
CAN GOD BE MY FRIEND?

SPIRITUAL
FORMATION IN THE
WESLEYAN TRADITION





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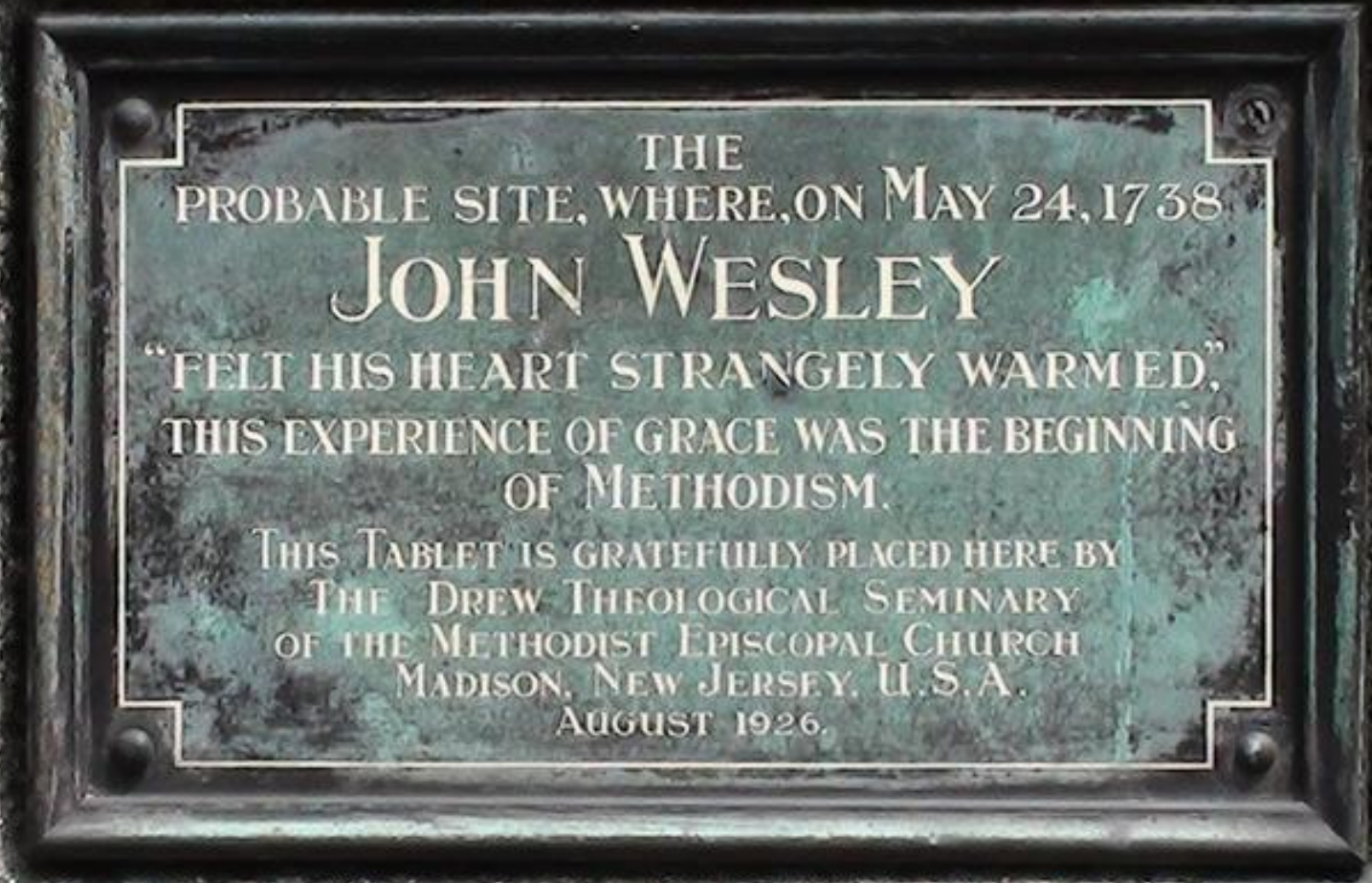
WHEN HAVE YOU FELT CLOSE
TO GOD?



HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED GOD IN YOUR LIFE?

JOHN WESLEY & PETER BOHLER

- John Wesley returned from Georgia a deeply troubled young minister. His life had been shattered and he felt that he had no faith. Upon his arrival back in London he found a group of German Moravians. The Moravians had impressed him during a storm at sea and had blessed him while in Georgia. He befriended a young Moravian pastor, Peter Bohler. Bohler was 10 years younger than John.
- John told Peter that he was going to quit preaching because he “had no faith.” Bohler said, “Don’t do that, Mr. Wesley. You are a Bible scholar and have so much to offer. Preach faith until you have it. Then you will preach faith because you do have it.”



