

jesus manifesto



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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

I assure you, they've received their reward in full. 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 reward you. While we're on the subject, don't babble on and on like those with lots of options. According to them, with more words comes 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 reign, 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 distort their bodies to show people they're going without food. I assure you, they've received their reward in full. When you fast, brush your teeth and wash your face,

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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 reward you.

Don't store treasures on earth, where moth or rust destroys and thieves can steal. Instead, store treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy and no one steals. Wherever your treasure is, there's your heart also. 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, how enveloping it is! 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; or 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

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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 your, '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 reign 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 sliver 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 sliver 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. If you do, you're not to act surprised when it gets turned around on you.

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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. He makes the sun rise on the wicked and the good, and sends rain to the grateful and the bitter. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? 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? Be comprehensive in your love, just like your heavenly father is comprehensive in his.

Be careful not to put on a good show before others to be seen. If you do, you'll have no reward from your father in heaven. When you give to the needy 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 their reward in full. When you give to the needy 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 reward you.

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