

**Episode:** Other Letters Series No. 14

**Narrator:** Nicodemus

**Primary Scriptures:** John 3:1-21

**Story Summary:** If you could have one rule to live by, what would it be?

**Location:** Israel

**Time:** circa 30 AD

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** John 3:16, 21

It has long been popular for people to find a motto or a rule to live by. Solomon coined the phrase, “Eat, drink and be merry.” Horace, the Roman poet, coined the phrase “Carpe Diem” or “seize the day.” In early American history, many people lived by “Live free or die.” In the early 1900’s and again in the 1990’s, it was popular for Christians to say, “WWJD” or “What would Jesus do?”

One problem with mottos is that they can be misleading. It’s as if you accomplish the motto then all will be well. Mottos may also be true in limited situations or times of life, but not for all situations.

The appeal of mottos and life rules is their simplicity. Jesus illustrated that with his very first sermon in Mark 1:15, “Repent and believe the good news.” This saying was easy to understand, remember, and implement. But it was not meant to be a recommendation or command for an all-encompassing way of life.

John 3:2 says Nicodemus, Israel’s teacher, came to Jesus at night. He seemingly was desperate to find answers to his own questions. Perhaps he had found that his own teachings were deficient in teaching people how to truly live as God wanted them to live. We don’t really know, because Jesus doesn’t let him express what is on his mind.

The New Testament is full of commandments about how to live. It has hundreds of stories teaching about ways to live in accordance with God’s desires. It is tempting to see the New Testament as a list of rules. That can lead to the understanding that if you follow the rules, or at least don’t break the rules, you are living in a way that pleases God.

Is there a middle ground? A saying that is true, simple, easy to remember and leads you to an all-encompassing lifestyle? If there was, wouldn’t you expect to find it in the New Testament?

Here are some verses that might come to your mind. Paul’s request to, “Have the mind of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus’s rendition of the Golden Rule, “In everything, do to others what

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:16

you would have them do to you.”<sup>2</sup> Or perhaps this one from John, “Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 7:12

<sup>3</sup> 1 John 2:6