

jesus manifesto

My favorites are the optionless. They operate in the world of heaven.

My favorites are those who grieve. They're going to be surprised by joy.

My favorites are those who heed the voice of conscience. They can be trusted with the earth.

My favorites are those who pang to experience what's right. They'll be satisfied.

My favorites are the merciful. They get mercy back.

My favorites are the pure in heart. They see God in everything.

My favorites are those who work for peace. They're known as children of God.

My favorites are those who are persecuted for doing right. They operate in the world of heaven.

My favorites are you! When people insult you, slander you and injure you on my account, keep your chin up and be happy. You'll be warmly recognized beyond what you see. Prophets have always been bullied.

You are the salt of the earth. If salt loses its flavor, can it be made salty again? Is it good for anything, except to throw on the ground?

You are the light of the world. Can a city on a hill remain hidden? Do people light a lamp and then cover it? Don't they put it high on a stand, so it gives light to everyone? In the same way, your light is to shine. Let people see your active love and praise your father in heaven. Don't suppose that I've come to destroy the law that's in everyone's heart or what the prophets taught. I haven't come to destroy, but to complete. I assure you, it's easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the smallest bit of that law to fail. Whoever won't do the least of these commands and concocts ways for others to follow their lead will be known as least in the world of heaven. Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be known as great in the world of heaven. I assure you, unless your sense of right is greater than those who adhere to the written law just for audiences, you certainly won't get in on the world of heaven.

You've heard it was said to the ancients, 'Don't murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I say anyone who's angry with someone else will be subject to judgment. Anyone who talks with an air of superiority is answerable to the elders. If you speak disdainfully to others, you're in danger of being consumed by hell. So, if you're offering anything to God and remember that someone has something against you, drop your gift where you are. First, go — physically go — and try to work things out. Then, and only then, come back and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with those who take you to court. Make peace while you're on the way there. If you don't, they may hand you over to the judge, the judge may hand you over to the officer and you may be thrown into prison. I assure you, if you want to play it that way, you won't get out until you've paid in full.

You've heard it was said, 'Don't commit adultery.' But I say if you look at another lustfully, you've already committed adultery with that one in your heart. If your most useful eye leads you astray, rip it out and forget about it. It's better to enter life maimed than to enter torment whole. If your most useful hand leads you astray, hack it off and forget about it. It's better to enter life maimed than to enter torment whole. Again, it's been said, 'Whoever abandons a spouse must give a certificate of divorce.' But I say whoever abandons a spouse with an eye to unite again becomes an adulterer, and whoever unites with that person commits adultery.

You've heard it was said to the ancients, 'Don't break your oath, but keep the oath you've made to the Lord.' But I say don't swear at all. Don't swear by heaven; it's God's throne. Don't swear by the earth; it's God's footstool. Don't swear by your capital; it's a city, full of God's impartial love. Don't even swear by your head; you can't make one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' or 'No' stand on its own. If you have to prop it up with more words, doesn't that indicate something's wrong?

You've heard it was said, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say don't resist a malicious person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, present your left one also. If

someone wants your coat, let that person have your shirt as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, accompany that person for two miles. Give, excessively, to all who ask and don't look the other way when anyone wants to borrow from you.

You've heard it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say love your enemies and pray for those who bully you, so you may be children of your father in heaven. The sun rises on the wicked and the good, and rain refreshes the grateful and the bitter. If you love those who love you, is someone supposed to recognize this? Aren't even those with lots of options doing that? If you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing more than others? Doesn't everyone else do that? Love comprehensively, just like your heavenly father does.

Be careful! Don't put on a good show to get noticed. If you do, your father in heaven won't recognize it. When you give of yourself don't mention it, like the actors do in churches and on the streets. All they want is to be honored. I assure you, they've received all the recognition they'll ever get. When you give of yourself don't let your left hand know what your right hand's doing, so your giving is secret. Then your father, who sees what's done in secret, will recognize you.

When you pray don't be like the actors, who love to pray standing in the churches and on the street corners. All they want is to be seen. I assure you, they've received all the recognition they'll ever get. When you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your father, who is unseen. Then your father, who sees what's done in secret, will recognize you. While we're on the subject, don't babble on and on like those with lots of options. From that point of view, more words give you a better chance of being heard. Don't be like that, because your father knows what you need before you ask.

Pray like this: 'Our father in heaven, your name is holy, so we honor you alone. Display your world, do what you purpose before our eyes, just like you do beyond them. Surprise us today with what we need, and as we forgive others, take our sins away too. Don't lead us astray, but protect us from evil.' I put it like that because if you forgive others when they malign you, your heavenly father will also forgive you. If you don't forgive their shortcomings, your father won't forgive yours.

