

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

WWJD?

WWJD. For many of us, those letters conjure up images of gimmicky woven bracelets and judgmental youth group kids. Unfortunately, the over-commercialized “What Would Jesus Do” movement of the 1990s may have done more harm than good, but the foundational concept is worth reconsidering. If, as we are attempting to demonstrate in this devotional, Christlikeness is the goal of genuine Christian holiness, then considering what Jesus would do in any given situation really might be the most practical approach to holiness.

In 1896, a minister by the name of Charles Sheldon penned the popular novel *In His Steps*. The book emerged from a series of Sunday evening sermons he delivered to his congregation with the goal of helping people actually base their everyday decisions on what they believed Jesus would do in a similar situation. In the novel, Rev. Henry Maxwell challenges his congregation at the First Church of Raymond to take a one-year pledge in which they ask themselves, “What would Jesus do?” before making any decision, and then acting accordingly. The story follows several characters from different walks of life who take the pledge. They discover that although the decision to follow “in his steps” is neither easy nor safe, the commitment to do so changes both their own lives as well as their community in profound ways.

What would it look like for us to put that into practice in our own lives, even for one week? What would it look like, if before every decision we made this week we asked ourselves, “What would Jesus do?” What would Jesus do if someone cut him off in traffic? How would Jesus respond to a co-worker with a bad attitude? How would Jesus deal with a toddler throwing yet another temper tantrum? How would Jesus treat a beggar on the street corner? What kinds of things would Jesus post on social media?

Will you try out this practice in this coming week?

Of course, the answers to our WWJD questions may not always be readily apparent. That’s ok. The goal of this exercise is not perfection; the goal is to help us reframe the idea of holiness and to begin to train ourselves to think about how we might “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:5). Ideally, this exercise will inspire us to crack open our Bibles and study the life of Jesus afresh. Let’s imagine how we might reflect his love, grace, mercy, and truth in our own interactions, relationships, and decisions. Perhaps we’ll find that what began as a one-week exercise becomes a new way of living.