

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

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Because It Is Right

Reward incentive motivation permeates our society. People respond to rewards just like little puppies do. Some parents think only in terms of rewarding their children, and, they even reward them for being bad. When a parent says to a little child, "If you will quit throwing a temper tantrum, we will go get an ice cream as soon we get away from the Dr.'s office," he is rewarding bad behavior and the child quickly understands how to get what he wants. The "in thing" now in many churches is to offer physical rewards for being religious. That ranges from the "gospel of health and wealth" that says, "If you give \$100, God will give you \$1,000," to appealing to the fleshly appetites of entertainment to get people to come to "church."

Whatever happened to doing right because it is right? Surely, Jesus offers men rewards but those incentives have nothing to do with the sensual desires. In fact, he condemned those who followed him because they were fed – *"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life,"* (John 6:29). The reward for righteousness is eternal life with God. God expects right behavior, because he is holy and we must be like him to share in spiritual life (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Christians are committed to a way of life that is righteous, because it is the right way to live. Sometimes the righteous life may offer a material advantage but that isn't why the Christian lives that way. At other times, being righteous may be a difficult road and the righteous may be mocked and persecuted. The disciple of the Lord does right when people speak well of him and when they do not – his motivation is doing right, because it is the right thing to do.

✍️ Jim R. Everett

W W J D

You have, no doubt, seen folks (especially young people) wearing bracelets and other jewelry which display the letters "WWJD." As you know, these are the first letters of the words: "What Would Jesus Do?" The question is taken from a popular book by Charles M. Sheldon entitled, *In His Steps*. The novel tells of a group of people in a church who pledged for an entire year not to do anything without first asking the question, "What would Jesus do?" The book tells of the changes that this new outlook brought into the lives of several individuals.

All of us who call ourselves Christians need to be imitating Jesus in our daily lives. Peter wrote that Jesus *"left us an example, that ye should follow in his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21). It is certainly a worthy thing to ask the question, "What would Jesus do?"

The real challenge is to implement this in our daily living. How would Jesus react if He was confronted with the temptations and trials that we meet on the job, in our homes, throughout the community, and even in the church? The answer to these questions can be found in the Scriptures. Will we learn from Him - and follow in His steps?

But, back to the bracelets with the letters WWJD: what about these? It seems that there are always some who are more interested in making a show of religion than they are in really following the Lord. This is not a new problem. Jesus rebuked some of those in His own day when He said:

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." (Matthew 15:8). It's much easier, as it is sometimes said, to "talk the talk," than to "walk the walk."

Do you really want to know what Jesus would do, so you can imitate Him? If so, we commend you. But be careful about just making a show - or a fashion statement! Think!

✍️ Greg Gwin

NOTE: The title of the above article could be **WDJD**, i.e., "What **DID** Jesus Do? We have the record of His life and His doing the will of His Father. Let us study that record and imitate His example in our lives. We don't have to be in doubt about what He would do; we know what He did. (JH)

Salvation by "Blood"

God made man with the capacity to serve and glorify Him, or to rebel at His will. Without free-agency man's service would be meaningless; but the power of choice makes man subject to punishment when he sins. In fact, untempered justice demands that man be punished for his sin; but Our Father is merciful, and gave of Himself – His Only Begotten Son – that both justice and mercy might be fully satisfied.

This is the basis for the New Testament doctrine of salvation in Christ's blood. The "blood" under consideration is not the red and white corpuscles; the plasma, hemoglobin, fibrinogen, etc., that make up blood per se. This ridiculous explanation is justified only by equally ridiculous conceptions of mystical powers in Christ's blood. (Ex. "One drop could save the world!") The significance of Christ's blood is its relation to life – Christ gave Himself – he willingly died on Calvary for the sins of the world.

The special place that blood had in the Jewish sacrificial system is due to its relation to life. In Leviticus 17:10-f. the people were forbidden to eat blood, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life."*

Man sinned, and *"it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth"* – so man was the one due to die. But God planned to send His Son to die in man's stead. (Isaiah 53:4-f) As a type or shadow of this perfect offering, God directed animal sacrifice from early times (Hebrews 11:4); the life of the offering in place of the life of the sinner. A dramatic demonstration of this principle is seen in the account of the offering of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-f); with God providing a ram in the place of Abraham's son. Even the name of the place has significance – "Jehovahjireh" (God will provide).

And after 1,500 years of bloodshedding in Judaistic types, the "pattern" was given reality, the shadow its substance (Hebrews 9:22-f) in the offering of Jesus Christ, *"once for all."* (Hebrews 10:10) There is no more "bloody" sacrifice – the types have served

their purpose. But man still sins and is "proven" (See Genesis 22:1, 12) not by the first of his flocks, nor even his son; but by offering himself a living sacrifice unto God. (Romans 12:1)

Jesus said, *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself"* (Matthew 16:24). He calls on us to die – yes, die to the old life of sin and rebellion against God. *"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:2-4)

When gospel preachers say one "contacts the blood of Christ in genuine N.T. baptism" they are not referring to some mystical "blood in the tank." Christ is the *"author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."*

✍ Robert Turner



HAVE YOU NOTICED?

Have you noticed that when you want something done the ones you can depend upon to get it done are those who are already busy with various tasks?

<i>Belleville church of Christ</i> 5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258 www.bellevillechurch.net	
Schedule of Services	Elders
Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.	
	Deacons
Evangelist	Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507	Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514