

**SERMON - "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them," Luke 6:31-36,
September 29, 2019**

There is hardly a person that does not know the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matt. 7:12). Doesn't this rule seem very simple? It doesn't seem to be complicated or difficult to understand. If even, let's say, fifty percent of the people in the world actually lived by this maxim, do you think there would be a big difference in the world today? This tells me that even though most people know the words, very few have actually taken them to heart. I wonder what percentage of Christians and those who consider themselves to be followers of Christ actually lived by this injunction. Do we ever even think about this rule as we go about our daily life and day to day living? Do we ever even remember and consider the Golden Rule when we decide how to act towards another person? The Jews of the Old Testament were taught to never ever forget God. However, they were well aware how easy it is for us to forget God and His commandments. The Jews even devised various methods to help them to remember God. For one thing, they tie tefillin. Tefillin (sometimes called phylacteries) are cubic black leather boxes with leather straps that Orthodox Jewish men wear on their head and their arm during weekday morning prayer. Inside the leather boxes are parchments with Scripture quotes that state that the Lord our God is One and that we should never forget Him. Do we Orthodox Christians need to also tie tefillin in order to remember God and the commandments of God? Actually, if we follow traditional Orthodox customs and practices, there are many things already in place to help us to remember God. For one thing, every room in the home (excluding bathrooms) should have an icon. Every Orthodox Christian should always wear a cross around their neck. Our automobiles should have an icon in them. Some Orthodox Christians wear or carry prayer ropes and use them during the day. I have seen some Orthodox Christians wear prayer rings, rings with the inscription of the Jesus prayer on them. All Orthodox Christians should always pray and ask the Lord to bless their food before eating. Even we have not thought much about God, sooner or later none of us will forget to eat, and if we pray as we should, then at least before our meals we will pray and remember God. So you see, we have many things in place, if we follow them, that help us to remember God and His commandments. I get it. You and I are not St. John of Kronstadt or Blessed Xenia, and we don't remember God all the time every day. Furthermore, it is possible to become complacent, and all these things can be observed or practiced superficially with our hearts and minds far away from God, and then these things become meaningless to us. "If you pray sincerely and attentively, you will feel within yourself a great assurance, and the angels will be your companions," says Evagrius of Pontus. Remember St. Herman's famous injunction, "From this day forth, from this hour, from this minute, let us love God above all." Today, brothers and sisters, let us make a solemn promise to the Lord that we will try to the best of our abilities to always remember the Golden Rule. Let us always think about it when we decide how we are going to treat others and even what we will say to others. Let us ask God to help us to live our lives by the Golden Rule, because without God's help we can do nothing. Here is a challenge for you and for me. Perhaps it is unlikely for us to remember God every minute of every day all the time. However, starting today, let's try for one week to really remember the Golden Rule and to sincerely try to live by it —for one week. Is there anyone here who cannot do this if they wanted to? Maybe from time to time we forget God. Only we know how much we live our lives by the Golden Rule and how much we don't. But for one week, no matter what, let's all try very hard at all times to think about the Golden Rule and to live by it. At the end of the week, look back and think about whether or not this week was different in any way than the other weeks in our lives — and why. "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Let us confirm our love, one to another, that we may perform this duty perfectly, and attain those good things that are promised in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, power and honor, now and for ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!