:10](#)).

The Royal Law and the Law of Liberty (James)

[James 1:25](#) calls believers to persevere in “the perfect law of freedom,” while [James 2:8](#) labels “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” the “royal law.” Far from antinomianism, gospel freedom empowers practical obedience.

Principle, Power, and Analogy

Paul extends “nomos” metaphorically:

- “Law of faith” ([Romans 3:27](#)) contrasts grace–received righteousness against merit.
- “Law of my mind” vs. “law of sin” ([Romans 7:23](#)) pictures conflicting forces within the believer.
- “Law of Christ” ([Galatians 6:2](#)) equals bearing one another’s burdens in Spirit-enabled love.

Historical Significance

1. Identity Marker: For Israel, Torah shaped calendar, diet, worship, and civil justice, preserving them amid pagan nations.
2. Scripture Formation: Early Christian preaching drew authority from the Law’s prophetic and typological content ([Acts 13:15–39](#)).
3. Doctrinal Clarity: Reformation theology’s “three uses of the Law” (civil restraint, mirror of sin, guide for gratitude) remain staples in catechesis and preaching.

Ministry Implications Today

1. Evangelism: The Law exposes guilt, preparing hearts for grace ([Romans 7:13](#)).
2. Discipleship: The moral commands, fulfilled in love and empowered by the Spirit, outline holy living ([Galatians 5:22–23](#)).
3. Corporate Worship: Reading from “the Law and the Prophets” ([Acts 13:15](#)) models the unity of Scripture around Christ.
4. Apologetics: Demonstrating prophetic fulfillment ([John 1:45](#); [Luke 24:44](#)) authenticates Jesus as Messiah.
5. Ethics and Justice: Civil statutes reveal God’s concern for the vulnerable, guiding contemporary application in mercy ministries.

Representative Texts

- [Matthew 5:18](#) – enduring authority of every “jot or tittle.”
- [John 1:17](#) – “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
- [Romans 10:4](#) – “For Christ is the end of the Law, to bring righteousness to everyone who believes.”
- [Galatians 3:19](#) – purpose “added because of transgressions, until the Seed should come.”
- [1 Timothy 1:8](#) – “Now we know that the Law is good if one uses it legitimately.”
- [Hebrews 10:16](#) – Law written on hearts under the new covenant.

Synthesis

“Nomos” reveals God’s holy character, exposes human sinfulness, and, in its prophetic and typological dimensions, points decisively to Jesus Christ. Fulfilled yet not discarded, its moral essence now radiates through Spirit-empowered love, guiding the

church in faith, holiness, and witness until “heaven and earth pass away” ([Matthew 5:18](#)).

◀ 4396. prophētēs ▶

Lexical Summary

prophētēs: Prophet

Original Word: προφήτης

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: prophētēs

Pronunciation: pro-fay'-tace

Phonetic Spelling: (prof-ay'-tace)

KJV: prophet

NASB: prophets, prophet

Word Origin: [from a compound of [G4253 \(πρό - before\)](#) and [G5346 \(φημί - said\)](#)]

1. a foreteller ("prophet")
2. (by analogy) an inspired speaker
3. (by extension) a poet

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

prophet.

From a compound of [pro](#) and [phemi](#); a foreteller ("prophet"); by analogy, an inspired speaker; by extension, a poet -- prophet.

see GREEK [pro](#)

see GREEK [phemi](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 4396 *prophētēs* (from [4253](#) /*pró*, "beforehand" and [5346](#) /*phēmi*, "elevating/asserting one idea over another, especially through the spoken-word") – properly, one who *speaks forth* by the inspiration of God; a *prophet*. [See 4394](#) (*prophēteia*).

A prophet ([4396](#) /*prophētēs*) declares the mind (message) of God, which sometimes predicts the future (foretelling) – and more commonly, *speaks forth* His message for a particular

situation. [4396](#) /*prophētēs* ("a prophet") then is someone inspired by God to *foretell* or *tell-forth* (*forthtell*) the Word of God.

Topical Lexicon

Definition and Scope

The term refers to one who speaks forth the message of God under divine impulse. In the New Testament it embraces historic prophets of Israel, John the Baptist ([Luke 7:26](#)), the Lord Jesus as the promised "Prophet like Moses" ([Acts 3:22](#)), and Spirit-gifted messengers active in the early church ([Acts 13:1](#); [Ephesians 4:11](#)).

