

## WWJD?

A few months ago, I lost my key ring. Yes, all my keys. Car, house, church, church office. I knew where and when I had seen it last, but at the end of the day, it was gone. Fortunately, I had a back-up car key, but clearly that wasn't going to be enough. So at my earliest convenience, I went to the hardware store in Westerly to get a replacement. Since I'm too cheap to pay for the more expensive battery-powered replacement, I just got the basic key. My previous back-up would become my main key, but it needed a new battery, since I sometimes need to find my car at night by lighting it up. It became a morning of key-making and battery replacing, with trips out to my car by Alicia and me, and sometimes just me, to be sure all was working fine, and of course, the buy-one-get-one-free bird seed on the way out.

It wasn't until I was driving home that I realized that I had paid for my new key, and my bird seed, but since Alicia had thrown away the battery wrapper after inserting my new battery, I hadn't paid for the battery when I got to the register. Two days later, after church, I went back to the hardware store. Alicia was busy at another register, so I went to the next cashier, a young man who looked barely old enough to drive. I explained what I was there for, and finally, with a very puzzled look on his face, he said, "Wait, you came back here to pay for your battery??" I wish I had a picture of his puzzled face as I said, "Yes." He was shaking his head as he walked away to check the price, as if going out of his way to pay for something he had walked out of a store without paying for would never have occurred to him. He returned, told me I owed \$4.99, and thanked me for being honest. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall in the break room when he told the story of the old lady who came back to the store to pay for a \$5 battery. I like to think that his co-workers looked deep inside themselves to ask what they would have done in the same situation, and maybe they vowed that given a similar opportunity, they might have made the same choice.

When my children were growing up, I always told them, "No matter what everyone else is doing, do the right thing." I try to impress the 'do the right thing' motto on my students as well. This reminds me of the bumper sticker I see on cars from time to time that reads, 'What Would Jesus Do?' The WWJD movement began in 1989 when the youth group at Calvary Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, studied Charles Sheldon's 1896 novel, In His Steps. In the novel, parishioners preface every thought and action with "What would Jesus do?" and begin to see the difference it makes. Calvary's youth took Sheldon's model to heart and made up colorful woven bracelets to wear as a tangible reminder of that powerful question. Soon people throughout the community were wearing the bracelets, and it mushroomed from there. By the late 1900s, the letters wwjd could be found on a multitude of books, t-shirts, and other Christian merchandise.

This hypothetical question, "What would Jesus do?" assumes we have already answered another equally important, yet less obvious, question: What *did* Jesus do? If we don't know what Jesus did in his life, how can we expect to guess what he *would* do in ours? The four gospels point out seven priorities that guided Jesus. This is where I begin preaching to the













