

**General Topics :: In His Steps----Social Gospel?****In His Steps----Social Gospel? - posted by DesertRose, on: 2010/7/24 8:11**

Watch your life and your doctrine closely.

Charles Sheldon espoused a pragmatic world view and agenda, which was divergent from orthodox Christianity. His social gospel and liberalism is being brought to fruition in our day. One can hear it echoed with the emergent church individuals.

Wikipedia says this about Sheldon,

"In the winter of 1896 Sheldon developed a sermon story that he read as a weekly series from the pulpit of Central Congregational Church in Topeka, Kansas

The unifying theme of these sermons was based on posing the question, "what would Jesus do?" when facing moral decisions. He viewed this question as traditional within Christianity and likely drew some inspiration from William T. Stead's "If Christ came to Chicago"

Novel and theological influence

The theme of the sermons was later fictionalized into the novel *In His Steps*. The central ethos of the novel was not about personal redemption but about moral choices related to encountering circumstances of poverty and deprivation. Sheldon's theological motif reflected his socialist outlook, and it helped to inspire the theologian Walter Rauschenbusch who is generally credited with creating the Social Gospel. However, Rauschenbusch acknowledged that Sheldon was the source of his ideas. Sheldon's own parish work became identified with the Social Gospel, an expression of early Liberal Christianity."

**Re: In His Steps----Social Gospel? - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/7/24 11:07**

This may sound cold but Jesus would have walked by the woman with the issue of blood. In fact, He did walk right by her! It was she who pressed through the throngs of people to touch the hem of His garment.

The records of the Bible show that He did stop for a few, praise His name b/c when He did stop, they were all helped! But I'm sure He walked by many He knew needed His help but they never came forward, only He knows why.

Now I believe in the root of, "What would Jesus do?" To me the root is that He helped, healed, delivered, set free, comforted, and refused NONE of those who dared to come to Him!

Just my two cents (edit from today's perspective - tomorrow could be different!),

God bless you,  
Lysa

**Re: In His Steps----Social Gospel? - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/7/24 11:12**

I just posted a thread on here about recommending this book and so now I am torn between the two opinions. I understand your post though and the intent behind it. As I read the story though I saw something that modern Christianity hasn't seen in a long while and that is genuineness on the intent to follow Jesus no matter the cost (we at least don't see this in the US). The idea to live as Christ would is the theme I picked up from the book, and trust me I have been searching scripture to figure out who Jesus is and what He would want me to do even before I read this book. I did see the socialism slip through that made me question that chapter.

I am just a simple guy looking for a simple gospel to live by and teach, imitating Christ seems to be the simplest for me now (not necessarily the easiest). Taking up my Cross daily is my goal and dying completely to self. I have before asked myself when I saw people in need if I was in the same situation would I like help? The intent and direction of this question is not just to meet the social needs of the person but also the spiritual needs as well through Jesus Christ.

I guess the safest thing to do would just to follow the Holy Spirit and be sure to make sure I am lining up with scripture by being a diligent student. Thank you for post this it is appreciated.

God Bless,  
Matthew

**Re: In His Steps----Social Gospel? - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2010/7/24 11:15**

OH; THE NERVE OF SHELDON TO  
SUGGEST WE ASK OURSELVES WHAT  
JESUS WOULD DO AND THEN DO IT!!  
FOR HIM TO SAY THAT A SAVING  
FAITH IS ONE THAT IS PRACTICED!  
IF THAT MAKES ME A LIBERAL  
FOR JESUS, I'M NOT ASHAMED TO  
BE ONE!!

**Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/7/24 17:30**

The book's a fictitious story; it isn't non-fiction :o/ C'mon people! It's a book about a possible revival. A book where people are convicted of their sins, who pray to God, who leave their sins behind.... It's not the Gospel of Christ Jesus! It's not the Word of God! It's a fictitious book, that even says "Christian fiction". Who said it was the Word of God? Blast away if you feel compelled. Who gets their Doctrine from hymn books; yet you probably sing the hymns therein.

**Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/7/24 18:16**

hi, thou most pompous ...get a life...book was given to me by len ravenhill...good book.jim

**Re: What Would Jesus Do? , on: 2010/7/24 19:24**

What Would Jesus Do?