Old Testament Background

Although the word itself is Greek, New Testament writers consistently connect it to the Hebrew prophetic tradition. Jesus explains that "all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John" ([Matthew 11:13](#)), underlining continuity between the covenants. [Luke 1:70](#) recalls that God "spoke through His holy prophets of old," while [Hebrews 1:1](#) summarizes the age-long method: "God spoke to our fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways."

Prophets in the Life and Ministry of Jesus

1. Jesus as Fulfillment. New Testament authors repeatedly cite prophetic texts to demonstrate that events in Christ's life "happened that the word spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled" ([Matthew 2:15](#); 4:14; 12:17; 21:4; 26:56).
2. Jesus as Prophet. The crowds hail Him: "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee" ([Matthew 21:11](#)). He applies to Himself [Isaiah 61:1–2](#) in [Luke 4:18–21](#) and calls Himself a prophet who must perish at Jerusalem ([Luke 13:33](#)).
3. Prophetic Affirmation. After the resurrection He rebukes the Emmaus disciples: "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" ([Luke 24:25](#)), then interprets "all the Prophets" concerning Himself ([Luke 24:27, 44](#)).

Prophets in the Early Church

Acts portrays prophets as essential to congregational life. Agabus foretells famine ([Acts 11:27–28](#)) and Paul's imprisonment ([Acts 21:10–11](#)). Judas and Silas, "themselves prophets," strengthen believers with "a lengthy message" ([Acts 15:32](#)). Antioch's leadership features prophets and teachers together ([Acts 13:1](#)).

Paul ranks the gift directly after apostleship: "God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets" ([1 Corinthians 12:28](#)). Prophets receive and weigh revelations in gathered worship ([1 Corinthians 14:29–32](#)); they must submit to apostolic doctrine ([1 Corinthians 14:37](#)). [Ephesians 2:20](#) places prophets, with apostles, as foundational to the household of God, while [Ephesians 3:5](#) says the mystery of Christ was "revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets."

Distinctive Functions

- Foretelling: Specific predictive messages ([Acts 11:28](#); 21:11).
- Forthtelling: Exhortation, consolation, and edification ([1 Corinthians 14:3](#)).
- Foundation-laying: Doctrinal testimony that aligns with apostolic teaching ([Ephesians 2:20](#)).
- Scripture-bearing: The prophetic writings constitute the authoritative Word ([Romans 16:26](#); [2 Peter 3:2](#)).

Testimony to Christ

Peter affirms, “All the prophets testify about Him” ([Acts 10:43](#)). The collective witness culminates in the suffering Messiah ([Acts 3:18, 24](#)) and the promise of restoration ([Acts 3:21](#)). Revelation pictures the consummation: “The mystery of God will be fulfilled, just as He proclaimed to His servants the prophets” ([Revelation 10:7](#)).

Honor and Persecution

Prophets are honored for faithfulness yet often suffer rejection. Jesus warns, “You bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets” ([Matthew 23:31](#)). Believers facing opposition are encouraged: “Remember the patience of the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord” ([James 5:10](#)). Heavenly reward awaits: “Rejoice and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven; for this is how their fathers treated the prophets” ([Luke 6:23](#)).

Eschatological Witness

Revelation depicts two prophetic witnesses whose ministry precedes Christ’s return ([Revelation 11:3-10](#)) and celebrates final vindication: “Rejoice over her, O heaven, O saints and apostles and prophets, because God has judged for you against her” ([Revelation 18:20](#)). The book closes declaring that the words of the prophecy must not be sealed, for “the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His servants what must soon take place” ([Revelation 22:6](#)).

Examples of New Testament Usage

[Matthew 5:17](#); 10:41; 23:37

[Luke 16:29-31](#); 24:25

[John 1:45](#); 7:52

[Acts 3:24](#); 13:40; 28:23

[Romans 1:2](#); 3:21

[1 Corinthians 14:29-32](#)

[Ephesians 2:20](#); 3:5; 4:11

[Hebrews 11:32](#)

[1 Peter 1:10](#)

[Revelation 11:10](#); 22:9

Application for Today

The prophetic office, whether embodied in scriptural writers or in Spirit-empowered exhorters, directs God's people to covenant faithfulness and to Christ Himself. Modern ministry that claims the prophetic mantle must be tested by conformity to canonical revelation ([1 Thessalonians 5:20-21](#)) and by fruit that glorifies God.

[Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

(12) **Therefore . . . whatsoever.**—The sequence of thought requires, perhaps, some explanation. God gives His good things in answer to our wishes, if only what we wish for is really for our good. It is man's highest blessedness to be like God, to "be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect," and therefore in this respect too he must strive to resemble Him. The ground thus taken gives a new character to that which otherwise had already become almost one of the "common-places" of Jewish and heathen ethics. Perhaps the most interesting illustration of the former is the well-known story of the Gentile inquirer who went to Shammai, the great scribe, and asked to be taught the law, in a few brief words, while he stood on one foot. The Rabbi turned away in anger. The questioner then went to Hillel, and made the same demand; and the sage turned and said, "Whatsoever thou wouldest that men should not do to thee, that do not thou to them. All our law is summed up in that." And so the Gentile became a proselyte. A like negative rule is quoted by Gibbon (*Decl. and Fall*, c. liv., note 2) from Isocrates, not without a sneer, as if it anticipated the teaching of the Christ. The nearest approach to our Lord's rule is, however, found in the saying ascribed to Aristotle, who, when asked how we should act towards our friends, replied, "As we would they should act to us" (Diog. Laert., v. 1, § 21). All these, however, though we may welcome them as instances of the *testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ* (as Tertullian calls it), are yet wanting in the completeness of our Lord's precept, and still more do they fall below it in regard of the ground on which the precept rests, and the power given to perform it. Yet even here, too, there is, of necessity, an implied limitation. We cannot comply with all men's desires, nor ought we to wish that they should comply with ours, for those desires may be foolish and frivolous, or may involve the indulgence of lust or passion. The rule is only safe when our own will has been first purified, so that we wish only from others that which is really good. Reciprocity in evil or in folly is obviously altogether alien from the mind of Christ.

[Benson Commentary](#)

[Matthew 7:12](#). *Therefore all things*, &c. — As if he had said, But it is only on this condition that he will give, and continue to give them, viz., that ye follow the example of his equity and benevolence, that you imitate the God of love; that, being “animated by his goodness, you study to express your gratitude for it by your integrity and kindness to your fellow-creatures, treating them, in every instance, as you would think it reasonable to be treated by them, if you were in their circumstances and they in yours: for this is, in effect, a summary and abstract of all the human and social virtues recommended in the moral precepts of *the law and the prophets*, and it was one of the greatest ends of both to bring men to this equitable and amiable temper. I say, *one of the greatest*, that this may be reconciled with our Lord’s declaring *the love of God* to be *the first and great commandment*, [Matthew 22:38](#). And, indeed, it is a most absurd and fatal error to imagine, that *the regulation of social life is the only end of religion.*” — Doddridge. Thus far proceeds the doctrinal part of this sermon. In the next verse begins the exhortation to practise it.

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

7:12-14 Christ came to teach us, not only what we are to know and believe, but what we are to do; not only toward God, but toward men; not only toward those of our party and persuasion, but toward men in general, all with whom we have to do. We must do that to our neighbour which we ourselves acknowledge to be fit and reasonable. We must, in our dealings with men, suppose ourselves in the same case and circumstances with those we have to do with, and act accordingly. There are but two ways right and wrong, good and evil; the way to heaven and the way to hell; in the one or other of these all are walking: there is no middle place hereafter, no middle way now. All the children of men are saints or sinners, godly or ungodly. See concerning the way of sin and sinners, that the gate is wide, and stands open. You may go in at this gate with all your lusts about you; it gives no check to appetites or passions. It is a broad way; there are many paths in it; there is choice of sinful ways. There is a large company in this way. But what profit is there in being willing to go to hell with others, because they will not go to heaven with us? The way to eternal life is narrow. We are not in heaven as soon as we are got through the strait gate. Self must be denied, the body kept under, and corruptions mortified. Daily temptations must be resisted; duties must be done. We must watch in all things, and walk with care; and we must go through much tribulation. And yet this way should invite us all; it leads to life: to present comfort in the favour of God, which is the life of the soul; to eternal bliss, the hope of which at the end of our way, should make all the difficulties of the road easy to us. This plain declaration of Christ has been disregarded by many who have taken pains to explain it away; but in all ages the real disciple of Christ has been looked on as a singular, unfashionable character; and all that have sided with the greater number, have gone on in the broad road to destruction. If we would serve God, we must be firm in our religion. Can we often hear of the strait gate and the narrow way, and how few there are that find it, without being in pain for ourselves, or considering whether we are entered on the narrow way, and what progress we are making in it?

[Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

All things whatsoever ... - This command has been usually called the "Saviour's golden rule," a name given to it on account of its great value. All that you "expect" or "desire" of others in similar circumstances, do to them. Act not from selfishness or injustice, but put yourself in the place of the other, and ask what you would expect of him. This would make you impartial, candid, and just. It would destroy avarice, envy, treachery, unkindness, slander, theft, adultery, and murder. It has been well said that this law is what the balance-wheel is to machinery. It would prevent all irregularity of movement in the moral world, as that does in a steam-engine. It is easily applied, its justice is seen by all people, and all must acknowledge its force and value.

This is the law and the prophets - That is, this is the sum or substance of the Old Testament. It is nowhere found in so many words, but it is a summary expression of all that the law required. The sentiment was in use among the Jews. Hillel, an ancient Rabbi, said to a man who wished to become a proselyte, and who asked him to teach him the whole law, "Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to another." Something of the same sentiment was found among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and is found in the writings of Confucius.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

12. Therefore—to say all in one word.

all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them—the same thing and in the same way.

for this is the law and the prophets—"This is the substance of all relative duty; all Scripture in a nutshell." Incomparable summary! How well called "the royal law!" (Jas 2:8; compare Ro 13:9). It is true that similar maxims are found floating in the writings of the cultivated Greeks and Romans, and naturally enough in the Rabbinical writings. But so expressed as it is here—in immediate connection with, and as the sum of such duties as has been just enjoined, and such principles as had been before taught—it is to be found nowhere else. And the best commentary upon this fact is, that never till our Lord came down thus to teach did men effectually and widely exemplify it in their practice. The precise sense of the maxim is best referred to common sense. It is not, of course, what—in our wayward, capricious, gasping moods—we should wish that men would do to us, that we are to hold ourselves bound to do to them; but only what—in the exercise of an impartial judgment, and putting ourselves in their place—we consider it reasonable that they should do to us, that we are to do to them.

Matthew Poole's Commentary

Most interpreters think the term *therefore* here redundant, as some such little particles often are in holy writ, for it is hard to make out this to be a proper inference from the premises. This precept containeth in it the substance of all that is to be found in the books of the law and the prophets which concerneth us in reference to others, the sum of the second table, which requireth only justice and charity. Christ doth not say, this is all the law and the prophets, but *this is the law and the prophets*. There is no man but

would have others deal justly with him in giving him what is his own, whether honour, or tribute, or estate, &c., neither taking nor withholding his own from him. Nor is there any but, if he stood in need of it, would desire the charitable help of another, or a charitable remission from him of what he might in exact justice require. Do ye (saith our Saviour) the same unto them. And indeed this is but a confirmation of the light and law of nature, no more than what men would do if they would hearken to the light within them. And without this in vain do men pretend to religion, as our Saviour teacheth, [Mark 7:9-13](#); which makes some think that our Saviour by this reflects upon the Pharisees, who laid all their religion upon ceremonies, and some ritual performances in observance of their traditions, and omitted *the weightier things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith*, [Matthew 23:23](#).

[Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

Therefore all things whatsoever,.... These words are the epilogue, or conclusion of our Lord's discourse; the sum of what he had delivered in the two preceding chapters, and in this hitherto, is contained in these words; for they not only respect the exhortation about judging and reproof; but every duty respecting our neighbour; it is a summary of the whole. It is a golden rule, here delivered, and ought to be observed by all mankind, Jews and Gentiles. So the Karaite Jews (l) say,

"all things that a man would not take to himself, , "it is not fit to do them to his brethren"."

And Maimonides (m) has expressed it much in the same words our Lord here does;

"all things whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, (says he,) do you the same to your brethren, in the law, and in the commandments:"

only there seems to be a restriction in the word "brethren"; the Jews, perhaps, meaning no other than Israelites; whereas our Lord's rule reaches to all without exception, "all things whatsoever"

ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: let them be who they will, whether brethren, or kinsmen, according to the flesh, or what not; "for this is the law and the prophets": the sum of the law and the prophets; not the whole sum of them, or the sum of the whole law: but of that part of it which respects our neighbours. Remarkable is the advice given by Hillel (n) to one who came to be made a proselyte by him;

"whatsoever is hateful to thee, that do not thou to thy neighbour; , "this is all the whole law", and the rest is an explication of it, go and be perfect:"

yea, this rule is not only agreeable to the law of Moses, and the prophets, but even to the law and light of nature. Aristotle being asked, how we ought to carry ourselves to our friends, answered (o), as we would wish they would carry it to us. Alexander Severus, a

Heathen emperor, so greatly admired this rule of Christ's, that he ordered it to be written on the walls of his closet.

