**The Golden Rule**: V. 12 – What an absolutely staggering commandment.

**Let’s Read and Compare**: Matt. 22: 34-40

**Differences:**

1. The question and response of the Pharisees and Jesus is not present.
2. The 1st and greatest commandment mentioned in Matt. 22 is not mentioned in Matt. 7:12 (Love God with all your Heart, Soul, and Mind).

**Similar:**

1. The 2nd commandment that is like the first, to love your neighbor as yourself.
2. Both mention that “this is the Law and the Prophets.”

**Understanding the Connection Between Loving “your neighbor as yourself” & “this is the Law and the Prophets”**:

1. This verse alludes back to **Matt. 5:17-20** – Jesus had not come “to abolish the Law or the Prophets,” but had come to “fulfill them” v. 17.
2. I believe this verse ***sums up the relational thrust*** of the whole sermon on the mount.

* Thus, Jesus is saying that treating others as you want to be treated “is the law and the prophets.” ***All that they teach relationally is summed up*** in “so whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.”

1. Concern for the feelings of others mirrors God’s care of us.

**Recap:** It Seems to Me to Be a Great Summary

5:5 🡪 Jesus teaches us to be meek.

5:7 🡪 Jesus teaches us to be merciful.

5:9 🡪 Jesus teaches us to be peacemakers.

5:13/14 🡪 You are “the *salt* of the earth” “you are the *light* of the world.” – ***Remember. V. 16***

*Christ’s Ethical Teaching*: 🡪 Anger (anger, grudges, insults), Lust, Divorce, Oaths (keeping our word), Retaliating (retaliating to insults and going beyond what is asked), Loving Enemies.   
 6:2 🡪 Jesus teaches and calls us to “give to the needy.”

6:14 🡪 Jesus teaches and calls us to “forgive others their trespasses.”

7:1 🡪 Jesus teaches us not to judge others - “judge not.”

**Major Point:**

* I think what he means is that when you see people love like that (fulfill the Golden Rule), what you are seeing is the **visible expression of the Law and the Prophets**. This behavior among people manifests *openly* and *publicly* and *practically* what the Old Testament is about. It fulfills the Law and the Prophets. **Loving God is invisible. It is an internal passion of the soul. But it comes to expression when you love others.**

**Truth to Believe:**

* Loving God is not less important than loving others, but rather loving God is made visible, manifest, and practical in our lives when we do this commandment.

**Going Deeper: The Golden Rule**

**Thought to Contemplate**: It is as if this command demands that we tear the skin off our body (obviously not literally), and wrap it around another person so that I ***feel that I am that other person***; and *all the longings that I have for my own* safety and health and success and happiness *I now feel for that other person as though he or she were me*.

* For us to truly do something like this God would have to do something unbelievably powerful and upending/overturning, in regard to our flesh, would have to happen in our souls. ***SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL.***
  + Something well beyond what self-preserving, self-enhancing, self-exalting, self-esteeming, self-advancing human beings like us can do on our own.

**Paul’s Perspective:** Paul sees this type of practical love as utterly dependent on our relationship with God and living by the Spirit.

**Rom 8:3-4**: **3**For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh,God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh (= self-reliance), **4**in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (= God-reliance).

* In other words, fulfilling the law—loving our neighbor as we love ourselves—is **not something we can do on our own**. We do it ***by the Holy Spirit***.

**The Call:** To Love Others as Ourselves

* Meek spirit, merciful, peaceful and peacemakers, being a light and salt, Christ’s ethical teaching lived out, loving (practically) even our enemies, giving to the needy, forgiving others who have trespassed us, and not judging others… 🡪 Other passages throughout scripture that teaches us how to love others.

**Getting Practical:**

* Your Job (employees, boss)
* Your Spouse
* Your Children
* Your Other Family Members
* Your Friends
* Your Church Members
* Your Fellow Students (those in school)
* Your Enemies (those who have hurt you, bother you, insult you…)
* The Stranger (the person in need (physical/spiritual/mentally), the person treating you rudely) & the Lost in your Life

**Two Questions to Ponder with the Holy Spirit:**

* Do you actively seek (***do***) to see yourself through other people’s shoes (***do also to them***)?
* Is your love sacrificial and selfless in nature? Does it cost you anything?
  + Jesus’ teaches us to mimic the love he has shown for us. ***WILL YOU***?