This is NOT the gospel!!!!

I posted an article The Law of Life By Chip Brogden  
see the whole article at  
[http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id=34502&forum=35&0](http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=34502&forum=35&0)

Here is a portion of that article.

Please prayerfully read

My Christian life changed from "What Would Jesus Do?" to "Watch What Jesus Does!"

THE LAW OF LIFE MEANS "NOT I, BUT CHRIST"

"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20a)."

You may be interested in knowing how the Lord taught me to live according to the Law of Life. I learned from the Scriptures that Christ lived in me, and I had no life of my own. I understood that Christianity is not about trying to be like Jesus, but is about Jesus Himself living in me and through me. This is what is called the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. So then I realized that it is not about me at all, my weakness, or my feelings one way or the other. All that mattered was Christ in me, doing what I cannot do in myself.

As I was taking a shower one morning the Spirit began to repeat to me over and over again, "Trust in My Life! Trust in My Life!" I thought that was too easy to do, Christianity must be more difficult than this. But this soft Voice was persistent. It was not a command, but a challenge. Finally I agreed to trust in His Life, and I went about my business.

It was not long before the first test came. I did not like to wash dishes, but the first thing my wife asked me to do that morning was wash the dishes. Oh no! Immediately I clenched my jaws together and felt my blood pressure rise. You must understand that I used to have a temper which once caused me to slam a car door so hard that I broke the glass out of it. So my natural response to this dirty kitchen was to explode and say that I was too busy and besides, it is not my job any

way! That was my first thought.

But at that exact moment I recalled what the Spirit had been telling me: "Trust in My Life!" So I went to the Lord, not outwardly, but inwardly, and said, "I cannot clean this stupid kitchen! I have better things to do. I hate this dirty job. Nevertheless, I trust in Your Life to do in me and through me what I am unable and unwilling to do myself." Neither my feelings nor my emotions went away, but I obediently began washing the dishes, and waited to see what, if anything, would happen.

I cannot say when exactly it happened, but at some point I became conscious of the Law of Life taking over and washing those dishes. What was at first a repulsive thing soon became a joyous occasion, and I began to smile. I realized that it was not I, but Christ, Who was doing this chore. It was almost as if I was observing myself doing it, marveling at how well it was going, but at the same time, incredulous that it was so easy! It was like riding a bicycle for the first time, when you finally "get it", and you wonder why it took you so long to figure it out. The dishes were soon done and the kitchen was cleaned, but the lesson learned that day stayed with me forever. It convinced me that Jesus Christ lives. I know that Jesus lives because Jesus washed those dishes! That was more proof to me than a thousand sermons. I could not do what I just did. Or to be more correct, I could do it if I forced myself to, but I could not do it with such joy and peace!

It was not so much the outward thing that was done as it was the spirit and manner in which it was performed. My Christian life changed from "What Would Jesus Do?" to "Watch What Jesus Does!"

Now you may think that is a silly example, but we must begin with baby steps. There is no need to go out and put yourself through a major test. If you cannot pass the smallest of tests, what makes you think the larger tests will be any easier? It is not the size of a thing that matters, it is learning the lesson of the Law of Life. The Lord was not trying to teach me about doing housework, but was teaching me how to cooperate with His Life.

The Law of Gravity brings objects to the ground. It does not matter to Gravity how large or small the object is. It works the same with acorns as it does with airplanes. Likewise, I know today that it does not matter if I am called upon to wash dishes, mow the lawn, write an article, preach a message, cast out a demon, love my neighbor, forgive my enemy, or lay down my life. It makes no difference to the Life. It is not I, but Christ, who does these things. The principle is the same, and the Life cannot fail. If I give up my life, if I give up my self-effort, then He begins to do what I cannot do. This is Christianity.

The Law of Life means that I do not try to be or do anything in my own strength. Instead, the Life leads me, the Life instructs me, and the Life gives me the words and the actions. I am not a Christian because I believe in the Bible, follow the teachings of Jesus, and live a good life. I am a Christian because Christ is my Life. Since Christ is my Life, I no longer live, but it is Christ who lives in me. I do nothing to achieve this, it just is. Because He lives, I live. In Him I live; in Him I move; in Him I have my being (Acts 17:28a).

