

WWJD

Prayer

What would Jesus do?

First off he would do a better job of this sermon than me... but we will press on anyway and hopefully you will see him in what is said today.

Today we will be discussing what Jesus would do on the basis of several priorities that we can see that guided his decisions.

Before we get underway, I'd just like to point out that just remembering WWJD when we come across real life situations and then acting as Jesus would act prepares us with tools to deal with many of the practical situations that we face each and every day.

In 1989 there was a youth group at the Calvary Reformed Church in Michigan that studied Charles Sheldon's novel, *In His Steps*. In the novel, Christians chose to preface every thought and action with the thought "What would Jesus do?" They began to see a change in the way people acted, in fact, WWJD became a whole movement.

While I know that Christ is doing a new thing in our churches, there is a lot to be said about what was learned in this movement. I believe that today, if we governed our thoughts and actions by the same principle we would be well on our way to providing the kind of testimony that will make a difference in our community today.

Is it even biblical to consider the WWJD question when it offends your personal sensibilities?

1 Peter 2:21

After all, God chose you to suffer as you follow in the footsteps of Christ, who set an example by suffering for you.

Paul tells us that we need to follow the example of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 11:1

You must follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ

Consider what we claim here at Crossroads... We say that we love all people. Now consider that you take a housewarming gift to every person who moves into your neighborhood. Now you have a situation. The new couple two houses down is Gay... Do you give them the same gift? If you welcome them are you condoning their lifestyle? In Matthew 11:19 (CEV) Jesus is accused of being a friend of Sinners.

But the Son of Man goes around eating and drinking, and you say, "That man eats and drinks too much! He is even a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Yet Wisdom is shown to be right by what it does.

But what did he do? And how would that relate to us today... We say: "love the person, hate the sin", but what does that mean in practical terms?

Jesus would establish a relationship and become their friend. It doesn't mean that he would condone the lifestyle but Jesus is God and he is wise, you cannot speak into a person's life if you don't have a relationship.

How about if we have plans to pave our parking lot... There are a number of seniors and others who don't want to get wet or muddy feet. We feel that it would be an awesome addition to our church. It would look great too and maybe draw more people. Also we are going to turn the parsonage into a new ministry center that will help a lot of people in the community. I am about to write my check in support of this great initiative, but my I just found out that one of people on my street is going to lose their house and they and their family will be out on the street. Will I put all of my contribution into the parking lot and ministry center or will I put a part of it aside and help this family?

WWJD? – Would Jesus be more concerned about the development of a new ministry center or helping the suffering person on the street? While both benefit people, I believe that Jesus would be concerned about the immediate need of the couple losing their home...

Jesus uses several principles to guide his steps.

- He always walked in the will of the Father.
 - He always loved and accepted the castaways of society.
 - He always spoke out about hypocrisy
 - He always demonstrated a life of service to others
 - He always mentored, trained and equipped people to be leaders and disciples
 - He always restored broken hearts and lives
 - He always taught using the Word of God and the fifth Gospel for illustration
-
- He always walked in the will of the Father.
 - He always loved and accepted the castaways of society.
 - He always spoke out about hypocrisy
 - He always demonstrated a life of service to others
 - He always mentored, trained and equipped people to be leaders and disciples
 - He always restored broken hearts and lives
 - He always taught using the Word of God and the fifth Gospel for illustration

He always walked in the will of the Father and defended the house of God as a house of prayer.

Jesus went away to pray to the Father 45 times in the gospels... Why? Because Jesus came as our example and he walked in the will of the Father. He showed us the importance of prayer and an intimate relationship with God the Father. WWJD – Jesus would pray to be sure that he was doing what the Father wanted him to do.

Luke 19:45-46

Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

Jesus knew that prayer was the way to an intimate relationship with the Father not the charlatans selling the anointed prayer cloths with your gift of \$19.95 including the special free gift of Holy Water.

WWJD – Jesus sought the Fathers will and revered the house of God as a house of prayer. He recognized the importance of prayer in the intimacy of our relationship with him.

He always loved and accepted the castaways of society.

The Pharisees and Sadducees always wanted the best seats, positions of power and respect. They had a pious attitude and they believed that they were better than the people around them. WWJD – Jesus hated the hypocritical establishment that showed disdain for people, specifically the castaways of society. Tax collectors, publicans which are barkeepers and sinners would not get a second look from these religious leaders.

Take Levi who became known as Matthew for example. He invited Jesus to his house and had a feast for him. He invited a large crowd including several tax collectors. Now we need to remember that at that time tax collectors worked for the roman oppressors and were thought about as turncoats and parasites on Jewish society. They were hated and reviled by their own people.

Matthew 5:27-32 (CEV)

Later, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, "Come with me." Levi left everything and went with Jesus. In his home Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. Many tax collectors and other guests were also there. The Pharisees and some of their teachers of the Law of Moses grumbled to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with those tax collectors and other

sinner?" Jesus answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn't come to invite good people to turn to God. I came to invite sinners.

