



2.
Love and Ethics Mulched by WWJD

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While listening to the radio one day ... I heard ...

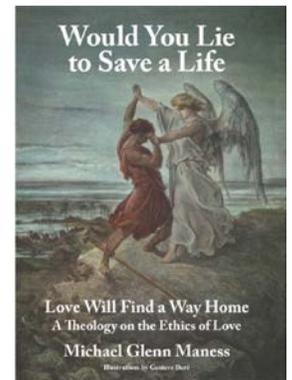
Just the other night at a hometown football game,
My wife and I ran into my old high school flame.
And as I introduced them, the past came back to me,
And I couldn't help but think of the way things used to be.
She was the one that I'd wanted for all times,
And each night I'd spend prayin' that God would make her mine;
And if He'd only grant me this wish I wished back then,
I'd never ask for anything again....
And as she walked away and I looked at my wife,
And then and there I thanked the good Lord for the gifts in my life.
Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers.
Remember when you're talkin' to the man upstairs,
That just because He doesn't answer doesn't mean He don't care.
Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers ...

Unanswered Prayers — by Garth Brooks

Love—far more than a choice, reaches to eternity.

www.PreciousHeart.net/love

Chapter 2 from



1968 - Capt. Bucher & his ship the [USS Pueblo](#) kidnapped by N. Korea. Held a year. Bucher was forced to LIE to save his men. *What would you do?* Contrasting four ethical systems and the "absolutes" therein, esp. Truth and Love, *where* is the absolutely RIGHT choice?

Christian ETHICS is the quest for God's will this side of heaven, and *TIME* itself plays a part in the determination of rightness.

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A. WWJD's Holy Ground—Where Did It Originate?

This section on WWJD and my comments throughout the book on WWJD were not part of the version endorsed by F. B. Huey, Ebbie Smith, and John P. Newport. I chose to use their endorsements without consulting them on my WWJD comments, and Newport has gone on to heaven.

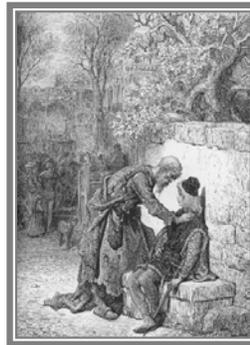
This section could be seen as somewhat moot, or even independent of the book's major theses, but it really is not. If WWJD is *not* taken seriously by those who wear the trinkets, then this section *is* moot. But no one who wears the trinkets actually believes WWJD is cheap, and they certainly do not believe WWJD distracts from the Love of God. My concern is that I cannot cushion this section enough to satisfy as many as I would like—such is the near virginal innocence of WWJD. I could have left this out or placed it in an appendix; I could have danced around it, placed it on the internet, or not written this section at all, rather than place it right here at the beginning. Yet, right here at the start is where this belongs. WWJD *is* a distraction and a *cheap* form of Christian ethics that mocks the sacrifice and Love that Jesus gave and asks from us.

At the start, I call your attention to the uniqueness of every person's choice, especially in Love. If unique, then no two people can make the exact same choice with respect to intentions of the heart; even the outwardly appearing identical choice to buy a Coke from a vending machine *still* has some unique differences between two people in their hearts. That is crucial to understanding Love, and, developing that as we go, that makes WWJD turn the world up-side down. Every choice is unique, especially when made in Love as every choice ought to be made, and the uniqueness itself is the golden treasure of human life. That is also the problem, how WWJD *appears* so innocent, yet does turn the world up-side down and away from what we value most in the Christian life—unique choices made in Love, the treasure of human life.

So we address WWJD head on. Challenges like WWJD to Love's golden treasures come in many forms and are often symptomatic of larger ailments. Sometimes a Christian sickness is covered with a placebo, something with the outward appearance and taste of something good, but actually being useless all the way through, except as it *fools* people into believing it is something other than what it is. That is WWJD.

Where did WWJD come from?

I hold in my hand a high quality, colored and



padding hard-bound copy of Charles M. Sheldon's novel, *In His Steps—What Would Jesus Do*, first written in 1896.¹ Each chapter has a beautiful picture of a church, and each page has a large watermark of the church in the background. More than that, every few pages throughout the entire 377 pages there is an indented side bar with a quote from the Bible or some famous Christian. At the end of every chapter, there are a few thought-provoking questions. Topping it all off, there is a silken tassel to mark the golden-edged pages. A lot of veneration went into this publication, which seems time-honored.

The novel centers round a pastor who shakes up his congregation and community by pledging to ask “What Would Jesus Do?” before making any decision. It is a nice story. This started the phenomenon of WWJD.

Dare I lampoon WWJD? I do *not* lampoon what *Jesus* would do.

There is an attractive innocence to WWJD, like flowers after a spiritual spring rain. Like children with angel wings around a nativity scene. It *looks* so pure and virginal. There is not a droplet of hostility, and the sound of the words seem as though they came from the Gospel of John: *What would Jesus do?* The meaning is fairly clear. When no one is looking for precision or no one is looking for any kind of real help, WWJD appears like the quintessence of the Christian ethic; it appears to be gold. When no one is being tortured or raped—it *looks* nice. The point missed is that Jesus would never have been raped. Only the niceties apply. When you see someone in need and you help them, you are doing WWJD. When you choose not to blow your top and cuss up a vile storm, or when you choose not to steal, you are doing WWJD.

