

**January 6, 2021**

**Lev. 25:17, “Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I AM the LORD your God.”**

The Hebrew word for *take advantage* is **anee** which means *oppress, harm, wrong or treat unfairly*. The LORD charges His people to treat each other in love instead of with selfishness or taking advantage. He does this because He desires us to live a life of love for others. When we take advantage, it is obviously a selfish motive instead of a sacrificial kind of love.

As Jesus was teaching on the Mount one day, He explained this in **Mt. 7:12, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”** Known as the Golden Rule, this statement tells us that we are to treat others as we would want to be treated. Can you imagine how this would change our relationships, our churches, and our communities? When we put others before ourselves, we are modeling the life and mind of Christ.

To reach out to others in the love of Christ, shows them that they are valued and somebody cares about them. Maybe you could challenge yourself to look around and find someone who needs a special touch of kindness. It might be a neighbor, a friend, a total stranger that is hurting. I recall one day as my wife and I were traveling back to Houston in a torrential downpour, we passed a car on the side of the interstate. I saw that there was an elderly woman struggling to get the spare tire out of her trunk. We pulled over and I changed her flat tire for her spare. She was overwhelmed and tried to pay me for helping her out. I could have “taken advantage of her offer” but I knew this was just something that would show her that someone cares. As I finished up, she again tried to pay me and I remember telling her that the best way she could pay me was to let me remind her that God loves her and is watching over her. She began to tear up and told me that she needed to hear that today because she had been going through so many struggles lately. I asked her if I could pray for her and she said yes. When I got back in our car, I was soaking wet on the outside, but warm and comfortable inside. She smiled and waved and I hope someday to see her in Heaven.

**Dear LORD, help us to treat others as we would want to be treated. Help us to put You first, others second and ourselves last. In Jesus Name, Amen**