(l) R. Eliahu Addaret, c. 3. apud Trigland de sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 166. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 146. 4. (m) Hilch. Ebel. c. 14. sect. 1.((n) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 31. 1. Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.((o) Diog. Laert. in Vit. Aristotel. l. 5.

Geneva Study Bible

{4} Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the {b} law and the prophets.

(4) An explanation of the meaning of the second table.

(b) That is to say, The doctrine of the law and prophets.

Meyer's NT Commentary

[Matthew 7:12](#). At this point Jesus takes a retrospective glance at all that He has been saying since [Matthew 5:17](#),—beginning with Moses and the prophets,—concerning our duty to our neighbour, but introducing, indeed, many other instructions and exhortations. But putting out of view such matters as are foreign to His discourse, He now *recapitulates* all that has been said on the duties we owe to our neighbour, *so that οὖν points back* to [Matthew 5:17](#). The correctness of this view is evident from the following: οὗτος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ νόμος, etc., from which it further appears that οὖν does not merely refer back to [Matthew 5:1-5](#) (Kuinoel, Neander, Baumgarten-Crusius). As Luther well observes: “With those words He concludes the instructions contained in those three chapters, and gathers them all into one little bundle.” Fritzsche is somewhat illogical when he says that οὖν generalizes the conclusion from οἶδατε δόματα ... τέκνοις ὑμῶν, which proposition, however, was a mere *lemma*. Ewald thinks that [Matthew 7:12](#) is here in its wrong place, that its original position was somewhere before ἀγαπᾶτε, [Matthew 5:44](#), and might still be repeated after [Matthew 5:48](#); according to Bleek and Holtzmann, founding on [Luke 6:31](#), its original position was after [Matthew 5:42](#). But it is precisely its significant position as a concluding sentence, along with its reference to the law and the prophets, that Luke *has taken* away from it. Comp. Weiss. On θέλειν ἵνα, see note on [Luke 6:31](#).

οὕτω] not for ταῦτα, as if the matter were merged in the manner (de Wette), but *in such a manner, in this way*, corresponding, that is, to this your θέλειν.

The *truth* of this Christian maxim lies in this, that the words ὅσα ἂν θέλητε, etc., as spoken by Jesus, and, on the ground of His fulfilment of the law (οὖν), which

presupposes faith in Him, can only mean a willing of a truly *moral* kind, and not that of a self-seeking nature, such as the desire for flattery.

οὗτος, etc.] *for this is the sum of moral duty*, and so on.

For parallels from profane writers, see Wetstein; *Bab. Schabb.* f. 31. 1 : “Quod tibi ipsi odiosum est, proximo ne facias; nam haec est tota lex.” But being all of a *negative* character, like [Tob 4:15](#), they are essentially different from the present passage. For coincidences of a more meagre kind from Greek writers, see Spiess, *Logos Spermat.* p. 24.

Expositor's Greek Testament

[Matthew 7:12](#). *The golden rule*. οὖν here probably because in the source, cf. καὶ in quotation in [Hebrews 1:6](#). The connection must be a matter of conjecture—with [Matthew 7:11](#), a, “Extend your goodness from children to all,” Fritzsche; with [Matthew 7:11](#), b, “Imitate the divine goodness,” Bengel; with [Matthew 7:1-5](#); [Matthew 7:6-11](#) being an interpolation, Weiss and Holtz. (H.C.). [Luke 6:31](#) places it after the precept contained in [Matthew 5:42](#), and Wendt, in his reconstruction of the *logia* (L. J., i. 61), follows that clue. The thought is certainly in sympathy with the teaching of [Matthew 5:38-48](#), and might very well be expounded in that connection. But the meaning is not dependent on connection. The sentence is a worthy close to the discourse beginning at [Matthew 5:17](#). “Respondent ultima primis,” Beng. Here as there “law and prophets”.—ἵνα with subjunctive after θέλητε, instead of infinitive.—πάντα οὖν ... ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς. The law of nature, says Rosenmüller. Not quite. Wetstein, indeed, gives copious instances of something similar in Greek and Roman writers and Rabbinical sources, and the modern science of comparative religion enables us to multiply them. But recent commentators (including Holtz., H.C.) have remarked that, in these instances, the rule is stated in *negative* terms. So, e.g., in [Tob 4:15](#), ὁ μισεῖς, μηδενὶ ποιήσης, quoted by Hillel in reply to one who asked him to teach the whole law while he stood on one leg. So also in the saying of Confucius: “Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself,” Legge, *Chinese Classics*, i. 191 f. The negative confines us to the region of *justice*; the positive takes us into the region of *generosity* or *grace*, and so embraces both law *and* prophets. We wish much more than we can claim—to be helped in need, encouraged in struggles, defended when misrepresented, and befriended when our back is at the wall. Christ would have us do all that in a magnanimous, benignant way; to be not merely δίκαιος but ἀγαθός.—νόμος καὶ προφῆται: perhaps to a certain extent a current phrase = all that is necessary, but, no doubt, seriously meant; therefore, may help us to understand the statement in [Matthew 5:17](#), “I came not to destroy, but to fulfil”. The golden rule was Law and Prophets only in an ideal sense, and in the same sense only was Christ a fulfiller.—*vide* Wendt, L. J., ii. 341.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

