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Before I die, I want to...

Bruce Hastings

Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die." (Gen. 45: 28). These words came from the mouth of Jacob. All of us have some things we would like to do before we die. The following is my list.

1. I want to know that I have done everything I can to have a positive influence on others.

When I am gone, I want people to miss me - not because I am anything special, but because I tried to live so that others could see God living in me. "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:15-16)

2. I want to right any wrongs that I have committed against others, so that God will forgive me of the wrongs I have committed against Him.

"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt. 6:12-15)

3. I want to be a faithful and wise steward and take care of things so I will not be a burden on my family when I am gone.

"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?" And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes." (Luke 12:40-43)

4. I want to do everything I can for the church – not because I am a preacher but because I am a Christian.

Christ has redeemed me. He owns me. He is my master, I am His willing servant. I owe Him everything. I WANT to be a worker for the Lord. Why are we added to the church? To Work. The church is organized to work.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard." (Matt 20:1)

5. Before I die, I want everybody to know that God is the only source of authority.

We need to draw people to Christ, Not the church. When we draw them to Christ – He will add them to the church.

"Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other." (1Cor.4:6)

Jacob intended to see his son Joseph before he died. Whatever I intend to do, I must do it, before I die. Friend what do you want to do before you die? What is on your bucket list? There are many things people talk about doing before they die but remember friend, we do not know how many days or hours we have left. "In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.'" (2Kings 20:1) "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work." John 9:4

"Do To Others..."

-by Robert F. Turner

The Lord gave me a yardstick by which to measure every relationship in my life. It is easy to understand, and easy to apply if I have the will to do so. It involves no complicated formula; it is with me every wakeful hour. Its strength is in direct proportion to my weakness; binding me with cords of my own weaving, or freeing me as I free my own heart. It comprehends my whole duty to man.

While yet a child I learned it as: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you;" but later I found it is properly stated: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12, see Luke 6:31)

"All things"" is very broad. This includes my driving on the highway, selling a rifle, working for an employer, living with my wife, writing to my brethren, or about them.

Whatsoever ye would --" is not "whatsoever they do." This rule does not depend on the other fellow -- it is determined in my own heart. How would I like to be treated? The rule is so reasonable, so unquestionably just, that it defies objection. It asks no pound of flesh, because its regulator would give none. It prescribes fair, honest treatment, because the party of the first part desires such. Self-interest, which so often blinds me to my duty to others, becomes the very indicator of those duties. God made the rule, but I am left to apply it -- with the intensity gendered by man's most powerful inner force, self-love. "No man ever yet hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it..." (Eph. 5:29)

"Do ye even so --" Lenski comments: "what we would like to have men do to us, whether they do that to us or not, we are to keep doing (poieite, durative) to them." Till seven times? Nay, but until seventy times seven. This regulates conduct, but it is far more than a law of "doing" -- it is a basic principle of attitude, of under-lying motive, which demonstrates itself in what we do.

"The law and the prophets" Jesus said; making it clear that this is no new rule, but one inherent in God's will for man in all times. Further, this clearly relates the rule to the giver of law, emphasizing the external authority of God. Those who seek to limit the "whole duty of man" to humanitarian obligations seem to miss this all-important point. I Jn.3:14-f clearly relates our love for our fellow man with our prior love for God. Because He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (Vs. 16) "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (Vs. 23)

Christians are in a position to understand and apply the "Golden Rule", as are none others. But the sad fact is that many so-called Christians make little practical application of this rule in their life, and seem a bit embarrassed if the preacher uses it as a text. Until we learn well the "second table of the law" (Matt.22: 39) we preach the "gospel" (?) in vain.