

CHURCH OF THE HIGHLANDS

Golden Rule Relationships

Mark Pettus
February 17, 2026

1

God designed us for relationship, but sin fractured that design by turning love inward toward self, making self the source instead of God.

Romans 5:12

“

*If we will put first things first, we'll get second things thrown in.
But if we put second things first, we lose both first and second things.*

at 3:36

2

The Greatest Commandment and the Golden Rule provide the divine reordering for relationships — love God fully, then treat others the way you want to be treated.

Matthew 7:12

“

Show me your friends and I'll show you your future.

at 6:33

3

Biblical empathy — seeking to understand others by pausing — is the essential first step, modeled by Jesus Himself who was tempted in every way yet did not sin.

Hebrews 4:15

“

Sin, instead of love being towards God and towards others, sin turns love inward towards oneself. And it leaves us self-centered, self-sufficient, self-protecting, self-promoting.

at 18:00

4

Jesus calls us beyond passive non-harm to proactive love — apologizing first, serving first, and going first even toward enemies.

Luke 6:27-28

“

Those who can no longer listen to their brother will soon no longer be listening to God.

at 23:05

5

Living the Golden Rule is impossible through self-effort; it requires dependence on the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit working through us.

Zechariah 4:6

“

It will not be by might or by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

at 28:53