12. *Therefore*] **The practical result of what has been said both in regard to judgment and to prayer is mutual charity.**

The thought of the divine judgment teaches forbearance; the thought of the divine goodness teaches kindness.

Bengel's Gnomon

Matthew 7:12. Οὖν, *therefore*) **THE SUM OF ALL THAT HAS BEEN SAID FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAPTER. HE CONCLUDES [THIS PORTION OF THE DISCOURSE], AND AT THE SAME TIME RETURNS TO CH. MATTHEW 5:17.**

The conclusion corresponds with the commencement.

And we ought to imitate the Divine goodness, mentioned in Matthew 7:11.—θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν, *ye would that they should do*) “*Ye would:*” this is pointedly said (notanter): for men often do otherwise [than what ye would that they should do]. We are not to follow their example. Sc. by benefiting, not injuring.—οἱ ἄνθρωποι, *men*)

THE INDEFINITE APPELLATION OF *MEN*, FREQUENTLY EMPLOYED BY THE SAVIOUR, ALREADY ALLUDES TO THE FUTURE PROPAGATION OF HIS TEACHING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE.—οὕτω, *THUS*) THE SAME THINGS IN THE SAME WAY: OR *THUS*, AS I HAVE TOLD YOU UP TO THIS POINT.—οὕτως, *THIS*)

The law and the prophets enjoin many other things, as for example the love of God: but yet the law and the prophets also tend to this as their especial scope, viz. *whatsoever ye would*, etc., and he who performs this, performs all the rest more easily: see ch. Matthew 19:19.

Pulpit Commentary

Verse 12. - Ver. 12a, parallel passage: [Luke 6:31](#); [Luke 12b](#), Matthew only. **All things therefore. Therefore.** Summing up the lesson of vers. 1-11 (cf. ver. 7, note). In consequence of all that I have said about censoriousness and the means of overcoming it, let the very opposite feeling rule your conduct towards others. Let all (emphatic) your dealings with men be conducted in the same spirit in which you would desire them to deal with you. **Even so.** Not "these things" do ye to them; for our Lord carefully avoids any expression that might lead to a legal enumeration of different details, but "thus" (οὕτως), referring to the character of your own wishes. (For this "golden rule," cf. Tobit 4:15 (negative form); cf. also patristic references in Resch, 'Agrapha,' pp. 95, 135.) On the occasional similarity of pre-Christian writings to the teaching of our Lord, Augustine (**vide** Trench, 'Serm.,' **in loc.**) well says it is "the glory of the written and spoken law, that it is the transcript of that which was from the first, and not merely as old as this man or that, but as the Creation itself, a reproduction of that obscured and forgotten law written at the beginning by the finger of God on the hearts of all men. When, therefore, heathen sages or poets proclaimed any part of this, they had not thereby anticipated Christ; they had only deciphered some fragment of that law, which he gave from the first, and which, when men, exiles and fugitives from themselves and from the knowledge of their own hearts, had lost the power of reading, he came in the flesh to read to them anew, and to bring out the well-nigh obliterated characters afresh." (Compare also Bishop Lightfoot's essay on "St. Paul and Seneca," in his 'Philippians.')

For this is the law and the prophets. For this. This principle of action and mode of life is, in fact, the sum of all Bible teaching (cf. [Leviticus 19:18](#)). Observe:

(1) Our Lord brings out the same thought, but with its necessary limitation to the second table, in [Matthew 22:40](#) (cf. [Romans 13:10](#)).

