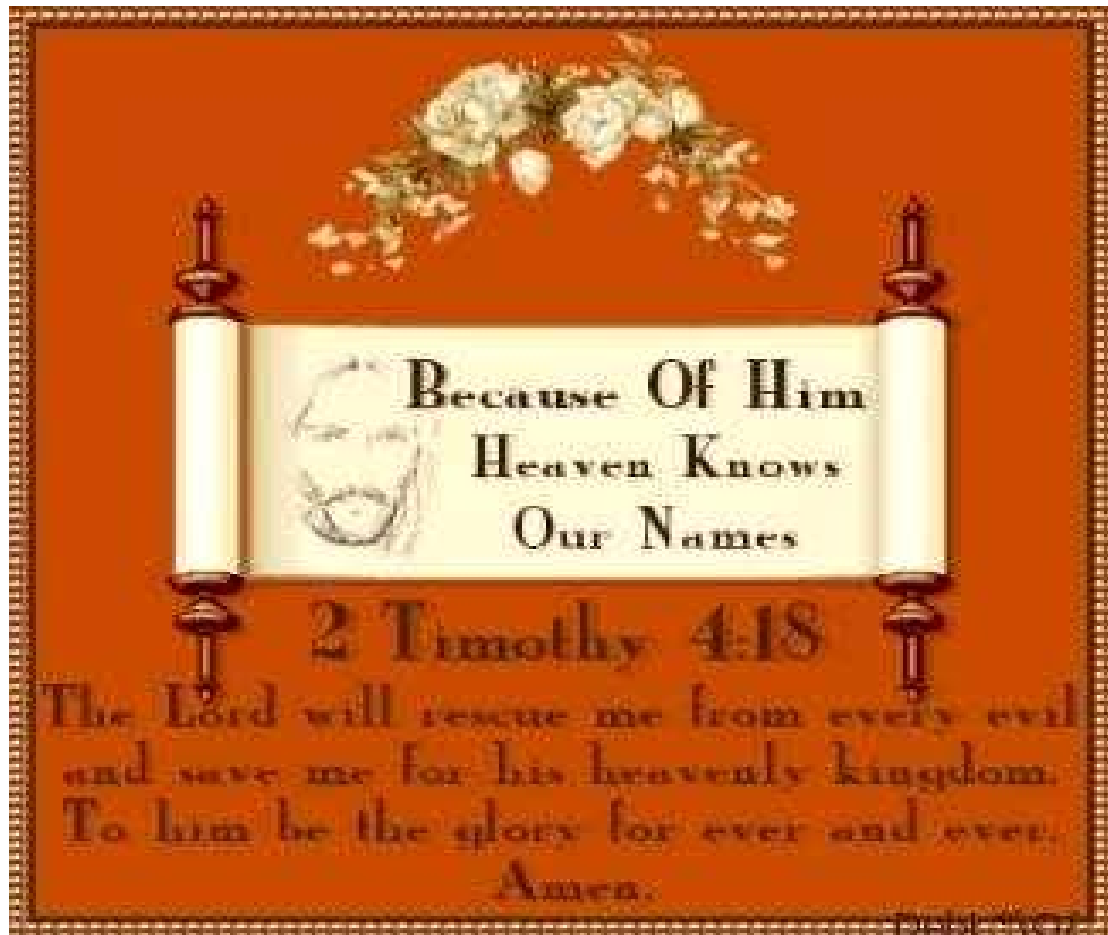


WHAT IF WE DID WHAT JESUS SAID?

by Tom Norvell



What if we got serious about doing what Jesus said concerning how we treat people ... especially those who treat us unkindly?

Here's what Jesus said:

"You have heard that the law of Moses says, If an eye is injured, injure the eye of the person who did it. If a tooth gets knocked out, knock out the tooth of the person who did it. But I say, don't resist an evil person! If you are slapped on the right cheek, turn the other, too. If you are ordered to court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles.

Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

You have heard that the law of Moses says, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and on the unjust, too. If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:38-48 NLT)

What if we took Jesus at His word and did what He said?

If we did what Jesus said, would we respond differently when our boss treats us unfairly and passes over us for the promotion we deserve? Would we wish evil on the person who got the promotion? Would we be public with our criticism of our boss? Or, would we do our best to encourage the person who received the promotion and do everything within our power to do our job better than ever before?

If we did what Jesus said, would we react differently when the person of our dreams chooses someone else? Would we be jealous? Would we seek revenge? Would we be vocal in our accusations? Or, would we demonstrate that our love was real and show each person the true love of Christ?

If we did what Jesus said, would we respond differently when our child disappoints us? Would we be a little less prone to point out their mistakes? Would we remind her of how she disappointed us less often? Or, would we remind her that she is our child, and she needs our acceptance, forgiveness, and love regardless of her actions, and that she has our acceptance, forgiveness, and love regardless of her actions?

If we did what Jesus said, would we respond differently when our spouse hurts us with words or actions that cause us to question their love and doubt our value? Would we respond with our own version of hurtful and cruel comments? Or, would

we respond with a quiet calmness that demonstrates the love we promised them on our wedding day?

If we did what Jesus said, would we respond differently when we are threatened or attacked by those who openly express their hatred for us? Would we respond with an equal or greater show of force? Would we respond with our own threats of revenge and retribution? Or, would our response be characterized by patience, forgiveness and a living example of what it means to love our enemies?

If we did what Jesus said, we would be better husbands, we would be better wives, we would be better bosses, we would be better employees, we would be better parents, we would be better children, we would be better church members, we would be better neighbors, we would be a better nation. We would be better people and the people around us would see a better example of doing what Jesus said.

How would others respond to us if we did what Jesus said?

Let's find out. Let's give it a try. Let's do what Jesus said today!