It *appears* like ethical gold.

The innocence and clarity of WWJD's power to arouse child-like guilt is enormous, best used upon children or the honorable *Christian* hothead, when they are acting selfish or proud. Therein, the adult tosses WWJD with soft words that stop the honorable locomotive in its tracks. Being kind and generous and helpful and considerate is doing WWJD. The whole point—just about—is that nearly all Christians and nearly the entire world have an intuitive grasp of the character of Jesus as the archetype of a good man. Jesus *was* the best man, perfect in righteousness and Love.

Furthermore, since God has written some things upon our hearts, there is some natural theology that says that some morals were written upon the hearts of all, easily seen than in the phrase “that's not fair”; usually, whatever is “not fair” is also *not* WWJD. So if there is any practicality to WWJD, it is in that appeal to an intuitive grasp of Jesus' character that is

¹ Charles M. Sheldon, *In His Steps—What Would Jesus Do?* (Barbour, 1994; 1st 1896).

fairly summed up in what most people would naturally grasp about good morals, an enduring soul, a generous heart, and a considerate spirit.

I do *not* lampoon Jesus, but I do ask if WWJD is biblical. Is asking WWJD what Jesus himself wants us to do? Or does Jesus want us to *relate* to His Father through Him? I challenge that *no* one truly does WWJD as a matter of habit and that no one *can* do precisely WWJD. I lampoon the claims of WWJD and not Jesus. I fear, for I am almost treading on ground that has been nearly canonized to holiness. Many persons are fond of WWJD—it’s cutesy. An intelligent friend of mine said he had no problem with it, even in spite of the fallacies that I indicated below. Another friend questioned me, too, perhaps wondering if I had lost some marbles, but she began to reconsider after I added some light about Jesus’ divinity. Magical almost, WWJD just sounds good and appears devoid of ailments. WWJD may look like gold from a distance, but it is actually fool’s gold.

WWJD is a prime and primal example of Christian radical fundamentalism running mindlessly amuck—the actual claim that someone *can* do WWJD. No thinking or loving or sacrificing at all, just WWJD. We use WWJD to lampoon the difference between fundamentalism run amuck and a biblical ethic, and we offer below an extended challenge to WWJD.



B. WWJD Supplants Great Commands

Love is so much larger and richer than *What Would Jesus Do?*—WWJD—a Christian euphemism brimming with divine capabilities and pretensions to discern the absolute will of God, indeed, an ability to discern absolutely “right” choices in perfect Love—*what* Jesus would do.

Asking WWJD distracts from the will of God. The most important portions of God’s will are already clear: God’s will is for us to Love Him and each other, with every one of our unique choices. That is what Jesus did and what we are supposed to do! What *would* Jesus do? Jesus is *already* doing what He would do, uniquely, and in perfect Love. The rightness of any choice is woven together with thoughts, feelings, and intentions; that’s true for Jesus and us. Therefore, every choice that any person makes is unique, one of a kind, and thoroughly that person’s choice; even when a choice is coerced, as with a child, or as with the weak, or with a the victim, there are still several unique elements to every single human choice.

One of the glories of heaven will be the inheritance of an ability to make a completely free and unique choice that is absolutely “right” in perfect Love, a unique choice that is totally uninhibited and thoroughly our own choice. We shall be like Christ then, not following WWJD, but with His ability to make a unique choice in perfect Love that is thoroughly our own

choice and “right.” That is what God wants—our true Love freely and uniquely given from our own soul on our own initiative.

At the very question of WWJD, one takes a step backward from Love and backward from what Jesus said were the two Great Commands. WWJD distracts from the Gospels on Jesus’ life, which was to point us to a relationship with our heavenly Father. I am supposed to pray unceasingly—*doing* what Jesus said, which is *loving* God, *seeking* first the kingdom of God, *doing* unto others what I would like done to me. I am to *relate* to God, *meditate* on His Word day and night, and *write* His words on the door posts of my heart—what Jesus *did*. Follow Philippians 2:5-11 and put on the attitude or mind of Christ as my own, which in verses 6-11 indicates obedience and not the regurgitation of a single question.

I am not supposed to repeatedly ask a question *detached* from my personal relationship with God. WWJD asserts an ignorance of the demands of discipleship and reveals to bystanders the Christian’s own unawareness of shortcomings. Even the acronym itself, WWJD, is like shorthand for the will of God, that virtually everyone uses instead of the full question. Excuse me, but *shorthand* for the will God? *Shorthand* for Love?

Even today’s secular culture uses WWJD. On a recent news cast, the interviewer asked a cult member if she thought that her picketing of the funerals of American soldiers killed in Iraq was *What Jesus Would Do*. She replied, *yes*, which fairly well certified her psychosis for all those watching. The newscaster’s use of WWJD is the only practical use for WWJD, in the rhetorical, where the negative is implied or practically assumed. The newscaster *knew* that if she replied with *yes* that she would in that very instant align Jesus with her loony antics—likewise, immediately seen as loony by the news caster’s audience. WWJD was *used* to expose a looney person’s psychosis! Since most Christians and even non-Christians knew Jesus better than that, the cult member sealed the fate of her credibility when she admitted, after prodding, that Jesus would indeed have joined their cult in badgering grieving family members at funerals. Just about everyone knows that Jesus never badgered anyone.