(2) Our Lord thus returns to the main subject of his sermon, the relation in which he and his must stand to the Law ([Matthew 5:17](#)). Matthew 7:12

MacArthur Commentary on Matthew:

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS CHILDREN DEMANDS IT

Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (7:12)

The implication of verses 7–11 is made explicit in v. 12.

**THE PERFECT LOVE OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER IS
MOST REFLECTED IN HIS CHILDREN WHEN THEY
TREAT OTHERS AS THEY THEMSELVES
WISH TO BE TREATED.**

There is no capacity within an unbeliever to love in the way that Jesus commands here.

Unbelievers can do many ethical things, and every once in a while they might even approach the level of this highest of ethical standards. But they cannot sustain such selflessness, because they do not have the divine resource necessary for regular, habitual living on that plane.

However you want people to treat you sums up the sermon to this point, **and so treat them** is a summary of *the Law and the Prophets.*

It is also a paraphrase of the second great commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39; cf. Lev. 19:18).

The golden rule instructs us as to how we are to love other people, “especially,” as Paul points out, “those of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10).

And ***“he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law”***
(Rom. 13:8; cf. v. 10; Gal. 5:14).

*How we **treat** others is not to be determined
by how we expect them to treat us or by how
we think they should treat us, but by
how we want them to treat us.*

Herein is the heart of the principle, an aspect of the general truth that is not found in similar expressions in other religions and philosophies.

For many years the basic instrument of music was the harpsichord. As its keys are depressed, a given string is plucked to create the desired note, much as a guitar string is plucked with a pick. But the tone made in that way is not pure, and the mechanism is relatively slow and limiting. Sometime during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, during Beethoven's lifetime, an unknown musician modified the harpsichord so that the keys activated hammers that struck, rather than plucked, the strings. With that minor change, a major improvement was made that would henceforth radically enhance the entire musical world, giving a grandeur and breadth never before known.

That is the sort of revolutionary change Jesus gives in the golden rule. Every other form of this basic principle had been given in purely negative terms, and is found in the literature of almost every major religion and philosophical system. The Jewish rabbi Hillel said, “What is hateful to yourself do not to someone else.” The book of Tobit in the Apocrypha teaches, “What thou thyself hatest, to no man do.” The Jewish scholars in Alexandria who translated the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) advised in a certain piece of correspondence, “As you wish that no evil befall you, but to be a partaker of all good things, so you should act on the same principle toward your subjects and offenders.” Confucius taught, “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”

An ancient Greek king named Nicocles wrote, “Do not do to others the things which make you angry when you experience them at the hands of other people.” The Greek philosopher Epictetus said, “What you avoid suffering yourself, do not afflict on others.” The Stoics promoted the principle, “What you do not want to be done to you, do not do to anyone else.” In every case the emphasis is negative. **The principle is an important part of right human relations, but it falls short—far short—of God’s perfect standard.**

Those expressions go only as far as sinful man can go, and are essentially expressions not of love but of self-interest. The motivation is basically selfish—refraining from harming others in order that they will not harm us. Those negative forms of the rule are not golden, because they are primarily utilitarian and motivated by fear and self-preservation. As Scripture repeatedly tells us of fallen mankind, “There is none who does good, there is not even one” (Rom. 3:12; cf. Ps. 14:3); “each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa. 53:6).

Man’s basic problem is preoccupation with self. He is innately beset with narcissism, a condition named after the Greek mythological character Narcissus, who spent his life admiring his reflection in a pool of water.

In the final analysis,
every sin results from preoccupation
with self.

We sin because we are totally selfish, totally devoted to ourselves, rather than to God and to others. **Unregenerate man can**

never come up to the standard of selfless love—the love

that loves others as oneself and that treats others in the same way that one wants to be treated.

Only Jesus gives the fullness of the truth, which encompasses both the positive and the negative. **And only Jesus can give the power to live by that full truth.**

The dynamic for living this supreme ethic must come from outside our fallen nature. It can come only from the indwelling Holy Spirit, whose first fruit is love (Gal. 5:22). In Jesus Christ, “the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Rom. 5:5). Only Christ’s own Spirit can empower us to love each other as He loves us (John 13:34). We can only love in a divine way because God Himself has first loved us divinely (1 John 4:19).

Selfless love does not serve in order to prevent its own harm or to insure its own welfare. It serves for the sake of the one being served, and serves in the way it likes being served—whether it ever receives such service or not.

**THAT LEVEL OF LOVE IS THE DIVINE LEVEL,
AND CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY BY**

DIVINE HELP.

