

**ET 202 – Holiness 2 : Wesleyan Perspectives**



**Certificate and Diploma Levels**

**Leader's Handbook  
Nazarene Theological Institute  
Church of the Nazarene  
Africa Region**

Nazarene Theological Institute  
Church of the Nazarene – Africa Region

## **ET 202 – Holiness 2 : Wesleyan Perspectives**

Syllabus  
Certificate and Diploma Levels

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*Note to course leaders :* Please send notification of all typographical errors to :  
admin.itn@gmail.com

Except where otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version of the Holy Bible* (International Bible Society, 1973, 1978, 1984).

### **Course description**

This course is designed as a survey of early Methodism, especially the life and theology of John Wesley, one of its founders. In addition to studying his methods of biblical interpretation, it is through an analysis of his ministerial practice that practical applications to ministry in the African context can be gleaned.

### **Program outcomes**

The following program outcomes identify the competencies that the student will achieve by means of this course:

- CON 4      Appreciation of the theological foundations of the Christian faith from the biblical point-of-view when read from a Wesleyan perspective
- CON 5      Realization of the biblical, theological, and practical implications of holiness doctrine when taught from a Wesleyan perspective
- CON 7      Appreciation of the mission, history, and government of the Church of the Nazarene and his place in the larger Christian community
- CON 8      Appreciation of the position and teaching of the Church of the Nazarene concerning religious phenomenon

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| COM 2  | Ability to preach Biblical sermons that can then be applied to life  |
| COM 3  | Ability to represent well and fully the doctrines and positions of the Church of the Nazarene                            |
| CAR 6  | Ability to give value to relationships through openness, righteousness, and honesty                                      |
| CAR 11 | Ability to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength   |
| CAR 13 | Ability to live the experience of entire sanctification  |
| CXT 4  | Ability to understand the differences between the worldviews of the Western world, that of Africa, and that of the Bible |

### **Course outcomes**

To achieve the above-mentioned competencies, this course has organized its activities and requirements around course outcomes. Through presentations, lectures, and exercises will:

1. Have knowledge of the historical development of the doctrine of entire sanctification (CON 5, CON 7)
2. Have an understanding of the biblical and theological foundations of the doctrine of holiness through explaining scriptural holiness from a Wesleyan perspective and articulating Wesley's key theological doctrines. (CON 4; CON 5, COM 3).
3. Understand Wesley's theological sources and foundations for his theology (CON 4)
4. Appreciate the worldview of the 18<sup>th</sup> century British worldview that Wesley was born into (CXT 4)]
5. Understand how the theology of Wesley has been understood and received through an African worldview (CON 7, CXT 4)]
6. Understand theological terms, such as prevenient grace, justification, regeneration, adoption, and sanctification (initial, progressive, entire). (CON 5; CXT 4)
7. Deepen their experience of entire sanctification (CAR 11, 13)
8. Use Wesley's means of grace to grow in love for God (CAR 11)
9. Learn how to be formed by the character of Jesus Christ. (CAR 6, 13)
10. Be capable of clarifying the purpose of the Christian life which is Christ likeness. (CON 5; CAR 11)
11. Be capable of defending the doctrine of holiness from a biblical and theological perspectives. (CON 7, COM 3)
12. Be capable of classifying one's development in the various stages of the holiness pilgrimage. (CON 5, CXT 4)
13. Share about your spiritual life with one or two other people in the class (CAR 11, 13)
14. Seek out a new convert or other Christian and lead them into membership of the Church of the Nazarene. (CON 4, 5; CAR 6)

- 15. Establish a relationship with an older minister who can help you live the experience of entire sanctification (CAR 6, 13)
- 16. Be capable of distinguishing the Nazarene position from other positions on sanctification. (CON 4; COM 3)
- 17. Be capable of preaching and teaching the doctrine of holiness in culturally appropriate ways. (COM 5, 8; COM 3; CAR 13, CXT 4)
- 18. Prepare a message on holiness (COM 2)
- 19. Review and be able to articulate briefly the Church of the Nazarene's beliefs about concerning The Lord's Supper, baptism, the church, sanctification, The Triune God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Scriptures, and prevenient grace (CON 4, COM 3)

The lessons and activities of this class include the following percentages of the « four Cs » :

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Content    | 40% |
| Competence | 20% |
| Character  | 30% |
| Context    | 10% |

**Requirements**

1. Class attendance

Faithful attendance at all class sessions is essential to success. A student who knows in advance that he or she will be absent should notify the course leader beforehand.