Is there any *positive* practical use of WWJD? Does asking the question *help*? What is the *what* the person is looking for in WWJD? What is the answer? Is it possible to determine exactly what Jesus *would* do? We are beginning to sound like Abbot and Castillo’s baseball routine, by asking “who’s on first?” and “what’s on third?” What is the *what* a person is looking for in WWJD?

That depends upon what you believe about Jesus. If Jesus was merely a good man who died 2,000 years ago, then WWJD might have some practicality in proportion to the knowledge of Jesus’ character. Part of the problem arises with Christians who believe that Jesus is the sinless Son of

God who arose from the grave 2,000 years ago—the precise audience of WWJD marketeers. Jesus lived a life of perfect Love in absolute righteousness, and is still living that life today. That means, goodness, that Jesus is *already* doing what He would do, with unique choices, and no one this side of heaven is as competent as Jesus to find out *precisely* what Jesus would do—not at *any* precise moment, much less in both thoughts and deeds. Every single choice Jesus made and is making is unique, tuned exactly to absolute rightness in perfect Love. No two choices that Jesus ever made were identical, no two are identical today, and no choice made by any man or woman in human history is exactly what Jesus would do—poof, WWJD evaporates.

WWJD makes mush out of humanity, mulching human choices into baby food and depriving human choices of their unique golden treasures of Love. What two choices are identical even from the same person? None. Even in the choice to wear the same color socks, no two choices are *exactly* the same in thoughts and intentions. That is because each person is unique, one of a kind, in unique circumstances, with unique abilities, unique dreams, unique visions, and a unique relationship with God. WWJD makes the humungous claim that we can make the same choices as Jesus—discover them even—when we cannot even make the *exact* same choice in thoughts and intentions ourselves from day to day on the same color of socks, much less copy precisely the thoughts and intents of socks chosen by our neighbor.

WWJD supplants the Great Commands of Love themselves, and much more. WWJD adds a step, a prerequisite question that becomes *greater* than what Jesus said was the greatest. WWJD tears at our “praying without ceasing” and mulches our relationship with God. WWJD removes Jesus from His place by the Father interceding for us. WWJD sidetracks the reality of Jesus as our advocate uniquely—moment to moment—helping us *in* our pleading to the Father for guidance. WWJD cheapens all of life. Our faces are turned from the throne and from the advocate at the throne to the non-personal reputation of the advocate: the *what* of WWJD displaces my *talk* to God in Christ.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” in Philippians 2:5 in the KJV is worded in the NIV as “Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ.” The difference between the KJV and the NIV is clarified in the latter verses: Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient. WWJD sidetracks us from coming to the Father in Jesus’ name *inside* of a living relationship. In WWJD, we go *not* to Jesus or His Father, but we go to Jesus’ reputation *inside* of our brains in the pretense that our brains can somehow discern precisely what Jesus would do. At the least, that is far

more brainy than biblical, where WWJD supplants relationship and supplants Jesus' own words each time it is used.

In 1 Corinthians 2:16, we read in the KJV, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that we may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." Of this verse, the *Wycliffe Bible Commentary* says, "The spiritual man has the potentiality to understand all things." *Barnes' Notes* says,

This passage is quoted from Is. 40:13. The interrogative form is a strong mode of denying that ANYONE has ever known the mind of the Lord. The argument of Paul is this, 'No one can understand God. No one can fully comprehend his plans, his feelings, his views, his designs. No one by nature, under the influence of sense and passion, is either disposed to investigate his truths, or loves them when they are revealed. But the Christian is influenced by God. He has his Spirit. He has the mind of Christ; who had the mind of God. He sympathizes with Christ; he has his feelings, desires, purposes, and plans. And as no one can fully understand God by nature, so neither can he understand him who is influenced by God, and is like him; and it is not to be wondered at that he [non-Christian] regards the Christian religion as folly, and the Christian as a fool' (all caps his).²

Herein, the problem is *still* not WWJD, but rather why we so often do not utilize what we possess—the mind of Christ in us, and as Wycliffe so nobly points out, "the *potentiality* to understand all things" (emphasis mine). Christ lives *in* us, and we have God's living Word. Basically, we already have the answer to WWJD—Love—that is what Jesus would do and also what He told us to do, and the next step is the determination of Love. WWJD becomes greater than the Great Commands.

WWJD, in a way, admits that the person does not know what Jesus did or what Jesus asked His disciples to do: kind of like, "Here's Your Sign," for Christians. What Jesus did do in the NT informs us of what He would do, as best as our abilities can discern, and He is doing the same in heaven today. Even Jesus did not ask *What Would the Father Do*, instead, Jesus *did* what His Father did and what His Father asked. Jesus never asked a mantra. Never. Instead, Jesus said, "Love one another," which is harder, because Love requires a heart and a brain straining *together* to find unique choices every time for all time.