WWJD – Jesus touched the unclean, he healed the sick and the lepers; he ate and drank with barkeeps and sinners. He cared for the blind and people that wouldn't get a second look as people walked by. In short, Jesus met people where they were and as they were. If they let him... he would change their lives.

Crossroads as ambassadors for Christ, we are not a museum for saints we are a hospital for sinners. – Get it!

He always demonstrated a life of service to others

1 Peter 4:8-11 HCSB

Above all, maintain an intense love for each other, since love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, it should be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, it should be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen

We are told to have love for each other and serve each other...

WWJD – Jesus would demonstrate love to all people. He wouldn't just talk about it... and he would give the glory for the service to God the Father.

When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His robe, He reclined again and said to them, "Do you know what I have done for you? You call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done for you." I assure you: A slave is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

WWJD – Jesus humbled himself below his position as the Son of God and served those around him. If he as the Son of God will wash the feet of others what will you do to serve those around you?

Matthew 20:28

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life — a ransom for many."

WWJD – Jesus put others and their needs above himself.

He always mentored, trained and equipped people to be leaders and disciples

Jesus prepared those that walked with him to be Leaders. He demonstrated God's character through his actions and followed the will of the Father. His life provided the example by which we live. The man was the message. Jesus was very busy in his ministry yet he always took the time to mentor, teach and equip those around him. He was really hard on Peter. At one point in scripture he even responded to Peter saying in Matthew 16:23

But He turned and told Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me because you're not thinking about God's concerns, but man's."

Yet it was Peter who walked and people were healed merely by being in his shadow

Acts 5:15 NKJVS

As a result, they would carry the sick out into the streets and lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. In addition, a large group came together from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. He always restored broken hearts and lives

WWJD – He didn't sugar coat the truth. He always gave the truth in love for the benefit of the individual. He was hard on Peter, but look at the effect on Peter and the Affect of his ministry.

He always taught using the Word of God and the fifth Gospel for illustration

Jesus taught the Holy Scriptures as one with authority

Mark 1:21-22

Jesus and his disciples went to the town of Capernaum. Then on the next Sabbath he went into the Jewish meeting place and started teaching. Everyone was amazed at his teaching. He taught with authority, and not like the teachers of the Law of Moses

Why?

Because. Jesus is the Logos. He is the living word of God. He is the divine revelation

John 1:14 NKJVS

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The four gospels are in the bible for you as a record of the life of Jesus and an example to us. Yet there is a fifth gospel... What I mean by that is that Jesus often used examples from real life or from the land to illustrate his point. He talked about faith being like a mustard seed. He talked about a pearl of great price and so on. Jesus knew that to reach people he had to explain teaching in a frame of reference that people can understand and that is practical to them.

WWJD – Jesus wasn't about convoluted teaching he was about clarity and getting the message of God across to you and me. The Son of God as the Living logos wanted us to understand him. He did not want us confused. Jesus spoke in the language of the people in a way they could understand.

He restores broken hearts and shattered lives

Jesus helped people... He raised the dead as we can see in John 11:1-44 where he raises Lazarus, he forgives sins as we can see in Matt 9:6, he cast out demons as we see in Luke 4:36, he restores broken bodies as we see in Luke 5:17.

WWJD – He would heal and restore people

WWJD – He would bestow that authority on his people

Matthew 28:16-20 NKJVS

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain, which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, " All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

WWJD – He would expect us to take up our commission and fulfill his great purpose.

CONCLUSION

Everything Jesus did he did for a purpose in the will of the father. Everything he did he did in love, as we would expect from the God of Love. He came to serve and not Lord-over as is his right as an example to us. He confronted hypocrisy and holier than thou attitudes. He healed the sick, he healed the broken hearted; he forgave sins. His work is restorative not destructive.

Yes WWJD is an outdated fad, but the principle remains solid. As we go through life and are faced with choices. We ask ourselves first am I choosing fear or faith? Next we need to ask WWJD?

Of course... and here is the kicker... to understand what Jesus would do... we need to read about him and his life so that we know what Jesus would do. He has provided the example, but we have to crack the book, pray and discover Jesus for ourselves to be effective as Christians. Remember we are to make disciples of Christ. A disciple is defined as one who practices a discipline. The discipline here is reading his word and applying his principles to your life.

I think it was Max Lucado who once said a couple of very powerful things...

- God loves you just the way you are, but He refused to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus.
- To call your self a child of God is one thing to be called a child of God by those who watch your life is another thing altogether.

I want to be just like Jesus, I want to love those around me and the way I believe I can accomplish this is to talk to God in prayer and seek out his will. The next is to walk in faith instead of fear and the third is to ask myself when faced with a difficult choice what would Jesus do?

Prayer