2. Class participation..... 10%

Besides taking lecture notes, students are strongly encouraged to participate in group discussions and to complete all activities contained in the *Student Handbook*. It is recommended that each group choose a different spokesperson for each discussion, so that an oral group report can be given at the beginning of the next session (course outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19).

3. Daily quizzes.....40%

Except for the first session (usually held on Monday morning), a ten question quiz will be given at the beginning of each session. The quiz will be based on the previous lesson (all course outcomes).

4. Testimony.....non-graded

Sometime during the course, each student will participate in a group discussion with two or three other students. Share with the others your testimony of how

you came to know the Lord and also your experience of entire sanctification  
(course outcomes 6, 7, 8, 12,13, 14, 15)

5. Lesson (certificate) or reaction essay (diploma).....50%

- Certificate

To demonstrate your mastery of the subject, you will prepare a lesson based on the course material. This lesson is intended for a new members class in the your local church (course outcomes 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17)

- Diploma

Write a reaction essay of 500 words. This essay will be based upon three themes addressed during the course. Watch out ! This is not to be a summary of the information you received. Rather, for each of the three themes, show what your own thinking on the topic is, especially how you will apply it to practical ministry in your local church.

DUE DATE : \_\_\_\_\_

|   |         |   |
|---|---------|---|
| A | 90-100% | (excellent)   |
| B | 80-89%  | (very good)   |
| C | 70-79%  | (good)  |
| D | 60-69%  | (acceptable)  |
|   | 45-59%  | (9.5-11.9 acceptable for the certificate level and to fulfill requirements for this course, toward Nazarene ordination) |

If a diploma level student receives less than 60%, the course must be repeated.  
If a certificate student receives less than 45%, the course must also be repeated.

**Course outline**

Lesson 1 : The life and work of John Wesley

Discussion groups

Quiz 1

Lesson 2 : The Wesleyan Quadrilateral

The hermeneutical principles of John Wesley

Discussion groups

Quiz 2

Lesson 3 : The Image of God and Original Sin

Soteriology and Prevenient Grace

Discussion groups

Quiz 3

Lesson 4 : Repentance, Faith, and Justification  
Sanctification  
Discussion groups  
Quiz 4

Lesson 5 : Let's read together and discuss John Wesley's 1765 sermon, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*. If the students are advanced, this may be followed by reading *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*

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## ***Lesson 1***

### **"The Life and Work of John Wesley"**

#### **Sources**

Benefiel, Ron. "Christian Holiness and Ministry to the Poor."  
Unpublished article, June 7, 2002.

Collins, Kenneth J. *John Wesley : A Theological Journey*. Nashville, Tennessee :  
Abingdon Press, 2003.

Heitzenrater, Richard P. *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Nashville, Tennessee :  
Abingdon Press, 2003.

Lelièvre, Matthieu. *John Wesley: Sa Vie et Son Œuvre*. Kansas City, Missouri :  
Maison des Publications Nazaréennes, 1992.

Snyder, Howard. *The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal*. Eugene,  
Oregon : Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998.

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#### **Part One: 1703-1734**

##### **I. England at the dawn of the 18th century**

It is difficult to briefly summarize a period to which historians have devoted many books. However, one may note the following trends :

1. There was a generalized moral decay in society.
2. Corruption impeded the smooth functioning of government.
3. Robbery was common in London.
4. Because of the Industrial Revolution, poverty was widespread.

5. The greater portion of the population was illiterate.
6. The Church of England was weak and ineffective.

## **II. John Wesley's heritage**

- John Wesley was born June 17, 1703.
- His father was named Samuel. His mother was Susanna. She gave birth to 18 children, of which only 8 survived childhood. (Some were still-born).
- John had a younger brother, Charles, who later would become his collaborator in the Methodist Revival. However, since John had many sisters, he grew up in a family dominated by the female sex. Because of this, when he was older, he wasn't always sensitive to the perception of others that he was too informal when around women.
- Samuel was a priest in the Church of England. His parish was in the village of Epworth. Samuel and Susanna were both from a Puritan (non-conformist) heritage.
- Among the 8 rules for raising children that Susanna Wesley had, here are three (Collins, pp. 17-18):
  1. Never chide or beat a child twice for the same offense.
  2. If a child does something wrong but confesses it, do not beat him or her. This rule prevents many lies.
  3. A girl should learn to read well before being taught to sew.