Again, let us make this practical. Does a fish become a fish by swimming under the water, or does it swim under the water because it is a fish? Does it say to itself, "I am a fish, therefore, I must learn to act like a fish. I must remember to breathe through my gills and move my body back and forth." Absolutely not. Or what about a bird? Does a bird become a bird once it learns to fly through the air? Or does it fly through the air because it is a bird? Which is it? Of course, the bird is a bird, and therefore it flies. It does not have to be instructed per se, but when it is pushed out of the nest it flaps its wings. It is its nature to do so. So doing does not create being, doing flows out of being.

Now the Law of Life in Christ does not try to make us into something we are not. The very presence of the Life in us demonstrates that Christ already indwells us. We are not trying to be like Christ, and we are not trying to live like a Christian. Since we ARE in Him, we WALK in Him. Our works come from what we are, not what we are trying to be. We do not receive His Life so that we can work very hard to be like Jesus. That is like the fish having to remind itself that since it is a fish therefore it must swim. Or, like a bird having to keep telling itself through positive confession that it must remember to fly. Yet Christians keep reminding themselves, "Now that I am a Christian, I must remember to read the Bible, pray, and live a holy life. I must not forget to love my neighbor and smile no matter what happens." Can you see the problem here? With this mentality we cannot cooperate with the Life, because we would be depending on our life instead of His.

This is why we cannot look for a method, formula, or technique to try and teach people spirituality. It is like taking a bird and putting it in a school to teach it to fly. Just let the bird go and it will fly all by itself! Why do we not take a fish and give it a technique for swimming? You know very well that when you drop the fish into the water it will just swim away of its own accord. But we try to teach Christians three keys to spiritual growth, or four principles of Christian living, or seven wa

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ys to overcome, or a ten-step process to this thing or that thing. What we should be doing is letting these people loose and allowing them to discover how wonderful this Life in them is, how the Christ Who indwells them will teach them every thing.

**Re: - posted by knitefall, on: 2010/7/24 22:36**

Tuc, you've said well my friend.

The WWJD is really a check in our progress. Never to be performed out of religious duty.

Jesus' while ministry was about showing us that we're not what He is. Perfect.

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/7/25 6:46**

tuc,

Your point is well taken...however...

It has been at least 40 years since I have read "In His Steps" and perhaps the meanings of words have changed since then, people understand the language differently today than what was the original intent?

As I see it, the idea behind "What would Jesus Do?" is rooted totally in submitting. Philippians 2 talks about how Jesus had to learn submission - take orders, follow another's wishes - "I do the will of my Father".

As a wife I am to submit to my husband. He trusts me because he knows I will not do anything to harm him. When in doubt I ask myself, 'what would he do?' Barring a direct expressed wish in the matter, any decision I make in his absence will be the one he approves of and can support. So is the concept of 'what would Jesus do?'

When you washed the dishes for your wife, you were doing what Jesus would have you do. Many times one finds himself/herself in situations where the flesh wants to do one thing but the Spirit witnesses another...so the question comes 'what would Jesus do?' Of course, given the situation this is a no-brainer, but the idea remains 'what would Jesus do?'

Quote:

-----his is why we cannot look for a method, formula, or technique to try and teach people spirituality.  
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This is true. Spirituality cannot be reduced to formulas, strategies. But one does need practical guidance. Read the epistles written by Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Many address practical issues...If a Spirit filled Believer would automatically know how to behave in any given situation, these writings would not be necessary. But this is not the case. We need guidance in knowing what to do and how to do in any and all situations. When the questions come, I many times ask myself 'what would Jesus have me do?' and then it is not too long until the Holy Spirit will remind me of a scripture that teaches me how I should proceed.

Sure we are not splitting hairs here?

**Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/7/25 7:14**

hi, if you have not read the book dont opine for this is a report on a book. all those in the book were christians who had allowed their testimony to get sloppy...newspaper owner and deacon had to not take thousands of dollars in ads because they promoted sin. now what would the devil do?others had to relearn how to be moved with compassion for others instead of thinking only of themselves...wickedness jimp

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/7/25 8:20**

I personally have no problem with "what would Jesus do?"

since we are called, predestined to be transformed into His image, so more and more we should be doing what Jesus did, become more humble, more loving, more helping, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, helping the sick etc.

