

Scriptures and Doctrine :: FOUR GOLDEN RULES by Zac Poonen

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1.Receive all whom God has received

"God has placed the members in the Body just as He desired...that there should be no division in the Body" (1 Cor.12:18, 25). God has raised up men at different times in different lands to restore a pure testimony for Him. But after those men of God died, their followers have made their groups exclusive and cultistic. But the body of Christ is larger than any group. And we must never forget that. The bride of Christ is found in many, many groups today. So we must seek for fellowship with all whom the Lord has accepted, even though we may not be able to work together with many of them, because of differences in interpretation of the Word of God.

2.Treat every human being with dignity

"With our tongue, we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (James 3:9, 10). Any word or action that degrades a human being is never from God. It is always from Satan who forever seeks to demean and degrade people. We are commanded to speak "with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet.3:15) to all people - whether they be our wives, our children, younger people, beggars or enemies. All men must be treated with dignity. For example, when giving a gift to a poorer brother, we must do so, without robbing him of his dignity as a human being. We must be his brother and not his benefactor.

3.Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit

"Be (being) filled with the Spirit" (Eph.5:18 - Literal). It is impossible to live the Christian life, as God wants us to, if we are not continually filled with the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to serve God as we should without being anointed with the Spirit and receiving His supernatural gifts. Jesus Himself needed to be anointed. The Holy Spirit has come to make us like Jesus in our personal lives as well as in our ministry (See 2 Cor.3:18). God fills us with the Spirit in order to conform us to the likeness of Christ in our character, and to equip us to serve as Jesus served. We do not have the same ministry that Jesus had, and so we won't be able to do what Jesus did in His ministry. But we can be as fully equipped to serve God as Jesus Himself was - to fulfill OUR OWN ministry. All that is required is an adequate thirst and faith, on our part, for rivers of living water to flow out through us (Jn.7:37-39). We must earnestly long for the gifts of the Spirit if we are to have them (1 Cor.14:1). Otherwise we will never have them. A church without the gifts of the Holy Spirit is like a man who may be living but who is deaf, blind, mute and lame - and therefore useless.

4.Know God intimately

"The people who know their God will be strong" (Dan.11:32) Today, God does not want us to know Him second-hand through others. He invites even the youngest believer to know Him personally (Heb.8:11). Jesus defined eternal life as knowing God and Jesus Christ personally (John 17:3). This was the greatest passion of Paul's life and must be our greatest passion too (Phil.3:10). One who desires to know God intimately, will have to listen to Him always. Jesus said that the only way man could keep himself spiritually alive was by listening to EVERY word that proceeded from God's mouth (Matt .4:4). He also said that to sit at His feet and listen to Him was the most important thing in the Christian life (Lk.10:42). We must develop the habit that Jesus had of listening to the Father from early morning every day (Isa.50:4), right through the day; and then to be in a listening attitude in the hours of night when we are asleep too - so that if we ever wake up from our sleep at night, we can say, "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening" (1 Sam.3:10). Knowing God will make us overcomers in all situations - because God has a solution for every problem that we face - and if we listen to Him, He will tell us what that solution is.