

LIVING HOLY

Life Application: Behaving ourselves in a manner that reflects our commitment to be separate from the world and dedicated to God for His purposes.

Key Verse for Meditation: Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. – 1 Timothy 4:12

Focus Scriptures: Psalm 101:1-8; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 2 Peter 3:10-14

Recently I finished reading Charles Sheldon's book *In His Steps*, a book that traces the experiences of a handful of Christians who made a promise not to do anything without first asking themselves, "What would Jesus do?" I began to wonder what would happen in my life if I tried to walk in Jesus' steps without reservation. Would my life be any different?

Secretly, I hoped it would not. After all, I gave my life to God at a young age, and have been sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost. I go to church several times a week, teach Sunday school, and play in the orchestra at church. I like to think that I'm a devout Christian.

What Would Jesus Do?



However, I began to go mentally through my average day. First, I considered how Jesus would have me treat my family. I was quite sure that Jesus treated His family with utmost respect. Although at times the human part of Him might have felt frustrated, He would never have taken His frustrations out on His family.

What would Jesus watch, read, and listen to? I was certain He would be very careful about what He allowed to enter His mind. I remembered reading in Isaiah 33:15 how we are to shut our eyes from see-

ing evil, and I was sure that verse could be applied to these areas of my life.



Lesson Key: Living a holy life in terms of our conduct is not based on a list of "don'ts." The admonition, "Be ye holy; for I am holy," is positive. Also note that the verb *be* is reflected in specific actions. (For example, we know God is holy because of His actions which reflect His nature.) However, we cannot just do holy things; holy actions must flow from our innermost being, which has been transformed and made pure.

Next, my mind went to my neighbor, Wayne, who is eighty years old, almost deaf, and lonely. What would Jesus do for him? I believe God will ask me about him one day. But about the only thing I could say right now is, "Well, Lord, I took him a piece of pie once." I have not shared the Lord with him . . . yet.

I have to admit, I cringed a few times as these thoughts came to my mind. Every area seemed to need a little improvement. As I continued my inward examination, I began to think about the impact if I lived by the question, "What would Jesus do?" at church. "Surely," I thought, "nothing would change there!" My strength comes from walking with the Lord and worshiping with His people. However, as I took a closer look, I realized that changes would need to happen in this area, too, if I were to pledge to ask myself, "What would Jesus do?"

First, I considered the prayer room in our church. There we have the opportunity to gather before each service and ask for His blessing on the coming meeting. How would Jesus regard the prayer room? Knowing His great love for you and me, I could only imagine Him faithfully availing Himself of the chance to pray before meeting.

How would Jesus go about preparing His Sunday school lesson, or selecting a piece of music for a church service? For an instant it seemed that I caught a glimpse of the Lord's burden for souls, and I knew at once that He would make each effort a matter of prayer. Anything in His Father's service would be a privilege not to be taken lightly.

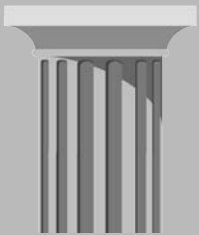
The next point on my inward checklist was the church service itself. I wondered, What would Jesus think about during

church? It would probably not be where He was going to eat after church, or how sleepy He was. In fact, I'm sure He wouldn't entertain any thought the devil might slyly slip into His mind. Jesus would be focused. He would be intent on the message.

Finally, I contemplated the altar in the front of our church sanctuary, where we gather to pray after our services. How would Jesus pray there, during that most important time in the meeting? When I thought of the love, perseverance, and earnestness He would demonstrate, the answer was obvious.

The more I meditated about these things, the more I realized that my life would not and could not remain the same if I began to seriously ask and live by the phrase, "What would Jesus do?" Making such a commitment, even for a short time, would require sacrifice. It was tempting to brush all of these thoughts aside, and convince myself that there really was nothing wrong with the way I was living. However, as I thought and prayed, it became clear in my heart that I needed to do this in order to draw closer to God and truly be what He wanted me to be. So it really is not a choice. I know the end result will help me to be more Christ-like, and that is my heart's desire.