Of course we have an issue with what would Jesus do if we do not have a clear image of who Jesus is and what he actually did. Then we can develop all kind of crazy habits and thoughts.

But i am convinced this is a "natural" development for a true christian, to do what the Lord did. Love what he loved, hate what he hated, do what he did...

we live in a different age, but the same principles the Lord walked by we can walk with today still. Even as we move in a different age and different setting, the eternal principles Jesus ruled his life with we can also, and we will, if we live for him by the spirits power.

Ive read the book, and yes its fiction, but still it has some good in it worthy of reading and ALL of us could be more like Christ, so if the book trigger those thoughts in you, create a greater desire to be as Jesus is. Then its a book worth its weight in gold. One would not be very wise to draw up "theology" from the book or look upon it as such material. But if it inspires and edify its a good book.

There are much worse book in our bookstores that are on the top 5 most sold christian books that will hurt your christianity much worse then "in his steps" , so let us do as the Lord warned us.

Mat 23:24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

**Re: - posted by knitefall, on: 2010/7/25 8:31**

Here's the simple answer: WDJD

What

Did

Jesus

Do?

He already died and resurrected, sealing a perfection for us- to the point, we can screw up time after time and still be perfect in the Father's eyes!

We're dealing with the Fruits of the Spirit. They are called that because they're not ours, but the Spirit's! It takes time and is very difficult to insert a Thrice Holy God into a broken earth suit. But God found a way!

**Re: what would Jesus do., on: 2010/7/25 8:44**

Yes - I have read the book. I was a leader in a small church at the time I read this book. I was fully convinced that putting these principles in practice would bring much needed revival to this church. The whole church read the book and a many stood up front to take the pledge of asking "What Would Jesus Do?".

Did it work? No!

After a sort time many who took the pledge stopped coming to church and I, myself ended up leaving the church.

Is this splitting hairs? NO!

Why you should NOT ask "What Would Jesus Do?"

Doesn't it sound good?

Doesn't it sound noble?

Just ask yourself in every situation "What would Jesus Do?" and you'll end up being a pretty good Christian!  
What a whopper of a lie this one is!

What is my problem with this saying? it's NOT Biblical -

The problem with this type of thinking is it makes you think of Jesus like a guy from the past, a nice guy, who did a lot of "good things" - but NOW he's dead.

Now all you should do is look back in time, use the Bible or whatever to see how Jesus acted and think "if Jesus was still around - "

When the truth of the matter is: Jesus IS still around! He lives in every believer and He is our Life.

The Bible proclaims this wonderful, AMAZING fact, that we believers are IN Christ - and He is IN us.

1 Cor 6:17 says it like this:

"But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit."

The Christian life is NOT about "Acting" like God - "imitating" Christ - or trying to be a "good person" - NO!

The Christian life is about Christ expressing Himself through you each and every day - you are a "co-laborer" with Christ in this respect.

Another problem with this lie is - You do NOT know what Jesus would of done anyways!

This lie assumes by looking back you could know what Jesus would do.

But think about it, Jesus was always surprising in his actions - ESPECIALLY to the religious leaders of the day!

How astonished they were when they thought they were being "good" and "religious" and "pious" and pleasing God - and then Jesus turned their self assumptions about righteousness upside down when He introduced His law of Love for God and others.

Even the disciples who lived with Him and followed Him around everywhere didn't know what He was going to do.

Plus, even if you did somehow know, in each and every situation, exactly what Jesus would do - Do you think you're good enough to live like Christ?

NO!

What is Christianity? It is Christ. Nothing more. Nothing less. Christianity is not an ideology. Christianity is not a philosophy. Christianity is the "good news" that Beauty, Truth and Goodness are found in a person. Biblical community is founded and found on the connection to that person. Conversion is more than a change in direction; it's a change in connection. Jesus' use of the ancient Hebrew word shubh, or its Aramaic equivalent, to call for "repentance" implies not viewing God from a distance, but entering into a relationship where God is command central of the human connection.

