



## WOW: Word Of the Week

August 23, 2023

### WWJS

You probably know WWJD. Good question! Life guidance. Charles Sheldon's book, *In His Steps*, is an excellent tool for exploring the applications of the question (although a bit dated). What **Would** Jesus Do?

I have another word (technically an initialism), another question: WWJS. What Would Jesus Say?

What would happen if Christians were firmly committed to speaking to others like Jesus would? Bible stories immediately come to my mind—a Samaritan woman having had five husbands and now with a man not her husband, an adulterous woman, a Pharisee with honest questions, sisters mourning the loss of their brother, a rich young man too much dependent on his wealth. What would we say? Would we feel compelled to address immorality, misunderstandings, lack of faith, misplaced priorities? Would we immediately move to “criticizing mode?” Would we, as Jesus, extend compassion, understanding, tenderness, help, comfort, forgiveness?

Christians are influenced by the surrounding culture. Often we are influenced by the culture more than we influence the culture. Consider the way we talk. WWJS?

Ours is an age of strongly expressed opinions. People talk loudly; texts and posts appear in ALL CAPS. Social media gives everyone an outlet for expressing views, and with so many differing viewpoints, many people think they will be heard if they talk loudly—even more if they talk rudely! Brothers and sisters, having a strong opinion about a matter does not give us the right to be loud. And we should never speak rudely! Jesus spoke kindly, tenderly, gently – even to sinners!

Jesus spoke boldly to Jewish leaders. Debate should lead to truth, not attempt to obscure it. We should be passionate about truth. The truth does need defending – it certainly is not advanced by ugly, critical words.

In our culture today, it is too common that speech demeans others and questions their character, or their intelligence. Falsehoods are spread, unsubstantiated rumors smear reputations. WWJS?

I am not surprised when our culture speaks loudly, rudely, falsely. People are known by the fruits—and by their words. Words come from the overflow of the heart (Matt. 12:34). When Christians have transformed hearts, their speech reflects a higher standard. We do not always get it right, but we seek to answer, WWJS?

We do not resort to speech, words, communication, and writings that criticize, demean, belittle, and hold grudges. How sad when those who claim to be Christians speak like the world! Sincerely seeking to speak like Jesus leads us to compassion, understanding, tenderness, help, comfort, and forgiveness.

A high standard? Yes! Consider the words of Jesus on the cross—forgiveness, compassion extended to a thief, kindness, grace. Consider the apostles in the early chapters of Acts (5:41) --rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. Consider Paul and Silas imprisoned in Philippi—singing to God, then tenderly speaking gospel words of life to the jailor.

Speaking like Jesus would speak does not mean compromising truth. Speaking like Jesus would speak means living out the presence of the one who is the Truth, in our lives and in our words. I assure you that your witness will be strengthened, not weakened.

WWJS?