

06.30.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

Title: “[My Heart – Christ’s Home](#) - The Study – Discipleship”

Scripture Reading: [Luke 2: 41 – 51](#)

Reflection: Rev. Evan Heerema

During the 1990s, the letters WWJD became a popular reminder to thousands to ask what Jesus would do before deciding on or acting in response to a situation. The history of that question goes back much farther than the 1990s though. It actually became popular in the United States in the late 1800s after the widely read book by [Charles Sheldon](#) entitled, [In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do](#).

It is a good reminder for those who follow Jesus to think about whether their actions will reflect the mind and heart of Jesus or not. But anyone could ask that question at any time, whether or not they were a follower of Jesus. And of course, anyone might or might not fully understand the action or words of Jesus before they did or said the same thing. Think of Jesus telling Peter to “Get behind me Satan.” Just asking the question does not prove discipleship.

In July of 1997, I preached a sermon at Covenant CRC entitled, DWJWD (Do What Jesus Would Do) to get beyond just asking the WWJD question and doing what Jesus would do. But even doing what Jesus would do, does not prove discipleship. Obviously, some, claiming to be followers of Jesus who were acting and teaching in his name, were not accepted by Jesus as his followers. Remember the reading from Sunday, “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:22-23)?

Where does this leave us? Claiming to do Jesus-like actions or using Jesus-like words but still falling far short of what Jesus calls us to be and do. What can we do? Dallas Willard, in his book, [The Spirit of the Disciplines](#) (1988, p. 6) writes, “The general human failing is to want what is right and important, but at the same time not to commit to the kind of life that will produce the action we know to be right and the condition we want to enjoy. This feature of human character explains why the road to hell is paved with good intentions. We intend what is right, but we avoid the life that would make it a reality.”

So it is that Robert Munger, in [My Heart – Christ’s Home](#) challenges us to give Jesus full control of our study, the control room of our house (lives). By doing so, we offer to become disciples of Jesus, not in word only, not with actions only, but with a heart that imitates Jesus in thought, word, and deed. Imitating Jesus is the clue to discipleship. And Jesus gives us a peak in Luke 2: 41 - 51 about what that would look like. In answer to his parent’s question about why he had stayed behind in Jerusalem instead of going home with them, he said, “Why were you searching for me?” (Luke 2:49) “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” Being in his Father’s house and presence, seeking knowledge and wisdom from the teachers was essential. And after he went home with his parents, we read in Luke 2:51-52...⁵¹ “Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. . .⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” Jesus submitted to the authority figures God had placed over him and learned obedience. Those years prepared him for his years

of sacrificial ministry leading up to the cross. From his Father in Heaven, and his father and mother, he learned what his life had to look like. The study of Jesus' mind was centered on God his Father's will and we know from Scripture that he never wavered, even in the toughest of times.

How can we follow Jesus into the Father's presence to discern God's will and live it out fully to the best of our ability?

1. Prayerfully identify thoughts that are un-Christlike in our mind; identify imaginations of the heart (reading material, internet, television, and streaming 'stuff' that you know is of the world).
2. Repent and confess your participation with them as the sin that they are.
3. Accept God's forgiveness as often as you need to; remember He loves you as a child.
4. Intentionally place Jesus at the center of your thoughts.
5. Practice solitude with God and meditate on his word. Memorize it so that it has a central place in your mind and heart.
6. Actively love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Expect abuse by others, remembering that Jesus did too, and told us that we would be rejected. You are better off as a follower of Jesus than as a member of the world.

I know this list could be expanded with other spiritual disciplines. Feel free to expand it to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus.

Prayer:

Reigning King Jesus, the Lion who looks like a lamb that was slain, I confess that I have often thought and acted as if I was one of your disciples simply because I did certain things or did not do certain things. I see that now in the light of your Word and I am sorry that I took your desire to mold me into a disciple for granted. Thank you for listening to me again. Help me to spend time with you in your Word so that it might be said of me that I grew in stature and favor with God and with others for Jesus' sake. AMEN.

Action Item for the Day/Week:

Write a list of things in your life that do not serve Jesus or do not assist you in following close to Jesus. Then throw that list in the trash or burn it in a controlled fire as a symbolic act of rejecting them for the glory of God.

Songs for today:

[Trust and Obey](#)

[Trust and Obey](#)