**February 9, 1709** – "Is this not a brand plucked from the burning?" – At the age of 5, John Wesley was saved from a fire that consumed the preacher's house at Epworth. His mother, Susanna, gave special attention to John's religious instruction after that, since she believed that God must have a special plan for his life.

## **III. Primary, secondary, and university education**

At the age of 10, John Wesley left for London where he enrolled in a primary school, Charterhouse.

What did he study? His education was classical, meaning he learned to read in Greek, Latin, English, and French.

Wesley later explained the nature of his faith at this age:

1. I wasn't as bad as the others.
2. I had a respect for religion.
3. I read my Bible, and said my prayers.

In what university did Wesley later enroll? Christ Church, Oxford

After earning a Bachelor's degree and a Master's, he was named Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

What subjects did Wesley tutor as Fellow? 1) logic 2) Greek

#### **IV. Ordination, pastoral service, and the "Holy Club"**

John Wesley was ordained deacon in 1725, and priest in 1726.

What role did John fulfill from 1727-29? He was associate pastor for his father, in Epworth

✓ Important influence of three writers and their works

1. Thomas à Kempis The Imitation of Christ
2. Jeremy Taylor Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying

According to Collins (p. 35), these writers helped Wesley realize for the first time that holiness is the goal of religion, and that this holiness includes outward exercises (or duties), but also inward transformation, including the tempers and affections of the heart.

3. William Law – 2 works

- a) A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life
- b) Christian Perfection

According to Law, in order to be saved, it is necessary to strictly obey the law of God, even its tiny details. Another idea Wesley learned from law was union with God. In later years, Wesley rejected this aspect of Law's thought, since he considered it mystical and thus dangerous.

As soon as he returned to Oxford in 1729, Wesley became the leader of a small group that his brother, Charles, had already started.

What were the four objectives of this group of young men?

1. to discuss books
2. to take Holy Communion at least once per week
3. fasting
4. visitation of prisoners

Many at Oxford thought that this group got carried away with its religious practices. What two titles did they give to the young men that had gathered around John and Charles Wesley?

The Holy Club                      Methodists

A young student who was part of the group – and who later would become a great evangelist – was George Whitefield.

To this point, John Wesley had defined “faith” as “assent to a proposition, after reflection.”

In other words, faith concerned the head, but not the heart.

*In part two, we'll see what events forced Wesley to re-examine his faith, and permitted him to become much more effective in the service of his Lord.*

## **Part Two: 1735-1738**

### **I. Missionary in Georgia**

- Near the end of 1734, Samuel Wesley's health was failing. He asked John to return to Epworth to take the position of pastor.

Why did John refuse? He thought that he could be more “holy” at Oxford than in Epworth.

A few months later, Samuel Wesley passed away.

- Following his father's death, Wesley decided to leave for Georgia to serve as a missionary. He left with several young men, including Charles.

Wesley seemed to have two motivations:

1. He wanted to "learn the true sense of the Gospel."
  2. He thought that the Indians would be easy to convert.
- Atlantic crossing: October 14, 1735 to February 14, 1736

What discovery did Wesley make during the crossing?

*During a storm, he discovered that he was afraid to die.*

What group of German Christians did he meet on the ship?

*The Moravians – They were very calm during the storm, and trusted God. This greatly impressed John and Charles Wesley.*

- What did John Wesley discover when he preached a few times among the Indians? *He understood that they weren't the "noble savages" that he had believed them to be.*
- The English lived mostly in the town of Savannah. As pastor, Wesley organized Christians into cell groups for prayer. He led services on Sunday and other days of the week.
- One problem that Wesley had was his theological rigidity. An example of this was his insistence that – when baptizing infants – they be immersed three times in the baptismal font, once for each Person of the Trinity. Some began to think that he was a sympathizer with the Pope.
- John Wesley fell in love with Sophie Hopkey, a young girl of 18 years old, who was also the governor's niece. Since Wesley took too much time to propose marriage, she married someone else. Hurt, John refused to serve her Communion when she came to the Table during the church service.
- Because of this humiliation, her family brought charges against the young Wesley. He was forced to flee on December 2, 1737, and returned to England. In short, his missionary career was nearly a total failure.

## **II. Peter Böhler and Aldersgate, May 24, 1738**

Back in England, John Wesley met Peter Böhler, a young Moravian.

Böhler explained to Wesley the nature of justification by faith.

Böhler advised Wesley:

**“Preach faith *till* you have it, and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.”**

-Wesley's *Journal*, in *Works* [BE], 18 :226

Charles Wesley experienced what he called his “Pentecost” on May 21. He came to view this as the time of his conversion.