May I ask you, How much more could the Lord accomplish through you if you made a promise to do this? What would be different in your life and in the lives of others around you? I believe that the possibilities as well as the benefits are limitless. By His grace, each of us can purpose in our hearts to walk closer to Him by asking "What would Jesus do?" . . . and then doing it. – *From a Higher Way* article by Lori Arechy



Bible Background

In Ephesians 5:11, Paul admonished the Early Church, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." The word translated *fellowship* means "to share in company with; to participate in." If we are to maintain a pure and holy life, one that is set apart and devoted to God, we must refrain from giving consent, approbation, or assistance to any who do wrong, and we must have no part in their deeds. Evangelist J. Wilbur Chapin (1859-1918) put it this way: "Anything that dims my vision for Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps me in my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me; and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it."



For Personal Study

1. We read in 2 Corinthians 6:17 that we are to “come out from among them” and be separate. Since we live in this world and must interact with unbelievers on a daily basis, how is it possible to follow this instruction?

2. How can we determine whether a specific action is appropriate for one who is trying to live a holy life? See Romans 12:9; 14:21; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 6:14; Colossians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

3. How should the concept of separation (2 Corinthians 6:17) and dedication to God (Romans 12:1) impact our conduct and actions?



“It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it. Lighthouses do not ring bells and fire cannons to call attention to their shine—they just shine.”
– Dwight L. Moody, American evangelist and founder of Moody Bible Institute

Whatever Happened to Worldliness?



Worldliness is something that Christians of a few decades back were warned to scrupulously avoid. Christian parents, pastors, and religious publications used this term and its companion, “the world,” with great frequency. However, those terms have become increasingly unfamiliar in our day.

Worldliness refers to following the example of unbelievers in activities, associations, attire, and thinking which do not align with the teachings of Christ. Some argue that outward appearance and behavior are not important because God looks at the heart. While it is true that God’s focus is on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7), His Word also points out that the “fruit” of a person’s life—what others see—is how those looking on will determine our spiritual condition (Matthew 7:17-20).

If our Christian testimonies are to have the desired effect on others, everything about our lives must back them up. When contemplating an action or activity that might be deemed worldly, it would be good to ask ourselves, “Can I do this to the glory of God? Is my whole aim to please Him?” Remember, God wants a clean line of demarcation between His children and the world. What we say, how we look, where we go, and what we do form the basis of other people’s opinions as to who we really are. If we look like the world, talk like the world, and act like the world, it should not surprise us if people assume that we are “of the world,” and not of Christ. Conversely, if we consistently live a clean, holy life before our associates, the reality of what God has done in our lives will be an unmistakable witness to others.

It is time to insert “worldliness” back into our vocabulary. It’s a danger we must carefully avoid!

Standing Out from the Crowd

Many professing Christians have tried to hold the Lord with one hand and the world with the other, but that just will not work. God's Word instructs us, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). You cannot act like the world, talk like the world, and do everything the world does and still be a true Christian. No, to be a follower of Jesus Christ is a revolutionary way of living totally opposed to the wickedness that surrounds you.

If you are thinking that this doesn't sound easy, you're right. While the Lord will give you power to live a holy life in this world, you have to guard against the temptation to compromise. You have to decide that your priority is to fit into Heaven's society. When people fault you or pressure you to loosen up and do what everyone else is doing, remember the Christian way is nothing to be ashamed of. You have chosen the high road of holiness, integrity, selflessness, virtue, love, and peace. So even if it isn't always easy, at least you know you are on the right road.

As you stand out from the crowd, there will be two positive results. You will be a light to the lost who are looking for a better way, and you will be pleasing to God! – *Excerpt from "Thirty Days on the Road to Eternity"*



Word Search

When Paul told the younger man,

Timothy, that he was to be an example of the believers "in conversation" (1 Timothy 4:12), he was not referring to verbal discourse. The word translated *conversation* means "behavior." Paul gave a similar exhortation to the believers at Philippi, when he instructed them, "Only let your conversation [behavior] be as it becometh [is worthy of] the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). The Apostle Peter sounded the same refrain when he said, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter 1:15).

4. How should we respond if God reveals to us that some action of ours is not pleasing to Him? Hebrews 12:9-11

5. Christ commanded His followers to be perfect (Matthew 5:48), and at times, the phrases "Christian perfection" and "perfect love" are used in connection with sanctification or holiness. How can a person really be perfect in this world?

6. What behaviors would you expect to see in the life of a person who is truly dedicated to God? What behaviors would you expect not to see?
