



Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

Reimagine a New Normal

Week 1 - April 26, 2020

In 1886 Reverend Charles Sheldon of Topeka, Kansas coined the phrase, “What Would Jesus Do?” to encourage his listeners to make decisions and live their lives the way that Jesus would. The phrase was revived in the 1990’s and often appeared as the acronym WWJD. It seemed like a simple way to remind His followers to live in harmony with Him and deepen their relationship with the Giver of life.

Sadly, in my world, I found people would often use that phrase to justify their choices and actions and it began to stretch outside of the Biblical context. Sometimes there was orthodoxy without orthopraxy and sometimes there was orthopraxy and not orthodoxy. Right thinking vs. right practice. As we reimagine a new normal, we can intentionally look at Jesus’ lifestyle by reading the Gospels and we can intentionally begin to make choices to imitate His lifestyle. It takes both right thinking and right practice, but it will not happen by accident.

When I was growing up, I was taught that we have six days to do our work and engage in a secular life, but we must keep the Sabbath sacred because it belongs to God. One day God showed me that Jesus came to give us Sabbath 24/7 and that all our life is designed to be sacred. This was a life-changing epiphany for me. It opened up my relationship with God on a new plane and I reveled in the new depth in which I experienced Him.

Time, however, began to erode my practice and I have found it so easy to come home from work and turn on Hulu while I make dinner, and then just keep my face on the screen until bedtime. God gives us the freedom to make those choices. I can even justify and imagine that Jesus would watch shows with his followers so He could stay culturally relevant. But a still, soft voice within reminds me that this does not bring me closer to Jesus and it stunts my spiritual growth.

Pastor Bill has called us to reimagine a new normal by focusing on the lifestyle of Jesus. His lifestyle animates the life He offers us. Romans 12:1-2 gives us a challenge: “I plead with you to take your everyday ordinary life and place it before God as an offering. Let it be a living sacrifice, holy—the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?” Will you accept this challenge with me?

SO, CONSIDER:

1. By focusing on the lifestyle of Jesus, what new insights do you expect to find and what areas of your life do you expect to find wanting? What do you do that conforms more to your culture than to His lifestyle?
2. What are you prepared to sacrifice as you reimagine a new normal?
3. If you already live a rich, spirit-filled life, what areas could increase with exercise? What areas of your life have you been satisfied with that may not be consistent with Jesus’ lifestyle?

TAKE ACTION: This week begin a new study of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As you read, ask yourself these questions: What would Jesus do? How did Jesus live His life? What disciplines or practices do you see in his life?

May His blessings and peace be yours, sent to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. ~Tess