WESLEY'S ALDERSGATE EXPERIENCE

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=BR6EXJ9V2LA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BR6EXJ9V2LA)

**I felt my heart
strangely
warmed. I felt
I did trust in
Christ, Christ
alone for
salvation.**

John Wesley

SANCTIFICATION

SANCTIFYING GRACE is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit that changes us so that our lives are increasingly conformed to the mind of Christ. John Wesley called this lifelong process sanctification or becoming “perfected in love.”

Sanctifying grace draws us toward **CHRISTIAN PERFECTION**, which Wesley described as a heart "habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor" and as "having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked."

Wesley believed we could become perfect in love in this life. He didn't mean we would be free from mistakes, temptation or failure.

For Wesley, growing as a Christian is all about being filled with love, which happens by the grace of God. We may not be there yet; but by God's grace, as United Methodists say, "we're going on to perfection!"

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48

A silhouette of a person in prayer, with hands raised, against a vibrant orange and yellow sunset sky. The person is positioned in the lower-left foreground, looking upwards. The background is a vast, glowing sky with soft, wispy clouds.

MEANS OF GRACE

- For John Wesley the means of grace were the environment in which persons first came to know and love God, and then grew in their relationship with God. They were essentially human practices or activities through which the Holy Spirit worked with transforming power.
- Wesley defined means of grace as “outward signs, words, or actions ordained of God, and appointed for this end—to be the *ordinary* channels whereby he might convey... preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace” (J. Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” ¶ II.1).

WORKS OF PIETY (THIS WEEK) & WORKS OF MERCY (NEXT WEEK)

- **Works of Piety** – are individual and corporate expressions of our love directed to God
- **Individual Practices** – reading, meditating and studying the scriptures, prayer, fasting, healthy living, and sharing our faith with others
- **Communal Practices** – regularly attending worship, regularly sharing in the sacraments, Christian conferencing (accountability to one another), and Bible study



MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURE: LECTIO DIVINA

This is a method of meditating on scripture that has been practiced by Christians going back to St. Gregory of Nyssa (c 330- 395). It's a four-step method:

1. **READ** – Carefully, slowly read your text more than once. A phrase or sentence or thought will no doubt “shimmer” or jump out at you. (Ex – “The Lord is my shepherd.” or “The Lord is my shepherd.”)
2. **MEDITATE** – Ponder the passage, especially the parts that “shimmered.” Why do you think that phrase or sentence jumped out at you? What did it mean to its original audience? Does it bring to mind other Bible passages you know? Do the shimmering parts bring you comfort? A challenge? A concern?
3. **PRAY** – Speak with God plainly and honestly about the feelings and thoughts that the passage has aroused in you.
4. **REST** – Rest in the experience you've just had. Wait in openness. Listen for how God wants you to live out the Word of God. “Here I am, the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.”

PRIMITIVE PHYSIC;

OR, AN

EASY AND NATURAL METHOD

OF

CURING MOST DISEASES.

BY JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

—

TO WHICH IS ADDED, THE

GENERAL RECEIPT BOOK

CONTAINING

UPWARDS OF FOUR HUNDRED

OF THE MOST

USEFUL AND VALUABLE RECEIPTS.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY BARR & CO.

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MDCCLXXXIII.

HEALTHY LIVING IS A MEANS OF GRACE?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

“*Primitive Physic*” was Wesley’s best-selling work. Among Wesley’s advice: Eat a light supper at least two or three hours before bed. Oprah could not have said it better.

“Those who read or write much, should learn to do it standing; otherwise it will impair their health,” Wesley said.

Other Wesley diet and exercise tips include:

- Drink lots of water; it's the healthiest of all drinks.
- Avoid coffee and tea; they elevate anxiety.
- Exercise, preferably walking, is necessary for good health.
- Cold baths promote circulation.
- Exercise on an empty stomach.
- Go to bed at 9 p.m. and rise at 4 a.m. or 5 a.m.



SELF-EXAMINATION: WESLEY'S 22 QUESTIONS

John Wesley had 22 questions for self-examination that he and the members of his Holy Club would ask each other. This was their way of taking stock of their relationship with God each day. You can read the 22 questions here:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/everyday-disciples-john-wesleys-22-questions>

SPIRITUAL RESPIRATION

[HTTPS://WWW.PURSUEGOD.O
RG/SPIRITUAL-RESPIRATION-
AND-THE-CHRISTIAN-LIFE/](https://www.pursuegod.org/spiritual-respiration-and-the-christian-life/)



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SPIRITUAL RESPIRATION

“God is continually breathing, as it were, upon the soul; and [man’s] soul is breathing unto God. Grace is descending into his heart; and prayer and praise ascending to heaven: And by this intercourse between God and man, this fellowship with the Father and the Son, as by a kind of spiritual respiration, the life of God in the soul is sustained; and the child of God grows up, till he comes to the ‘full measure of the stature of Christ.’”

From John Wesley’s sermon, **The New Birth**

BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD

EDWIN HATCH, 1878

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=U8AVDUDZDPQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8AVDUDZDPQ)

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with Thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.

3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glow with Thy fire divine.

4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity.

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