At a meeting of a religious society in Aldersgate street, in London, John Wesley heard a reading of the introduction to Martin Luther's commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In his *Journal* for May 24, 1738, Wesley wrote:

“About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

**“I felt my heart strangely warmed.”**

- J. Wesley

Some believe that this was John Wesley's conversion. Others claim that this was the moment that he received the assurance of his salvation.

A few years before his death, looking back at Aldersgate, Wesley said that before that even, he only had the faith of a servant. After Aldersgate, he had the faith of a son.

What is certain, May 24, 1738 marked a revolutionary change in both the theology and the preaching of John Wesley:

**before : sanctification ----- >>> justification**

**after: justification ----- >>> sanctification**

Before Aldersgate, Wesley had learned his theology of salvation (soteriology) from his mother and father. This was the thinking that dominated the Church of England, from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The name for it was moralism. It differs little much from Roman Catholic doctrine regarding salvation, except in its lower view of Mary. (More will be said about the relationship of justification and sanctification in a later lesson).

Over time, John Wesley came to teach that justification is a relative change, while sanctification is a real change.

Wesley's 1738 sermon, *Justification by Faith*, is evidence of this important change in his thinking.

### **Discussion**

1. In the life of John Wesley, it's obvious that the Christian education received from his mother, Susanna, was very important. Besides Sunday School, what else can we do to promote Christian education in our homes and churches?
2. Wesley was baptized as a baby. Even after his "heart warming" of May 24, 1738, he did not ask to be rebaptized. Why do you think that we often practice rebaptism in our churches? Debate together this practice.
3. Some Christians recall very well the moment of their conversion. Other Christians have no such memory. Is it required for Christians to be able to identify the time when they were converted? What does the word "testimony" mean in relation to these questions?
4. We saw in the lesson that the question of John Wesley's relationship with women caused him problems in his ministry. What policy should a pastor have concerning his or her dealings with members of the opposite sex? Is there as much danger in this area for a married pastor as for a single pastor?

*The discussion groups are designed to meet for 20-30 minutes. Assign one group to each question. A spokesperson will give a summary report of up to five minutes at the beginning of the next session. Be sure that the spokesperson duties are passed around, so that everyone has a chance sometime during the course to make a summary report for his or her group.*

*In part three of this lesson, we'll consider the impact that Aldersgate had on the ministry of John Wesley and how Methodism was able to maintain the importance of both justification by faith and holiness of heart and life.*

## **Part Three: 1738-1791**

### **I. The ministry of John Wesley after Aldersgate**

- Period of doubt and growing knowledge of the Moravians

Wesley noticed that his emotions fluctuated between confidence in his salvation and doubt.

He took a trip to Germany to visit the Moravian community led by Count Zinzendorf. He concluded that – despite their positive points – this community nearly worshiped Zinzendorf, which made Wesley uncomfortable.

Back in England, he continued his association with the Moravians at the Fetter Lane Society. Later, he left the group when other leaders spoke against observance of the means of grace. (This includes prayer, taking Communion, and other practices that strengthen faith). This heresy that urges the believer to just remain “quiet” is called quietism.

- Preaching in London and nearby

John Wesley accepted invitations to preach in churches. However, little by little, these invitations tapered off, since Wesley preached justification by faith.

- Collaboration with George Whitefield

His old friend from the Holy Club had experienced the New Birth a couple of years before John and Charles.

George Whitefield invited John Wesley to come to Bristol to fill-in for him, since he was going to the colonies (what later became the U.S.) for an evangelistic campaign.

April 2, 1739 – first open-air preaching by John Wesley

Those who responded to the invitation, John and Charles organized into the first Methodist society. In London, following their split with the Fetter Lane Society (1740), the Wesleys organized a society there as well.

### **II. Organization of Methodism**

The two basic units of Methodism were the **societies** and the **classes**.

## **A. Societies**

John Wesley never intended to start a denomination. He saw Methodism as a renewal movement within the Church of England.

Societies were not churches. They were called "preaching houses." To receive Holy Communion (the Lord's Supper), Methodists went to the local parish of the Church of England. What's more, the society meeting times did not conflict with service times for the local parish.

John and Charles Wesley visited the societies often. The societies themselves were founded mostly by lay preachers, since few members of the clergy supported the Methodist movement. With time, John permitted some women to serve as preachers, but their number was small. His mother, Susanna, convinced him that certain women were anointed for the preaching ministry.

