

"...Do What He Tells You"

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"...Do What He Tells You"

By Gary Shirley

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The wedding celebration in Cana was in full swing. Joy and celebration filled the air. There was a deep sense of kinship among the guests. There was happy music and spirited dance. There was also an acute shortage of wine.

Since wedding festivities typically went on for several days, great embarrassment was on the horizon. Mary quietly advised her Son of the predicament. Knowing the profound import of her next words, she issued a simple directive to the servants to "...do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). Moments later, heaven touched earth.

From the moment she spoke, Mary knew that Jesus would no longer be able to blend quietly into village life. She started her Son on his mission with no idea what that mission entailed. She knew not of the master plan God had crafted from the dawn of time – the coming rejection, suffering and death that would be the price of salvation. She was unaware of the depths of divine mercy. She only knew that God was in charge and it was not important that she understand, only that she trust.

We never hear from Mary again in Scripture. Throughout the years of her Son's earthly ministry, none of her words are recorded. Accounts of his passion and death noted only her presence, but no consoling prayer, anguished cry or stinging rebuke directed at his persecutors. Descriptions of Jesus's miraculous Resurrection offered no mention of his mother's reaction. Even the narrative of his Ascension included no reference to a parting dialogue or simple goodbye between mother and Son.

Some might think Mary was slighted by the inspired authors of Sacred Scripture. Others might feel that she was rightly overshadowed by her divine Son. Still others contend that her scriptural silence, in itself, possessed vast theological implications.

Perhaps another insight merits consideration. Maybe the Blessed Mother said all that needed to be said. While her command to the servants saved her wedding host much embarrassment, it was only a means to an end. Her directive was infused with a transcendence far beyond Cana. As any good mother would do, Mary offered all her children loving, yet firm, parental guidance. Quite simply, her last

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recorded words made clear the way to salvation.

Through the bewildered wedding servants, she reminds all generations of Christians to "...do whatever he tells you." No other message is necessary. No other instruction more profound. Mary quietly passes into the shadows of Scripture making sure her children know what she expects of them. Her haunting words continually remind us of the simplicity of the Christian faith. All we have to do is follow the path her Son carefully laid out, which is to serve the world through his bride, the Church.

Mary's words penetrate deep into the hallways of the heart. They imbed in the fabric of the soul. Despite such presence, we often fail miserably at living up to the Blessed Mother's simple mandate. Why does honoring the "whatever" part of Mary's instruction demand so much? Maybe it's because she knows her divine Son accepts nothing less than all we have to give. He sets the bar at perfection.

He is not interested in lukewarm faith or partial commitment. He has no time for minimalism. His is an unrelenting challenge, one which never stops asking for more.

It's not as if we haven't been given the proper tools for the job. Jesus took special care to remind us of faith's foundation in the Ten Commandments. He presented the Beatitudes so that we understood what it meant to die to self. He rounded out our understanding of the Christian mission through parables, discourses and miracles. Then he died to show us that love has no limits. Perpetual lessons taught through the power of a life perfectly lived.

Those lessons should give us pause. When I closed that last business deal, did I comply with his instruction to do unto others as I would want done to myself? When suffering came my way, did I take up the cross without whining? When praise was proffered, did I divert the spotlight to the true giver of the skill being praised? In the midst of tragedy, did I attempt to discern God's will among the ruins? How close did I come each day to honoring the "whatever" part of Mary's message?

In our childhood we learned to obey our mother, honor her place in the family, and respect her counsel. Mother guided, corrected, and cajoled as necessary to draw out the best in each of us. Often she only needed a single word or a telling glance and we understood exactly what instruction she wished to impart. Her messages, always, were infused with a love that was utterly impossible to comprehend. Well, our heavenly mother has spoken. She has given us the most crucial advice in the history of the world. Across the ages, our Blessed Mother has reminded us to "do whatever He tells you." We would be wise to take her advice to heart.

Gary Shirley, his wife, and three children are members of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Kennesaw, Georgia, where Gary serves as catechist in the adult education program. Gary is an Archdiocese of Atlanta certified catechist (both PSR and RCIA) with 14 years teaching experience. Email him at backtothebasics@searchlogixgroup.com.

Increase New Customer Traffic To Your Business

By Joy Gendusa

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One person tells another, who tells another, who tells another and so on. You get the idea. Let's see how to make that an actuality.

You have a great company and you provide the highest level of customer service. But as the old cliché says: "A happy customer tells a friend, an unhappy customer tells 10 friends." You don't have to worry about the unhappy customer telling 10 friends because you always do a great job and keep your customers happy. But how do you increase the number of friends that your happy customers are sending your way?

Plain and simple: You are going to have to reward them.

The reason that happy customers don't tell many other people about your service is because most customers EXPECT good customer service so the companies that provide it aren't at the front of their mind. They have too many other things to worry about on a daily basis.

By starting a Customer Referral Program you will give your best customers a reason to want to tell other people about you. Offering discounts or special incentives to customers who refer another person or company to your business is a win-win situation.

You may have medical licensing boards or other ethics committees for your profession that restrict you from certain types of rewards and rightly so due to conflicts of interest that may arise. But you can always find something that you can do to reward your customers when they refer someone to you.

Here is an example of a Customer Referral Program for a Direct Mail Company and how it works:

"When you refer someone, and that person places an order, you will receive a \$25 credit that can be used toward any of said company's services.

Each time this happens you will receive the \$25 credit and there is no limit, so feel free to go crazy referring your friends to us. If you refer enough people who become customers you could end up getting your next order FREE."

When you set up your own referral program you will want to do two things:

First, make sure that the incentive you offer to your customers is in proportion to the price of what you are selling. If your least expensive service is \$5000, then a \$25 discount is probably not going to be enough to get them interested in spreading the word.

And secondly, you need to promote it. Make sure that your customers know about the new reward program by:

- 1) Having your sales associates mention it whenever someone places an order.
- 2) Posting notices in your business if you have customer foot traffic.

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and

3) Sending out announcements to your customer address list on a regular basis.

All of these things will help you to increase the number of customers that you receive through word of mouth, and at the same time help keep down your marketing costs. Is this a great idea or what?

Offering discounts or special incentives to customers who refer another person or company to your business is a win-win situation.

Reward the customers that reward you. One of the greatest compliments is when someone refers another or others to your business.

Joy Gendusa founded PostcardMania in 1998, her only assets a computer and a phone. By 2004 the company did \$9 million in sales and employed over 60 people. She attributes her explosive growth to her ability to choose incredible staff and her innate marketing savvy. Visit her website at



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