

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.” Matthew 7:12 NLT

## lectio // Matthew 7:1-12

Jesus spends a tremendous amount of time getting us to re-think what we heard or learned in the past. For his listeners then, it was even harder because they had learned from centuries of culture, stories and traditions that we given to them by parents and religious leaders. They were so engrained that it was the ONLY perspective they believed and understood. Our thoughts and ideas have also been passed down, but they have come from multiple sources outside our family of origin. We can all learn from the simplicity of Jesus teaching when he says, “do as you’d like done to you.” However, being the consumer, we’ve believed it as “everyone needs to be good to me,” and I mean EVERYONE. I don’t owe anyone goodness or kindness or patience, but they owe me - always. When enough of society is made up of takers and very few givers, you can see what that does to reinforce the fact that we’ve got to look out for number one, because no one else will. I do believe at one time our culture was more courteous and kind. We had been taught to be so. Anyways, Jesus then gives them a massive flip of their spiritual script by saying, “basically, this is the point of ALL... all?... yes, ALL the law and prophets! Wait, I thought the bottom-line, punctuational point of the law and prophets was to be perfect? It’s not? Obviously, Jesus, the author of life, the creator of all things, the CEO, editor and owner of the law and over the prophets, can comment on his own book. Do you mean to tell me that the yummy, reduced-down gravy of the entire law and all the old testament journalists working for God wrote about, is captured by this simple idea - do as done? That sounds so Forrest-Gumpish! Oh wait, didn’t Jesus also say, love as I have loved you? Love as loved? Whoa, that can’t be right. That is not complicated enough. Nothing that simple can be so life-giving, so counter-culture, so effective! Hmmm, either Jesus is wrong or I’m just super slow to understand God. Oh, right, I don’t understand God! Jesus might be right.

## oratio

Dad,  
When you say your thoughts are ABOVE my thoughts and your ways are above mine, I just thought you were smarter and know how things work. I never thought about it in terms of relationships. Of course, I’ve only imagined it in creative power and wisdom, but not from the perspective of love and behaviors towards all of creation. No wonder Jesus was so overwhelmingly popular to those who suffered and hated among those who were proud. The needy saw this love and were smitten, the “perfect” saw this as comparative competition. The more you gave, the less the power mongers received for themselves.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root