



## The Cud...a little something to chew on.

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### WWJD with WWJD?

WWJD is an acronym that has been merchandised with a fervor rivaled only by the Thighmaster™. It appears on everything from bookmarks to bumper stickers, but most often shows up embroidered on wristbands – adding new meaning to wearing your heart on your sleeve. And if you didn't already know, the letters stand for "What Would Jesus Do?"

While it may be a gargantuan marketing success, I happen to believe it's a sloppy question.

Don't get me wrong, if an acronym pulls your mind off selfish ambition and onto the Lord's will, buy a bracelet. For that matter, get a tattoo. Any gimmick that keeps us focused on the Lord's will and good pleasure is, in the long run, invaluable.

But as a substantive question, "What would Jesus do?" is an inadequate, if not inappropriate, filter for our choices. I know that sounds harsh, but I promise it's not just sour grapes over the fact that my "Twelve Men of Galilee" calendar never took off.

For me, the question fails on at least three levels. First, as a filter, it's handicapped by the imagination. It's hard enough to imagine Jesus hiking through Palestine in the first century, I can't begin to imagine Him steering a Toyota through Beverly Hills in the year 2000. What would Jesus drive anyway? Would He buy new or used? Leather or vinyl? Where would Jesus invest? Would Jesus buy insurance? Would Jesus sell insurance? Would Jesus terminate an employee or simply wait until they hanged themselves?

Using WWJD as a behavioral filter, I limit myself to what I can imagine Jesus doing, which for me, ends up being very little. Not that He wouldn't do more than I can imagine, it's just that my imagination isn't that sanctified or fertile. I would feel guilty every time I went to the gym simply because I have a hard time imagining Jesus doing aerobics.

Another problem with filtering choices through WWJD is that our answers will, of necessity, rely solely on speculation. And speculating about what Jesus would do is about as reliable as speculating about where the Dow will close. Jesus constantly said and did the *unexpected*. He kept His hearers in perpetual vertigo. In fact, it was Jewish assumptions about *what the Messiah would do* that was behind their rejection of Christ. The cross put a big crimp in the Messianic Speculation business. Easter is a holiday celebrating the startling.

The historical precedent suggests we would be poor prognosticators of what Jesus would do on any given occasion.

Finally, WWJD fails to account for individual calling and stewardship. Jesus had a unique calling and stewardship from the Father, which He was expected to execute faithfully. Each of us is also uniquely called and gifted. I do not have the same mission nor the same resources as Jesus; so I will do different things than Jesus did. I have to make choices in harmony with my gifts, not His. Otherwise, I should never marry or own a home, and I better find twelve men who are smart enough to get out of jury duty for three years and hit the streets of Jerusalem.

Paul told the Corinthians, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). I think he meant we should imitate Christ's attitude toward the will of God, not necessarily His application of the will of God. Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me" (John 4:34). I want to imitate His surrender to the Father not His particular stewardship from the Father.

Jesus did everything the Father asked Him to do. And unless I assume the Father is asking me to do everything He asked Jesus to do, I ought to be asking a different question: "What did Jesus say?" This moves the answer from the subjective to the objective. I can only speculate about what Jesus would do – I can know what He said.

Knowing what Jesus has said doesn't mean I'll know what to do – but it grounds the decision-making process in God's Word rather than in my imagination. A better question to be addressing is, "What would Jesus want *me* to do?" Even though the answer will be purely subjective, for we "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7), I think the question is a truer, more effective filter.

The WWJD craze may prove that accuracy is no match for good marketing. It may be symptomatic of a Church increasingly unable to think critically and prone to elevating speculation over revelation. It may be a subtle sign that we are embracing our existential culture's inclination toward subjectivism.

Or it may just be a fad.

By the way, have I mentioned my new product based on [Luke 24:32](#)? I call it "Road to Emmaus Salsa: Guaranteed to make your heart burn within you."

For that day,

David