The truth is, you and I can do NOTHING apart from Christ (John 15:1-8). It would be the highest form of narcissism to think you could do it, you could live like Christ when the Bible says you can't.

**Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/7/25 9:21**

For you Tuc this may be true, perhaps it didn't because of disobedience to the question What would Jesus do (maybe not for you personally but some of your congregation)? I understand your point but when I am asking this question I am asking the Holy Spirit what He wants to do and must remain obedient to what He wants to do. For me it's all about submission to the Holy Spirit because as my partner in Christ He by far is smarter and knows Jesus a whole lot better than I. I take zero credit of any of the work the Holy Spirit does through me because there is no good thing in my flesh. I also ask for strength, love, compassion, courage, the words to say, Because the Holy Spirit provides all of these things.

I would say if it improves your relationship and moves you closer to Christ then there is no harm at all but a benefit to ask God what He wants to do. I know for me it is improving my dependence on Christ Jesus on a whole.

**Re: This is eating from the wrong tree., on: 2010/7/25 10:05**

This is an extremely serious issue.

Do not forget that Eve thought she could "be more like God" by knowing good and evil.

Knowing what Jesus would do will not make you more godly. This is eating from the wrong tree. This is strictly prohibited by God.

Knowing what Jesus would do is NOT the Gospel!

Do not forget what Paul said about those who bring a different Gospel.

**Re: This is eating from the wrong tree. - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/7/25 10:09**

I don't want to be more like God but Christ be moving through me. The question causes submission in me rather working my hardest to more like God or Christ. I believe if the seed of Christ is in me then it will grow into a tree and then produce fruit. If the question helps in spiritual growth and relationship and submission to Christ then it's not a bad question to ask GOD.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/7/25 10:46**

Well if anyone presents "in his steps" as the gospel I would be very upset to, but it's just a story.

But you will always have people that take things too serious, but we have people go into extremes over some verses in the word, that do not mean we should banish the word of God.

Jesus is our example, our forerunner, knowing what Jesus did and did not do/preach is very important I think, if not you are open to all sorts of deceptions and errors in teachings about the Gospel and Christ.

So I think it is extremely important to know what Christ did, what he said and what he did.

If Paul asked the believers back then to imitate him, how much more Christ?

Php 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you

**Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/7/25 17:30**

hi, our church had an invitation a few weeks ago and 60 people came forward ...after the dust cleared we found that it was 20 members that had a evangelistic party in their poor neighborhood and won the other 40 and brought them to church to follow up in the discipling process... a dear friend of mine a few years ago brought a team of young christians with food and drink to all the projects in new orleans and led over 1000 young people to Jesus... most churches drive by the opportunities to get to the rich with their buses or programs...what would Jesus do?jimp

**Re: - posted by knitefall, on: 2010/7/25 17:43**

Well said Jimp.

If these church folk will get on board with WDJJ they will fall in line with WWJD. Otherwise, all you have is snarly, snappy, lousy, have need of nothing christians instead of followers "OF JESUS."

**Re: - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/8/2 1:57**

Well said Christian; & I may add, for a story it's a pretty good one just like I stated in Matthew's original post on the book. And Matthew, don't get discouraged by the viewpoints of fundamentalist thinking; not that you are. There are many out there who study everybody else's doctrine, but don't study, nor know the God of the doctrine they study. God bless you Matthew.

**Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/8/2 2:07**

I will admit when this post originally started it kind of threw me for a loop. But since then I have been encouraged to keep seeking the Lord whether I ask What Would Jesus Do or not. I am still working through the doctrine thing I am kind of on a quest to find out what I believe rather than what other men believe through doctrines, its been interesting to say the least :) Thank you for the encouragement someday I need it more than others.

God Bless,  
Matthew

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/8/2 11:34**

Quote:

-----I am kind of on a quest to find out what I believe  
-----

Fascinating journey, is it not? Comparing scripture with scripture. It is so alive - no other piece of lit has this quality...You will have so many "WOW" experiences...God loves it when we love to study his word and allow it to shape our minds, our hearts, the way we think and act...

Blessings,  
ginnyrose