When you fast, run from every opportunity to make it known. This is most unlike the actors. They contort their bodies to show people they're going without food. I assure you, they've received all the recognition they'll ever get. When you fast, brush your teeth and wash your face, so no one can tell that you're fasting, except your father who is unseen. Then your father, who sees what's done in secret, will recognize you.

Don't store treasures on earth, where moths or rust destroy and thieves can steal. Instead, store treasures in heaven, where neither moths nor rust can destroy and no one steals. Wherever your treasure is, there's your heart as well. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are generous, your whole body is full of light. If your eyes are stingy, your whole body is full of darkness. If the light within you is darkness, look out, it's totally consuming! No one can serve two masters. Either you'll hate one and love the other, or you'll devote yourself to one and renounce the other. You can't serve both God and money.

So, I say don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or drink. Don't worry about your body, what you'll wear. Isn't life more important than food and the body more important than clothes? Look around you! Birds, for example, don't plant, harvest or plan for future meals, yet your heavenly father feeds

them, and you're much more valuable than birds. Can you worry up a single extra hour to your life? Why worry about clothes? Consider the growth of lilies. They don't work at it, yet Solomon, in his full splendor, wasn't even dressed like one of these. If that's how God clothes grass, which is beautiful one day and only fit to burn the next, won't he much more clothe you? Where's your trust? Stop worrying with you, 'Oh no! What'll we eat,' or 'Oh no! What'll we drink,' or 'Oh no! What'll we wear?' If the whole world runs after this, your heavenly father still knows what you need. Give this primacy: continually seek ways to establish God's world and do it all in secret. What you need will show up! Again, I say, don't worry about tomorrow. Rather, let tomorrow worry about itself. Each day is filled with trouble enough.

If you don't want to be indicted, don't indict. In the same way you judge others, you'll be judged. You're going to get exactly what you give. Why look for a splinter in your neighbor's eye and totally ignore the tree growing in your own? Where do you get the gall to say, 'Let me get that speck from your eye,' while there's a log in your own? Wake up! First uproot the tree from your eye, and then you'll see more clearly to remove the splinter from your neighbor's, if, indeed, it's still there. If your life is grounded in love, you won't shovel out information beyond use. Keep on talking, just don't be surprised when it gets turned around on you.

On the other hand, ask and keep on asking and it'll be given to you. Seek and keep on seeking and you'll find. Knock and keep on knocking, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who continually asks, receives; anyone who continually seeks, finds; and for whoever continually knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you parents, if your child asks for bread, would give her a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, would you give him a snake? If you, with all your mixed motives, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give good gifts to all who ask?

For each responsibility you have, make sure everyone gets what you'd want. This is the entire written law and prophets in a nutshell. Enter this world of which I speak through the narrow gate. The path that leads to destruction is wider than can be imagined, and many go that way. The path that leads to life is small and narrow, and only a few find it.

Could this little talk present both the path to and goal of life? If the sermon on the mount is to mean anything to anyone, it must be livable by anyone. To that end is this paraphrase offered.

What began as an attempt to memorize another version soon got hung up on the prevalent gender specific language. A couple years later I realized, 'Hey! There's a whole lot more going on here, than gender.' I'm quick like that. Much too much was slipping through the cracks.

In reexamining these words, I'm learning why Jean Vanier is so fond of saying, "Jesus has a nasty habit of turning things upside down." This text is certainly no exception. May we all enter life.

Thank you Leo.

Love, Ken

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Watch out for false prophets. They dress like sheep, but beneath appearances, they're ravenous wolves. You'll recognize them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes from a thorn bush or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree can't bear bad fruit, and a bad tree can't bear good fruit. Every tree that doesn't bear good fruit gets cut down and burned.

Again, you'll recognize them by their fruit. Not everyone who calls me, 'Lord,' will enter the world of heaven, but only the ones who do the will

of my father in heaven. Many will say to me, 'But Lord, didn't we work up amazing power in your name, like prophecy, expelling demons and all sorts of miracles?'

I'll tell it like it is, 'I never knew you. Get away from me. Take your evil elsewhere!'

So, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts upon them is like one who built a house on rock. Rain poured down, floods came, horrific wind battered that house and it didn't fall, because its foundation was firm. Everyone who hears these words of mine and ignores them is like one who built a house on sand. Rain poured down, floods came, horrific wind battered that house and it collapsed in a flash.