

Series: Seven Simple Truths about Life
Title: The Gold Standard for Life
Text: Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31
Key Word: Standard
Proposition: Everyone will know the joy of life by living by the Gold Standard.

Real life, like the board games we played as children, is filled with twists and turns, setbacks and surprises. We play the cards we're dealt; we take risks, face adversity, suffer losses and sometimes reap rewards. And, like a board game, real life eventually comes to an end. The game is over and put back in the box.

The board game called, “Life” was created in 1860 by Milton Bradley as the checkered game of life. This first game he created sold about 45,000 copies by the end of its first year. The game looked like a [modified checkerboard](#) where the object was to land on the “good” spaces and collect 100 points. A player could gain fifty points toward this goal by reaching "Happy Old Age" in the far corner, opposite "Infancy" where one began.

In 1960, the one hundredth anniversary of the game, the form of the game now known as *The Game of Life*, was designed and introduced by Rueben Klamer. The game simulates a person's travels through his or her life, from high school graduation, college (or not) to retirement, with jobs, marriages and children (or not) along the way. The object of the game is to reach millionaire acres and acquire the most money.

How are we meant to play the real game of life? In the weeks to come we hope to describe seven of life's most important truths – truths that make the difference between bitterness and peace, sorrow and joy, despair and hope. These truths appear

to very simple lessons, what is challenging though is applying these truths so that they become God-shaped habits. But when we study, pray, talk about these truths; memorize Biblical principles we begin to change one step at a time, becoming more and more what we were created to be.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, came from the glory of heaven to reveal and to offer us this real life. He said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”* (John 10:10) This truth is our memory verse for our series. Let’s all say it together. Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”* When we live the Jesus way, we live the life we were created to live.

A common household tool is the hammer. There are different types of hammers: sledge hammer, ball-peen hammer, and a claw hammer. I have a common claw hammer. One end is designed to deliver an impact to an object, like a nail. The other end is designed to pull or pry something out of another thing. Typically, we use it to pull out nails from a board. If I would use the claw end to drive a nail, like this, I would be risking pain and suffering. But if I use this hammer the way it is designed to be used, then I limit the risk of suffering.

God offers us some life truths which when applied as they were intended; will enable us to know real life, abundant life, a fulfilling life, yes, eternal life. This life that God offers though is impossible to live apart from a relationship with Jesus.

Jesus said, *“that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”* (John 3:15)

*“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal **life**, but whoever rejects the Son will not*

see life, for God's wrath remains on him." (John 3:36) Jesus said, *"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:40) I firmly believe that you are here for a reason. God has led you here so that you may seriously consider your life in relation to the life God offers you. We hope that the Holy Spirit will convince you to look to the Son and trust in Him for this life.

Today, Jesus reveals the Gold standard for life when he said, *"Do unto others as you would have them do to you."* This is today's memory verse. Let's all rise if we are able and say it together, *"Do unto others as you would have them do to you."*

This "Golden Rule" has its roots in multiple cultures throughout the world. It was present in ancient Greek and Chinese cultures. Greek philosophers wrote, "Avoid doing what you would blame others for doing." "Do not do to others what would anger you if done to you by others." Confucianism teaches, "Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself." Judaism teaches, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn." (Talmud) Islam teaches, "Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you." (Muhammad)

Greek, Chinese, Jewish, and Islamic cultures teach a version of this "Golden Rule" from a negative perspective. They insist that one must refrain from behaviors that would bring harm to others. Jesus, on the other hand reveals this truth from a different angle. He says do those things that bless others. He is not satisfied with

simply doing no harm. He wants His followers to live a radiant, positive life. It is not adequate to do nothing, or to avoid harm, radiant followers of Jesus do good as they would want good done to and for them.

[John Wesley](#), the founder of the Methodist movement expanded on Jesus' teaching when he instructed the Societies to live by [three simple rules: Do no harm of any kind, avoid evil. Do all the good you can. And attend to the ordinances of God:](#) worship, Bible Study, prayer, fasting, & The Lord's Supper. Wesley saw that the "Gold Standard" for life had two sides: A negative side which calls us to refrain from destructive behavior and a positive side which calls us to a way of life which brings good to all.

We see this also in Paul's teaching. In his letter to the Colossians he wrote, *"But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.."* (Colossians 3:8-10) In essence, he urges us to strip off, to shed an old, destructive, unhealthy way of life and to put on a new way of life, a way of love, the way of Christ. Wesley divided this life principle into two parts: do no harm, do all the good you can.

The "Gold Standard" of life, *"Do unto others as you would have them do to you,"* can be summed up in one word, Love. One day Jesus was asked by an expert in the law, who was trying to test him, *"Teacher which is the greatest commandment*

in the Law?” Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:36-40) This love refers to a way of living not just some romantic thing. According to Jesus, if we truly love God and love our neighbor we will naturally keep rest of over 600 commandments. Jesus always viewed His Father’s way of living life as positive, life-affirming actions and attitudes, not a long list of don’ts. For him it was more be and do. He wants us to focus on all we can do to show our love toward God and others.