² Commentaries from BibleSoft version of these works (1997).

C. WWJD a Divine Competence—Who’s that Competent?

We are mindful that some are not claiming perfect obedience or the ability to be perfect with the WWJD trinkets, only espousing an ethic that attempts to follow Jesus. Follow Jesus. He is our example. Well enough. But following Jesus and doing WWJD are two different things.

Are we supposed to *Love* God? Or, are we supposed to ask WWJD? You cannot do both at the same time. If you know the first, you do not need the second; if you ask WWJD, that should lead you to Love. Love God is deep and personal, and WWJD is shallow and anti-personal. WWJD clips our relationship at the surface and makes the Christian life (and ethics) some kind of elementary detective exercise. WWJD—is that all? WWJD is a closed question—yes or no, black or white—*what, what, what!* The answer to which is always a single choice, supposedly the will of God. The fantasy is that someone with WWJD *can* find out precisely what Jesus would do, setting aside what Jesus is already uniquely doing, and pretending that one *can* actually find a choice that is equal to Jesus’ unique choice—absolutely “right” in perfect Love.

WWJD denies the reality of what Jesus *is* doing, concocts a reality that Jesus’ competences is simply *there* for the taking—poof perfection—and constructs a Christian advertisement to others of something he or she *is not* and does *not* do. WWJD is a sign that the person does not know WWJD and does not do WWJD. Actually, “Here’s Your Sign” says more.

The only practical use of WWJD is with respect to negative judgments, where WWJD is used rhetorically to refer to an action that we all *already* know Jesus would *not* do. An adult uses WWJD to correct children and to mildly embarrass an adult Christian friend who—at the WWJD declaration—*already* knows the answer to WWJD. That is, the adult declaring WWJD never *truly* intended to utilize WWJD, but the adult misused WWJD for an ulterior or alternative end—Christian doubletalk. He or she says, *WWJD*, and convicts his or her friend in a piece of Christian showmanship or one-up-man-ship. *WWJD*—and the friend leaves the last cookie on the tray and puffs up in form of false Christian bravado of self restraint. What a man! The *action* is rebuked without touching the relationship with God or even the living relationship between friends. Shorthand for obedience without the confession.

That’s not fair! is replaced by WWJD, a piece of Christian vanity and Christian encoded doubletalk. *That’s not fair!*—a rather precise claim to universal morals is downgraded by WWJD into a rather smug self-righteousness; WWJD is asked with full knowledge that the person to whom it is addressed *already* knows the answer. Here, it is less about what Jesus would do, and more about rubbing a nose in a moral faux paux. Jesus’ name is *used* in vain to avoid a more clear and loving and harder initiative (even a

unique initiative) that would win the soul instead of judge the soul. Jesus' name is used in vain to produce guilt and to avoid a more wholesome and direct confrontation of the issue. Jesus' name is used in vain to a friend, rather than *relate* as a friend. Jesus would *not* steal or lie or break the Ten Commandments, and he would always be *fair*. Jesus would most likely not take the last cookie on a tray; but he might, if he *knew* no one else wanted it. But who *knows* at any time in history precisely what Jesus would do? The larger and more direct issue is Love God and Love others, specifically and uniquely tailored for every single choice to every single need.

WWJD cheapens the Christian life.

WWJD distracts from what Jesus said and crosses out the real-life practicality of the two Great Commands and the Golden Rule. The higher side of Christian ethics is not WWJD. The higher side is *Love* God with all your heart, which includes Love others as yourself. Love's chief principle is truly golden—do unto others as you would have them do unto you. WWJD downgrades the perfect ideal of Jesus' unique and majestic competence into something *everyone* can do *everywhere*—as though absolute holiness was that easy. WWJD distracts from what Jesus told us to do.

Ask WWJD. Ask it about any situation or problem in life. The only help comes at the moment you pass by WWJD and move onto Jesus' words in the Great Commands and the Golden Rule. WWJD is useless if one is already a Christian who knows Jesus' words. If a person does not know Jesus, then that person needs John 3:16 first, and WWJD is useless there, too—for then, one just needs Jesus.

The higher and more practical side is to remain with the Great Commands to Love, the Golden Rule, and the rest of the Bible. They work so much better in the battlefield foxholes, where specific guidance is needed on the fly.

For now, and with a little heart, we must know that WWJD means nothing in most of the heartrending crises of life. Ask the man or woman—gasp—*being* raped, or *being* mutilated, or *being* murdered. Ask the victim! In the process of defilement and torture, no one asks WWJD, much less demands WWJD. Let us not pretend that WWJD is useful in isolated Christian parties when there remains only one piece of pizza on plate. At that point of torture, the person goes straight to God, screaming *God ... have mercy and rain down fire on the terrorist*. No one asks WWJD to a victim, especially if the victim was their own child or family or friend.

No one asks WWJD in the township where Love is *truly* a Christian absolute. WWJD does not work where Love is tops, not even a little; rather, the asking of WWJD slaps the face of the victim *in* his or her pain.



Yet, someone has made a million dollars off the WWJD trinket.

