IN EVERYTHING...

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Category: Language Learning

> *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)*
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> *"In everything" says Jesus (offering no wiggle-room whatsoever that his words do not apply in this particular case), "do to others what you would have them do to you". (Perhaps we are tempted to ask: What others? If so, we already have a Samaritan shaped answer.) You want others to make life easier by learning your language? Learn theirs. You want others to understand you? Work to understand them. You want others to hear what you have to say? Be attentive to them. Right here, Jesus articulates a central biblical rationale for taking the languages and cultures of others seriously and for investing the sheer hard work necessary to attend to those who are culturally different and don't share my way of speaking. Jesus also cuts to the heart of the egocentric attitude (perhaps especially common among those whoÂ belong to the more powerful cultures and speak the more dominant languages) that assumes that the world revolves around me - that anything important will be said in my language, that the yardstick of normality and worth is my culture or ethnicity and that if any learning or humbling needs to take place it will be others who do it, and that I am the one who should be listened to most of all.*

From Learning from the Stranger: Christian Faith and Cultural Diversity by David I Smith p.71