

# Jesus and the Georgia Flag

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following fictional story was written from the heart of the battle over the Georgia state flag. Any resemblance to actual persons or events is absolutely intentional.

Nine-year-old Eric taps on the study door, cracks it open. "Uh, preacher, do you have a minute?"

"Well, hello, Eric. Sure I have a minute. Come on in."

The preacher notices with pride that Eric is wearing his WWJD bracelet. Inviting the children to wear a "What Would Jesus Do?" bracelet was part of a recent Sunday School promotion.

After showing Eric to a seat, the preacher asks, "So what's up?"

"I've been wondering about this flag fight," Eric says. "Everybody is talking about it."

The preacher nods.

"So I've been asking that question you taught us to ask: 'What would Jesus do?' Would Jesus be for changing our flag or would Jesus be against it? It's hard for me to know because everybody is saying different stuff. So I thought I'd ask you." Suddenly, the preacher is on alert. He must play his cards carefully. Nine-year-olds tend to repeat what they hear, and this is a sensitive issue.

"Well, as you've discovered, the WWJD question is sometimes hard to answer. Take the Georgia state flag. What would Jesus do? For starters, I think Jesus would call the Governor's hand for rushing something this important through the legislature."

"Un huh. And then what?"

"I think Jesus would say if anybody thinks changing a flag will change people's hearts, they don't know much about human nature."

"Un huh, and then what?"

The preacher shifts uncomfortably in his chair. Sunday School has trained Eric well. He is chasing that WWJD question like a bloodhound on a hot trail.

A little weakly now, the preacher says, "I think Jesus would say people have a right to be proud of their heritage. He was an Israelite who never traveled more than 90 miles from home. He was proud of the rich heritage of his people."

"Those are all good points, preacher, but they still don't answer my question. Would Jesus be for changing the flag or against it?"

The preacher looks at the wide-eyed boy, counting on his preacher to be true. The earnest look tugs at the preacher's heart. "So your question is, what would Jesus do about the flag?"

Eric nods. The preacher swallows hard. "I believe Jesus would say a flag that represents all Georgians, and not just some, is long overdue. I think Jesus would support changing the flag."

Eric smiles with relief. Finally, a straight answer, even from a preacher.

"That's what I thought," he says happily. He pops up from his chair and bounds out of the office.

The preacher stares after him. In the study, another voice sounds. It is the voice of an ancient Galilean, yet laying claim to one of his own. "Forget the politics and the posturing. You are my disciple. Follow me!"

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