The only place WWJD works is in Mayberry RFD, a nice place where there are no victims of serious crimes against persons: no rapes, assaults, murders. It is amazing and nostalgic that in America there was a time when the television series Mayberry RFD was actually watched and enjoyed on television. It's sad that Mayberry RFD is no longer entertaining, not even to most of the old crowd. On the contrary, the longest running prime-time television series in history in the same era was Gunsmoke, where Marshall Matt Dillon meted out justice against real predators and helped protect real victims. Part of Gunsmoke's appeal resided in its connection to real people. Festus was more credible than Barney Fife, tougher too, even ready to give his life to save life. In the actual series and not very well remembered, Festus was a former wolf hunter turned deputy sheriff. And we want that today, don't we?—an expert *wolf* hunter tracking criminal predators!

If one takes WWJD seriously, the question is just four words long and simple enough, then one clearly and simplistically makes a *claim* to an equality of competence to Jesus. That's too high-minded. Jesus' example was not to ask WWJD; Jesus' *example* was his loving of God the Father and his sacrificial Love for us. Accordingly, following Jesus is never asking an endless series of “what ifs” and “what woulds.” The only “what-if” and “what-would” experts in the NT were the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus fostered Love and Responsibility to God the Father.

To actually do WWJD would entail—ironically enough—*not* asking WWJD all the time. Instead, if there is any real use to WWJD, you would only need to ask WWJD once in a lifetime; after that, the answer to WWJD turns the person away from WWJD. The answer to WWJD is to Love God and to pray to God the Father without ceasing. If one does seriously ask WWJD, all they need to do is ask once, and then one gets involved in a relationship with God the Father. What *did* Jesus do? He related to the Father, returned to the Father, sits at the right hand of the Father, is making unique choices today—as He did 2,000 years ago—in perfect Love, and will return at the Father's appointed time and take us to His Father's house.

Absolutely “right” in perfect Love! That is what Jesus did, that is the goal of the Christian life, and that is what Jesus purchased for us on the Cross and shall be our inheritance in heaven. On earth, this side of heaven, we shall struggle to Love all our days, and our Love will help us find a way through the darkness, the darkest of times, and sometimes even through hell on earth until we finally receive our inheritance.

Self-sacrifice—that is what makes the hero and heroine, and that is what defines Love. The best of Love will never come to us in WWJD fantasies, not even in Shelton's old book, *In His Steps*. Instead, the best of Love has come *though* great struggles, as in the lines of *Dear God, take this cup from*

me ... but not my will, but Thine be done. That's Love and Jesus' example. Put that on a bracelet, and I'll buy it. A man or woman able to endure to the end, *without* answers, and overcomes—that is the person who gets the crown. The one who struggles is like Jesus, similar to Jesus, but not nearly as competent as Jesus; the one who struggles is *doing* what Jesus did while He was here on earth. And our goal is to approach Jesus' competence this side of heaven.



D. WWJD—Ill Symptom of Today's Christianity

We bring up WWJD because it is a good illustration of the sickness plaguing today's Christianity, and works well with the works of radical fundamentalism and the *better-than-though* attitude.

Moreover, we also bring up WWJD because even in its fanciful pretensions—hear this—WWJD is about teleological goals, is about *ends*, and much of Christian fundamentalism has a great distaste for the teleological. Almost without exception, Christian fundamentalism avoids the use of consequences in the determination of the rightness of a choice. So—hear this!—WWJD is about the *teleological*, and the *teleological* is the attraction of WWJD. The comparison of WWJD with the teleological will become much clearer as we progress, as the fool's gold of WWJD competes with Love's gold mine on the concourse of life.

WWJD is one of the symptoms of a sickness plaguing Christianity where some radical fundamentalists twist reality in the worst cases, or in the milder cases simply discount the golden treasure and complexity of Love. Through and through, WWJD is typical of Christian elitism and cuts the heart out of Christian ethics. Love is claimed—look at that *loving* televangelist's smile—just not critical or potent or determinative in any perceivable manner for the actual discernment of a “right” choice.

Love is almost ghost in radical fundamentalism—just ask WWJD.

When it is *not* taken seriously but merely alludes to the character of Jesus or some intuitive ghost of Jesus' good nature, herein, WWJD is Christian vanity and an elitism that only the prosperous and protected parade as privileged members of a special caste of Christianity. A victim and Christians in tough situations immediately pass over WWJD to prayer, like *God help me*, and the real struggle with Love just begins as Love searches to find a way through the dark hour.

When WWJD is taken seriously, it is layered through and through with the perpetuation of mindlessness that even undermines the divinity of Jesus Christ and that lifts our human abilities sky high. WWJD is made quasi-biblical because of its use of *Jesus*: the name dignifies the question, and helps with the deceit. WWJD twists and downgrades the Truth of Jesus'

majestic divinity into something that is fully accessible by human beings, and at the same time WWJD elevates human competence far above revelation. WWJD means that we *can* do what Jesus would do, and that equality of ability with Jesus lifts up human ability to His divine competence. There is no man or woman on earth who can discern precisely what Jesus would do, not in thoughts and deeds, not precisely or exactly. The person becomes nearly blasphemous, unintentionally to be sure, but still that is the claim. Look there! There goes a man or woman who *claims* to be able to accomplish WWJD—see the bracelet—near *divine* in their own minds, or so they advertise.

