

December 18, 2021

## What Shall We Do?

### [Luke 3:1-18](#)

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” <sup>11</sup> In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”

After reading this familiar passage in different translations, one word, “do,” stands out to me. In verse 8, John tells his followers to demonstrate or prove their repentance. The people, probably those standing closest to John, ask “What then shall we do?” John answers, instructing them to share their clothes and their food with those who have not.

Then others, identified as tax collectors, approach John and ask, “what shall we do?” He instructs them to be fair in their jobs. Others, described as soldiers, then come to John and ask, “what shall we do?” John tells them to treat people honestly and to be satisfied with their pay.

In several translations the questions are phrased in almost identical ways. John’s answers vary slightly in the translations, but the meanings are the same: share with others, treat people fairly, honestly, and respectfully.

“Share” and “fair,” are words we use often when helping young children learn to play together. As adults we look for fairness, honesty, and respect in our workplaces, homes, and relationships.

During the pandemic many children have had limited opportunities to play together and to learn about sharing and fairness. Many adults have noticed a lack of fairness and equity in their work environments.

Many women have called attention to the lack of respect and subsequent harm they have experienced. Many people of all ages continue to experience loneliness and despair after months of restricted “pandemic living.” What shall we **do**?

John’s answers to the questions, “what shall we do?” foreshadow Jesus’s instruction, “Do for others just what you want them to do for you.” (Luke 6: 31)

Each of us can resolve to live by the Golden Rule. We can resolve to reach out to others, to really see them as children of God, to attempt to understand them, and to build a personal relationship with them. We may not be able to shake hands or hug one another, but we can try to establish an individual connection based on sharing, fairness, honesty, and respect.

***Prayer:** Dear God, remind us each day to “do for others” just what we want them to do for us. Guide us as we strive to reach out and make personal connections with others. Amen.*

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