Only God's children can have right relations with others, because they possess the motivation and the resource to refrain from self-righteously condemning others and to love in an utterly selfless way.¹

THE "Golden Rule"

The Term's Origin

- **Early 17th Century:**

British Anglican churchmen first used the specific term "Golden Rule" to refer to the well-known ethical principle.

- **Early Usage:**

Some of the earliest recorded uses of the term were by Anglican figures Charles Gibbon and Thomas Jackson around 1604.

The Principle's History

- **Biblical Context:**

The principle of "do unto others as you would have them do to you" is a central teaching of Jesus, found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

- **Ancient Roots:**

While the term is recent, the concept of treating others as you wish to be treated is ancient and appears in many world religions and philosophies.

- **Confucianism:** The "Silver Rule" of "what is hateful to you, do not do to another" is found in the writings of Confucius, dating back to the 6th century BCE.

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*Matthew*](#), vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985–1989), 441–448.

- **Ancient Greece:** The ancient Greek rhetorician Isocrates also taught a similar principle: "Do not do to others that which angers you when they do it to you".
- **Judaism:** The biblical concept of "love your neighbor" was interpreted by Rabbi Hillel as "that which is hateful unto you do not do unto others".
- **Christianity:** Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount are one of the most famous positive formulations of the rule: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12).

Why it Became Known as the "Golden Rule"

- **Simplicity and Applicability:**

The rule is a simple, yet profoundly wise, ethical concept that is universally applicable.

- **Christian Prominence:**

Its inclusion in the teachings of Jesus brought the principle to great fame and prominence, leading to it being widely adopted and referenced.

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“WHAT IS THE LAW OF LIBERTY?”

We find the law of liberty first mentioned in [James 1:25](#), *“But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.”*

JAMES HERE REFERS TO THE GOSPEL, WHICH, ALTHOUGH IT IS CALLED HERE A LAW, IS NOT, STRICTLY SPEAKING, A

LAW COMPRISED OF REQUIREMENTS AND ENFORCED BY SANCTIONS. RATHER, IT IS A DECLARATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SALVATION BY CHRIST, AN OFFER OF PEACE AND PARDON BY HIM, AND A FREE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH HIM.

The juxtaposition of the two contradictory terms — “**law**” and “**liberty**” — made the point, especially to the Jews, that this was an entirely new way of thinking about both. Paul uses this same technique when he refers to the “**law of faith**” in [Romans 3:27](#).

The perfect liberty found in Christ fulfills the “perfect law” of the Old Testament because Christ was the only one who could. Those who come to Him in faith now have freedom from sin’s bondage and are able to obey God. Christ alone can set us free and give us true liberty ([John 8:36](#)).

The phrase “law of liberty” is found again in [James 2:12](#). In this portion of his epistle, James is discussing the sin of showing partiality within the church. He reminds his hearers that to show favoritism toward others is a violation of the command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus Himself reminded us that all of the Law that God gave to Moses could be summed up into one concise principle—to love God with all the heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves ([Matthew 22:37–40](#)).

God’s Word teaches plainly that all have sinned and stand condemned before God

([Romans 3:10, 23; 6:23](#)). No one but Jesus Christ has ever fully obeyed the law of God. He who knew no sin became sin for us ([Isaiah 53:5–6; 2 Corinthians 5:21](#))! Christ's sacrifice on the cross has redeemed from the curse of the Law all who trust in Him by faith ([Galatians 3:10–14](#)). Believers have been justified (declared righteous) by His grace ([Romans 3:24–28](#)) and are no longer under condemnation ([Romans 8:1](#)). All who have trusted Christ have received the Holy Spirit ([Romans 8:9](#)). It is His power in us that gives us the ability to please God ([Galatians 5:13–16](#)).

Christ's perfect sacrifice brings release from the eternal death sentence that the Law brings upon all sinners, and it gives believers the ability to please God as we put off the works of the flesh ([Colossians 3:1–9](#)), put on love ([Colossians 3:12–17](#)), and walk in (or by) the Spirit day by day. It is by the Spirit's filling and control ([Galatians 5:16–26; Ephesians 5:17–21](#)) that we can walk in love and please our Heavenly Father.

What perfect liberty we now enjoy! What a blessed privilege to have received mercy, to be redeemed (liberated) from the bondage of sin, and to be empowered for service by our Creator! Our love for others proves the reality of our faith ([1 John 4:7–11](#)). Let us love one another even as He has loved us ([1 John 4:19](#)).