Here's your sign—truly, that is what WWJD actually says. Outside the divine ability, undoubtedly, many wear the trinkets simply because they seek to identify with a Christian clique, and the trinket is as a kind of fraternity or sorority band of fellowship. Not really *using* the band as a mantra reminder. It's just a sign, after all.

WWJD looks like gold and sounds nice, but is fool's gold.



E. How Much *Would* Can a Would-Chuck Chuck?

How much *would* can a would-chuck chuck? Is it Funny? We try to make it funny, to drive home the depth of the sickness, because WWJD *is* a serious allegedly Bible-based-super-nice-Christian acronym, plastered on church walls and worn seriously by teenagers and adults. Is WWJD worth anything? Then name the single worthy thing. WWJD is truly another piece of Christian doublespeak, costume jewelry, not only useless, but sacrilegious in its distraction from what Jesus wanted in a real relationship.

How much *would* can a would-chuck chuck?

To ask WWJD in every decision makes a mockery of our living faith and degrades our living relationship into a never ending circle. Unintentionally, yet nevertheless, WWJD is a Christian mantra meant to be asked over and over and over. Try catching someone in the endless circuit of asking WWJD for *every* decision. No one actually does that, and no one can do that—except a robot. The human mind cannot function like that and remain sane. No one does—not one! Such a robotic mantra turns the cyclical questioning upon itself and away from the person of God. When the person wearing the trinket is not in the cycle of asking WWJD continually, then where is that person? How many times a day should one ask WWJD? If not always, then WWJD wilts at the root.

Just how much *would* can a would-chuck chuck?

Repeating the WWJD mantra in every situation is the obvious point of the trinket theology. In actuality, this is not very far removed from some of the claims of Krishna consciousness, where one gains a measure of holiness

in the verbal repetition of a prayer mantra, as in the verbal repetition of “Hare Krishna,” which the adherents do in dances for hours at a time. The only difference is that the Krishna followers are *serious* about mantras, and the Christian never intends to *use* his bracelet for its purpose. Have you ever seen anyone dancing around chanting WWJD in prospect for a revelation on a complex problem? Herein, the Krishna follower is of more integrity than the bearer of the bracelet.

In the NT, we have Jesus looking to the Father, and we have Jesus asking His followers to Love God and to be Responsible for themselves. We are to make decisions on our own, with His help, but nevertheless by our own selves. We are not to be parrots, martinets, or robots. We are to make our own unique choice to Love God with our own special intentions and feelings—just as a child does. We are to *decide* to Love, and we are to *use* the Golden Rule. We are to think and feel through every one of our unique choices with all of our heart, soul, and mind—but still uniquely—and then we are to Love as best as we can in an approach to the competence of Christ.

Love with all of our heart, soul, and mind.

The WWJD deception floats to the top, like a dead fish in a pond, and reveals Christian hypocrisy. Who actually asks WWJD five or twenty times a day? If WWJD had any credibility at all, we should be asking it 500 times a day. We would WWJD without ceasing! WWJD replaces the Great Commands to Love and becomes a Christian mantra, and it *has* to be a mantra if it is taken seriously at all. Go ahead, dance through life chanting WWJD, WWJD, WWJD, 500 times a day at every interchange, gas pump, bank teller, and every tip for every meal. All or none. No one but a robot is capable of asking WWJD 500 times a day. Worse, no one does—no one!

Ask anyone who wears the costume jewelry. You know the answer.

WWJD is merely a sign, and a sign of illness.

For the poor souls dedicated to the WWJD mantra, we need to write a book *outside* of the Bible to determine which choices are or are not applicable to WWJD. A book must be created to help people discern when to ask and not ask WWJD. *To ask or not to ask*—that is the question. Those non-WWJD-applicable choices would be left up to the poor soul to make on their own, perhaps now with a WWJD Golden Rule Book, listing choices that can and cannot be made by asking WWJD, all to replace the Golden Rule and Responsibility. That book would only be useful for those persons who do *not* see an applicability of WWJD for every single choice. In that book, the would-chuck experts would need to determine the extent of how much *would* a would-chuck may or may not need to chuck, perhaps with a continuum on common chucking choices. A book of golden chuckable choices. Maybe with an appendix of special chucking times, illustrated with chucking tables and flow chuck charts. Maybe even with some snap-out

would-chuck signs—to paste up around especially difficult or distracting chuckable places.

For someone unable to stay in the chucking cycle, not as competent as the best chuckers, then that person would need would-chuck experts from the elite chuckers school to help determine WWJD chuckability. Perhaps with chuckability credibility check lists, or an association of accredited chuckers. Said in another way, in an ethic that needs to ask WWJD all the time, most of the sincere adherents will *still* end on the doorsteps of the elite would-chuck chucker experts.

Bring on the golden chucking manuals.

