



Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

The Golden Rule

by Bridget Keylor

“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”—*Matthew 7:12*

Only Jesus could sum up God’s entire message in the Old Testament in one simple sentence. Yet, despite its grammatical simplicity, living out the amount of forgiveness and grace this sentence requires is anything but simple. It is downright complicated! If you are like me, you have moments when you say to yourself, “Self, you are crushing this loving others well thing! Just look at how you love people you don’t even know in the grocery store.”

Then again, if you are like me, there is one area, one place in your life where it is evident you are not wholly sanctified, and you need a whole lot of Jesus because you keep losing your Jesus in that place. I am sure that the place is different for each of us, but mine is a roundabout, not a specific roundabout—just a roundabout. If you aren’t familiar with this road phenomenon, let me try to explain.

A roundabout is just what it sounds like: a big road circle that, when you encounter it, your job is to—you guessed it—drive around it. But it isn’t just a road circle. I mean, that would be absurd, and no one would get anywhere! No, a roundabout has different points where you must make a lane choice. Depending on which lane you choose, you will either continue around the circle or exit it, ultimately taking you closer to your intended destination. At some intersections, a roundabout is simply a glorified four-way stop. Other times, this gigantic loop replaces complicated traffic lights at busy intersections. In either case, a roundabout’s goal is to ease traffic congestion by allowing continuous traffic flow. When designed correctly, a roundabout is a beautiful thing. Otherwise, it’s a call to intercession and playing Carrie Underwood’s “Jesus Take the Wheel” at full volume!

Living in a town full of roundabouts, I have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly. My first encounter with a roundabout was delightful. It was a small circle in the middle of a neighborhood, clearly placed there to slow traffic. The first time I saw a sweet older lady—

confused by a recently-added roundabout that had replaced her familiar four-way stop—decide just to keep going, I giggled and told all my friends. Love and grace abounded!

But the first time a clueless, new-to-town student failed to choose the correct lane, coming within inches of T-boning my brand new car, not even Carrie Underwood lyrics could calm me down. Now, I can assure you I made no hand gestures—I was too busy laying on my horn—but I cannot deny a few choice words might have popped out. All the love and grace I had shared in the grocery store earlier that day was gone. (Y'all, there is a reason I don't have a New Life Church sticker in my back window!) The unfortunate part about this scene is that I felt justified in my response.

Have you ever been there? Has someone ever wronged you or put you in a vulnerable position, and you felt like it gave you the right to be offended, even vengeful in your reaction? Yeah, me too. And God's people did, as well, which is why God instructed them in Leviticus 19:18 to “not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”

It wasn't until a few weeks ago that God provided a moment of “roundabout rage” clarity. It came in the form of my son. You see, my son has been learning to drive for the last three months. The best form of practice we have found is for him to go to and from school each day. On the way to school, he encounters two roundabout—big ones! One morning, the same thing happened to him that I had experienced earlier. Another driver chose the wrong lane, coming within inches of T-boning him. This time, instead of unleashing my wrath, I took notice that the driver cutting us off had a parent sitting beside her. She was also just a student driver with a nervous momma in the passenger seat, praying her child didn't hurt herself or others. And at that moment, the love and grace flowed. Right there in a roundabout, I saw the other like myself, and when I identified with them, I loved them. I blessed them. I prayed for them.

It would be great if I could say that was the last day I struggled to live out love “in everything.” But I wouldn't know that. What I *can* say is that I haven't struggled with roundabout rage since. I remember I have a Savior who sees me perfectly in my imperfection and loves me. And he wants to use my imperfect attempts at love to remind others that he also loves them perfectly. What an honor! What an undeserved gift. While I am not ready to put an NLC sticker on my back window just yet, I am excited to see what God can do during this season, when I choose to love others who are like myself. Even in a roundabout!

Question: What area of your life makes it hard to love “in everything?” What or who are you not seeing correctly?

Take Action: Loving those who hurt you is one of the most challenging aspects of Matthew 7:12. Who is it that God is calling you to forgive and love at this moment? Ask the Holy Spirit what your next step is regarding that person.