Yet, this is easier said than done. We all find it challenging to live the Golden Rule, the way of love first. On Wednesday, I was driving home for lunch, traveling west bound of 571. A car and a semi truck were ahead of me in the right lane. I was in a hurry to get home so I could eat lunch and return back to the church. The truck in front turned his right turn signal on to turn right toward Menards. The car directly behind him and in front of me, didn’t slow down. The truck veered left so he could make his wide right turn. The car behind him didn’t slow down and proceeded toward the semi-trailer which was still in his lane. It looked like there was going to be a collision. Alone, I said out loud to the car driver ahead of me, “You idiot, you are going to hit the trailer.” Fortunately, he slowed down in time and the truck with its trailer made a successful right turn without incident. Knowing I was going to preach on the Golden Rule, the Holy Spirit whispered to me, “Chris, would you want others to think you are an idiot too when you drive?” It’s hard to live the Golden

Rule when we are annoyed, frustrated, or wearied. It's hard to think about other people, their thoughts, their feelings, their life circumstances, when in reality we often think about ourselves, our feelings, our life-circumstances, our reality. It takes extra grace to live by the Gold standard.

When I think of people who live by this standard I see two adjectives that describe their lives. First is humility. The second is considerate. We really can't have one without the other. Humility is not thinking you are better than others. It is putting other people's needs first. It is being prepared and willing to do the "dirty-work" without leaving it for someone else. Paul describes it like this, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*" ⁴*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*"...Philippians 2:3, 4

It takes humility to be considerate. To be considerate is having or showing regard for others, considering and respecting their thoughts and feelings. In other words it is being thoughtful and turning that love first into action. In the business world, this Gold standard works in offering quality customer service. What would your work place look like if everyone considered others before themselves? What would our church look like if we consider the needs of the people on the outside more than we considered the needs of the folks on the inside? How would we order our calendars? What would be our priorities? How would that affect our budget at home, at work, in the church? Where and with whom do we struggle to be considerate? At

work? At home? At the golf course? At the Lake? On the highway? What about church members...shoppers...the neighbors...the kids...parents?

We often find that our faith and love is forged on the anvil of our marriages and families. The Gold Standard makes marriages and families work. Spouses who put the needs of their spouse ahead of their own enjoy solid marriages. Spouses who love their spouse the way that would bless their spouse have blessed marriages. Kids who strive to bless their parents live in a blessed home. Parents who bless their kids live in a Gold standard home.

This past week Melinda celebrated a birthday. Knowing that one of Melinda's love language is "gifts" I decided to buy her a gift instead of taking her for dinner. So I thought about what I would buy her. I considered buying her a new cordless drill. Then I thought about a chain saw. But then I realized that I was thinking about a gift that I would use or like. So I humbled myself, thought about what she would like, something different, and something memorable. So, I decided that I would choose a gift from one of our downtown antique stores. I walked around Midwest Memories and found an old picture of a young girl sitting next to her grandpa and her dog. Her grandpa was feeding a chipmunk that was in the branch above him. I thought that was perfect. Melinda loves animals, loves kids, and loves kind, gentle souls.

One of our daughters occasionally wakes up at night and retrieves a cup of water from the kitchen leaving a kitchen light on. I have often asked her to turn off

the light but she always says she leaves the light on because she needs to see the path to the kitchen. The light guides her from the dark hall to the kitchen. I never liked her response. I saw \$\$ being spent on unnecessary energy costs. I thought she was being selfish. So whenever she would leave the light on, I would scold her the next day. This week, preparing for this message, the Holy Spirit whispered, “Chris, consider her needs about yourself. Affirm her perceived need, then she will know your love.” I spoke her love language by affirming her need.

Living by the Gold Standard, the Golden rule is costly. It always takes courage and requires sacrifice. Bravery is called for in helping a stranger in Wal-Mart’s parking lot. The bold stand up for the rights of others when it is unpopular to do so. Sacrificial love gives up control of the TV Remote in order to consider the desires of others. Selfless hospitality takes one of our guests upstairs to our children’s or student ministries. Giving up a prime parking spot for a disabled person or a guest costs more energy but gains a friend and builds stamina. Surrendering a vacation day or two to serve on a mission trip offers the opportunity to bring Christ’s love to the least of these. Forfeiting several weeknights at home to teach kids about Jesus brings them closer to Christ. Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. Love always costs us something, but the rewards are always worth it.

Jesus’ simple, rule-of-thumb guide for living life to the fullest is asking oneself: “What do I want people to do for me? Then take the initiative and do it for them.” Such radiant love lights the world. Go light your world. 2378