Let me give one real-life example of a time of non-applicability, perhaps for Chucking 101 or Chucking for Dummies. In undergrad school, as part of a counseling practicum, I was to take the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, an inventory of about 400 questions, the answers of which were divided along a spectrum of about 20 continuums. One continuum would be introvert-extrovert, another hostile-passive, and so forth. On the graded answer sheet, there was a shaded band midway through the continuums indicating *normal* (between hostile-passive, that would be *normal*), and it was expected that each person who took the test would spike up or down *outside* the normal band in 3-4 continuums. This was particularly good for married couples who would take the test on themselves and then take the test on their perceptions of each other. Comparing the self-assessments with the spouses, and comparing how each spouse rated the other—that provided a good idea of sources of compatibility, conflict, and illusion.

That particular day, I was feeling exceedingly stressed, fatigued, having run on about 4 hours of sleep a night for the last several weeks. I was very interested in making a good impression, and there was no way I was going to betray to my teacher my stressed-out brain, I was a real nut case that day. So, I thought to myself, why not try to answer each question—seriously—as I thought Jesus might answer it. As God as my witness, when the finished test was graded, low and behold, I was one of the few whose temperament line ran almost smack down the middle of the normal band on all of the continuums—*normal, normal, and normal*. I was stressed to the limit, just short of full nut-case, and I had just tested *normal* all across the board. The clerk mentioned how remarkable that was, and I reflected to the clerk a little-tongue-in-cheek *was that good?*—to which she replied, *that was among the best*. I did not correct her and was actually *feeling* better, too. I did WWJD that moment, but that is not what Jesus *wanted* me to do.

The same is true in many cases. When a child is coloring in a coloring book, the young child inevitably colors outside the line. The child is not truly trying to do what Jesus would do or what his sibling would do. The child is *trying* to create a unique piece of artwork to please daddy and

mommy. When the child presents the artwork to the parent, it is a unique piece of art, one of a kind; yes, of course, you see the elementary color splashes, the crooked lines and crayon marks going wildly over the lines, the additional stick-figures representing mommy, daddy, and sister—but there it is, a unique piece of artwork presented in Love—*Love you* is the message. It is presented to mommy and daddy in all sincerity, and the parents would not trade it for a real Picasso. Here’s the kicker. A good mom and dad do *not* want a Picasso or something like the child’s *other* sibling, and they do not even want WWJD—they *want* the child’s *own* unique present. That’s Love received from a child who gave Love on his/her own initiative, unique in the universe, unique to the time, unique to the place, and best of all unique to the family—see the stick figures. No two sticks are identical. The picture goes on the refrigerator door, then to the office, then to the scrapbook archives.

God does *not* want WWJD. Instead, as Jesus said, God wants us to come as a child. Gosh, that’s clear, and I can certainly do that. Radically against WWJD, *through* Jesus, God said He wanted us to Love Him and Love others, uniquely, on our own, with our own initiative. Best of all, loving outside the lines is OK, *not* perfect is OK, but trying to Love—that is what we all want and what God wants, true and unique Love most of all. Follow the guidebook, the Bible, yes—but Love God. When we do that, and endure, God hangs that piece of Love on His refrigerator.

Yes, for one *not* believing that WWJD is applicable 24/7, then there needs to be a special chucking manual to determine chuckability for would-be master would-chucks. Like me, perhaps, who misused WWJD in a clearly inappropriate, but nevertheless satisfying academic circumstance.

For all those who *do* see an applicability of WWJD to all choices 24/7, that would force another class of would-chuck experts—those capable of chucking 24/7. Yes, *classes* or dare I say *castes* or *casts* of chuckers. Costume jewelry for the castes and casts, depending on the role *played* without thought to the life lived 24/7. Perhaps even color-coded bracelets, so we can identify the master chuckers at a distance, in case we need them for an emergency chucking.

There would need to be a chucking manual for the 24/7 chuckers, bigger than the non-applicable-chucking manual mentioned above. We would need to discern the meaning of WWJD for decisions reflecting our own initiative and own state of affairs, even feelings and intentions. Perhaps this could be called the sub-chucking manual, designed for the advanced world-class would-chuck. Therein, the sub-chucking manual would ask and answer the greatest chucking question of all: “How much *would* a would-chuck could chuck?” and return with as simple and as profound a chucking response,

answering, “just as much *would* as a would-chuck could chuck to keep the chucking pay check coming.”

We have come full circle in would chucking, now, as I saw in a major new magazine a cartoon reflecting all the nonsense over the discovery of an alleged tomb of Jesus and Mary. Without touching the idiocy, so very well reflected in much of the news accounts already, the cartoon summed it up, declaring that they had *indeed* discovered the tomb of Jesus. Tada!—there is evidence in the tomb, because of a bracelet on the arm of a skelton, which was inscribed, “What Would I Do?”³ That really hit the mark.

Almost closing this tour-de-chuck and on a most serious note, CNN aired a special program on April 6, 2007, 8-9 P.M., hosted by Roland Martin—I kid you not—titled, “What Would Jesus *Really* Do?” The title was a kickstand to host several of the nation’s most popular pastors on social issues, including Rick Warren, T. D. Jakes, Paula White, Fredrick Douglas Haynes, and Jerry Falwell. It was a good program overall, and used WWJD as the starting point. One, Rev. Haynes, was more isolated than the rest in his seemingly exclusive confidence in his correction of problems. Jerry Falwell seemed very threatened by terrorism, as we all are, but I was not clear where “WWJD” fit in with what he said. Interestingly enough and to my great delight, when the anchor asked the prime question “What would Jesus really do?” to T.D. Jakes, the response was, “That is the most difficult question you asked me today.” The 2007 CNN program ended in a surprisingly positive manner, noting that Jesus would not have endorsed a political party, warning that some people do pimp God, and that the Christian faith is a serious affair.

