A few lines of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* provide a pattern which is inverted and transformed in the Sermon on the Plain in the version of Luke. The Greek poet makes a far-reaching distinction between friend and enemy (A), “Invite your friend to a banquet but leave out your enemy” (*W&D* 342):

τὸν φιλέοντ’ ἐπὶ δαίτα καλεῖν, τὸν δ’ ἐχθρὸν ἕκασαι.

He goes on to discuss the best principles for borrowing and repaying grain (B), “Get a full measure from your neighbor and repay him in full, with the same measure, and with a better one if you are able, so that if you fall into need in the future you will find him reliable” (*W&D* 349-351):

εὖ μὲν μετρεῖσθαι παρὰ γείτονος, εὖ δ’ ἀποδοῦναι,
αὐτῷ τῷ μέτρῳ, καὶ λόιμον, αἷς ἐξ ὑπνησία,
ὡς ἐν χρημάτων καὶ ἐς ὑπερων ἄρκιν εὐρῆς.

He then recapitulates the first half of (A) and states the principle of giving (C) in rough-hewn grammar and meter, “Love the one that loves you... Give to whoever gives and do not give to whoever does not give” (*W&D* 353-4):

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1. Once again I have the pleasure of thanking Saul Levin, Distinguished Professor at the State University of New York in Binghamton, for reading a preliminary draft, saving me from several errors, and suggesting notable improvements. Also the anonymous reader at *NovT* provided several valuable additions from Continental literature.

2. All students of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* need to have at hand the commentary by M.L. West (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978).

3. The connection was observed in part by M. Bouttier, “Hésiode et le sermon sur la montagne,” *NTS* 25 (1978/9) 129-130; but he misses the nice connection of “measure for measure.”
Finally he replaces these infinitives acting as imperatives by gnomic aorists, “For one gives to a giver, and does not give to a non-giver” (W&D 355):

δώτη μὲν τις ἐδώκεν, ἀδώτη δ’ οὐ τις ἐδώκεν.

The Gospel parallels in both content and connections are clustered in Luke 6:27-38. (A) “Love your enemies” (6:27), ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἔξθροντας ὑμῶν with 3 more parallels. (C) “Give to everyone that asks you” (6:30), παντὶ αἰτοῦντι σε δίδου. (A) “But if you love those who love you, what thanks do you get?” (6:32) εἰ ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἀγαπώντας ὑμᾶς...; “But love your enemies” (6:35); (C) “and lend expecting nothing back,” δανίζετε μηδὲν ἀπελπίζοντες; “and your reward will be great.” (C) “Give and it will be given you” (6:38), δίδοτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν; (B) “Good measure, pressed down, heaped up, running over, will they give [Aramaic passive = ‘will be given’] in your lap”; “for with what measure you measure it will be measured back to you,” ὧ γὰρ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν.4

Other versions of Luke’s materials are in places closer to Hesiod. His parallelism in (A) appears at “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor’ [Lev 19:18 LXX] and hate your enemy,” ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἔξθρον σου (Matt 5:43). There might be a reference to pagan Greek usage in “And if you embrace your brothers only, what extra do you do? Do not even the Gentiles (οἱ ἔθνοι) do the same?” (Matt 5:47). Hesiod’s verb φιλέω appears at Didache 1.3: “But as for you, love those who hate you and you will have no enemy,” φιλέτε τοὺς μισοῦντας ὑμᾶς καὶ οὐχ ἐξετε ἔξθρον.5


5 The prudential addition is perhaps Stoic; see Epictetus Enchiridion 1.3 ἔξθρον οὐχ ἐξετε, “You will have no enemy” if you make correct judgements about good and evil.