

A close-up, warm-toned photograph of a person's face, partially obscured by an open book and a white mug of coffee. The person is wearing a grey sweater and a white towel. The background is dark and out of focus, with some bokeh light spots.

# STEP ONE

Devotions for people  
who don't do devotions.

Day Three

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# DAY THREE

## **Behavior modification is the wrong place to start.**

### ***Mark 5-6***

**A few years ago, there was a Christian fad called “What Would Jesus Do?”**

People would get bracelets or coffee mugs or bookmarks or t-shirts or cigars and stamp “WWJD” on them as a reminder for them to be thinking always about what Jesus would do. “WWJD” merchandise sold like crazy. Except the cigars - that was a tad misguided and someone lost a bundle.

The WWJD fad was helpful in the sense that it kept Jesus front and center as people made the daily decisions of their lives. This is great, this is how it should be. Except that, people generally found how impossible it was to be like Jesus since they didn’t have the character and power of Jesus. The WWJD fad, as well-intentioned as it was, missed a very important truth.

**That behaving like Jesus is the last step to becoming like Jesus.**

In fact, if you try to behave like Jesus without possessing the strength and character of Jesus then you soon find yourself merely acting like Jesus. Which is a nicer way of saying you are pretending to be like Jesus. And when you are pretending to be like Jesus but are in reality a very different person than Jesus is, you are a religious hypocrite. Eventually the inner strain of pretending makes you bitter and judgemental or you simply give up trying.

Jesus does eventually want you to behave like him, but this behavior will flow out of you in an organic way. Not to say you don’t need to deliberately try to be like Jesus (see Day 8), but rather to say behaving like Jesus isn’t the first priority.

***The first priority is to abide in Jesus.***

When Jesus introduced the notion of abiding in him, he uses plant imagery which is really helpful. He says “I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay connected to me then you will bear fruit.” Simple and clear. Imagine a branch not connected to the

vine trying as hard as it can to make grapes. It isn't happening. Fruit requires that the branch be connected to a larger organism to feed it, protect it, and water it. If it stays connected the fruit just happens.

This is why your daily devotions are so critical. They represent you doing a bit of gardening. Making sure your little branch is connected to the main vine. As you abide in Jesus, you will receive everything you need to become like him.

**Behaving happens later. For now, work on abiding.**

## **Journal:**

1. Admiration (by now you know what to do).
2. Pray for the people on your list from yesterday and add more people if they come to mind.
3. Take a minute and listen to Jesus. Write down what you hear (or what you think you hear).

## **Calibrating prayer:**

*Jesus, thank you so much you don't give me a list of dozens and dozens of rules for me to keep so I can be like you. Thank you instead for just inviting me to get to know you better. I trust, as I get to know you better, your divine power will give me everything I need for living a life like you.*