So we have come full circle, and WWJD is truly only of use when we are calling attention to what most of the world *already* knows that Jesus would *not* do: Jesus would not be hateful.

To close, then, if one is truly serious about ascertaining “what Jesus would actually do”—on their own—then a full grasp of the would-chucker’s own culture in comparison with a full grasp of the OT, the NT, all of the cultures, and all of the languages impacting those texts for the thousands of years of their development would be a prerequisite for a competent expertise in WWJD concerns—a mastery equal to Jesus’ own mastery. That’s the requirement to WWJD competence and becoming a master would-chucker. To perfectly articulate what Jesus would do—exactly in thoughts and deeds—would require a perfect mastery of the entire biblical record and cultural context right along with a mastery of the host culture.

³ TIME or Newsweek or US News & World Report?—but have lost it, I am sorry to say.

So if the poor soul made it to Dr. Joe Would-Chuck's office, even Dr. Would-Chuck would not have the complete answer to any specific WWJD question. There is no perfectly competent would-chuck. Not surprisingly, for a perfect answer to a single WWJD choice, Dr. Would-Chuck would have to be Jesus Himself. Only Jesus knows precisely what He would do.

In the last analysis, Love is very much larger than WWJD, and WWJD becomes another elitist conveyance that actually subverts a Christian's relationship with God and mulches Christian ethics, subtly under-chucking the eternal golden treasure of Love.





3.

Love and Evil Rain—Endure

- A. Love Makes the World Go Round & Love's Gold Rush
- B. Few Basic Definitions Used in Defense of Love
- C. How Does Love and Truth Complicate Bucher's Dilemma?
- D. What Is Love's Problem in Bucher's Dilemma?
- E. Love Complicated by Evil Forces
- F. Evil Rain, Mayberry RFD—Only Love Can Find a Way

While listening to the radio one day ... I heard ...

As the snow flies, on a cold and gray Chicago morning,
A poor little baby child is born ... in the ghetto. And his mama cries.
Because if there's one thing that she don't need
It's another hungry mouth to feed ... in the ghetto
People, don't you understand, the child needs a helping hand.
Or he'll grow to be an angry young man some day.
Take a look at you and me, are we too blind to see,
Do we simply turn our heads, and look the other way.
While the world turns, and a hungry little boy with a runny nose,
Plays in the street as the cold wind blows ... in the ghetto....
Then one night in desperation, a young man breaks away.
He buys a gun, steals a car, Tries to run, but he don't get far....
As a crowd gathers around an angry young man,
Face down in the street with a gun in his hand ... in the ghetto.
As her young man dies, on a cold and gray Chicago morning,
Another little baby child is born ... in the ghetto. And his mama cries.

In the Ghetto – by Elvis Presley

Love—the only thing evil cannot destroy, even with death.

See www.PreciousHeart.net/love
for more on true love ...

See Book Here

www.PreciousHeart.net/love



1968 - Capt. Bucher & his ship the [USS Pueblo](#) kidnapped by N. Korea. Held a year. Bucher was forced to LIE to save his men. *What would you do?* Contrasting 4 ethical systems and the "absolutes," esp. Truth and Love, *where* is the absolutely RIGHT choice?

Christian ETHICS is the quest for God's will this side of heaven, and *TIME* itself plays a part in the determination of rightness.

www.PreciousHeart.net/love

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See [Depravity and Will of God](#)

See [Truth Article](#) that briefly reviews three articles on Truth in the 2005 Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (JETS) by Andreas J. Köstenberger, R. Albert Mohler, and J. P. Moreland

See [Speaking the Truth in Love and Fundamentalist Mocking of Love](#), a commentary on Ephesians 4:15

See [Character Quotes by Famous Persons](#)

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Other Ethics Articles of Interest

[Will of God and a Man's Lifework: Condensation](#), by Henry B. Wright, a masterly work on the principles of discovering God's will for one's life.

["What is Truth?" - Short Review of Three 2005 JETS Articles](#) on Truth by Andreas J. Köstenberger, R. Albert Mohler, and J. P. Moreland.

[War and Peace Article](#) by M.G. Maness viewing SBC Doctrine of Peace and War.

LIFE Magazine Articles

[LIFE, Feb 7, 1969, Bucher and the Pueblo--The Cruel Dilemmas of Duty](#) - read the article here on GoogleBooks.

[LIFE, Aug 21, 1970, The Pueblo Variousy Remembered, by William A. McWhirter](#) - a small review of three books

Two Companion Books by Michael G. Maness

Two companion books, researched prior to the completion of *Would You Lie to Save a Life* were challenges in themselves and fortify it more fully:

[*Heart of the Living God*](#) and [*Character Counts*](#)

See Book Here

www.PreciousHeart.net/love