B. Classes – Characteristics of classes:

- a. composed of 10-12 persons
- b. met once per week to encourage each other
- c. they prayed for each other
- d. a way to take care of each other physically and spiritually
- e. were open even to those who hadn't yet received assurance of their salvation

C. **Bands** – Characteristics:

1. composed of 5-6 persons of the same gender
2. were grouped according to single or married status
3. limited to those who had a profession of Christian faith

**Six rules** for the bands (Snyder, pp. 59-60)

1. met once per week
2. arrive on time, unless you are providentially hindered
3. begin with a song or a prayer
4. reveal the true state of your soul

5. Speak of your temptations and sins in thought, word, and deed
6. End with a prayer for the needs of each one

**Four questions** to ask each one each week:

1. What sins have committed since the last time?
2. What temptations have you faced?
3. How were you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done of which you're not sure if it's a sin?

### **III. Opposition to Methodist work**

Bishops and priests were among the greatest enemies of Wesley and his preachers. They said that the Methodists were "enthusiasts," which in modern English means "fanatics."

Some members of the clergy complained that Wesley preached in their parishes without asking permission. Wesley replied that his position as Fellow of Lincoln College gave him the right to preach wherever he desired.

"The world is my parish."

*- John Wesley*

The general population occasionally violently opposed Wesley's ministry and that of other Methodists.

For example, in November 1742, Wesley was confronted by a mob in Wednesbury and beaten.

### **IV. Methodist compassionate ministry**

The second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England was the time of the Industrial Revolution. Many share-croppers no longer had access to fields because of laws passed by the Parliament. They were forced to leave the countryside and ended up in large cities like London, where their living conditions were terrible.

Dr. Ron Benefiel identified at least five responses by Methodists to social problems, including poverty:

1. Wesley insisted that Methodists regularly visit the poor and the sick.
2. The Methodist society in London in the 1770s gave 1/3 of their income to buy food and clothes for the poor.
3. Wesley founded a primary school at Kingswood.
4. He wrote and published a book that included remedies for certain illnesses.
5. Methodists began a credit union.

#### **V. Summary: The impact of Methodism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

The Methodist movement had a much greater spiritual and social impact than its numbers would indicate.

One shouldn't think that John Wesley was a perfect man. Many thought that he could be dictatorial in his leadership style. He finally married in 1751 to a woman named Molly Vazeille. Sadly, his marriage was a disaster. They separated, and when Mrs. Wesley passed away, her husband didn't receive word until three days later. She was often jealous of the attention that women paid to her husband. For his part, John never seemed to know how to involve his wife in his ministry.

Despite his faults, at the time of his death:

1. 50,000 Methodists were scattered throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and America.
2. Wesley himself had logged more than 250,000 miles on horseback.
3. Some historians believe that Methodism was responsible for sparing England from a bloody revolution like the one that France suffered.

**“The best of all, God is with us.”**

- last words of John Wesley, March 2, 1791

**Quiz 1** -- *This should be given before beginning Lesson 2.*

1. True or false – In John Wesley’s day, most people knew how to read.  
(False)
2. What was the name of John and Charles Wesley’s mother? (Susanna)
3. Fill in the blank: Because he escaped from a fire at the age of 5, often John Wesley said: “Is this not a \_\_\_\_\_ plucked from the burning?” (brand)
4. Where did Wesley serve as a missionary? (Georgia)
5. What was the name of the Moravian who explained to Wesley the true meaning of justification? (Peter Böhler)
6. Fill in the blank: “I felt my heart strangely \_\_\_\_\_.” (warmed)
7. John Wesley said that justification was what kind of change? (relative)
8. True or false: At the beginning, John Wesley was very reluctant to preach in the open air. (true)
9. How often did the Methodist classes meet? (weekly)
10. Fill in the blanks: “The world is my \_\_\_\_\_.” (parish)

**Discussion**

1. What do you think of open-air preaching/evangelism? Do we have similar methods today? Do you think that the Whitefield/Wesley method would be effective where you minister?
2. Are you in agreement with John Wesley about the importance of small groups within the local church? Make a comparison between the classes/bands of Wesley’s time and the cell groups in your church. Are there any differences? Would the questions used by the bands be helpful in your context?
3. Primitive Methodism placed a big emphasis on the social aspect of its message. Besides its belief that the community of believers was important for spiritual growth, Methodists also supported programs of compassionate ministry. Do you think these kinds of programs have a place in our churches today? What ideas from John Wesley or his helpers could be adapted to your setting?

Note:

*Each group should be ready to give a 5 minute report on their discussion to the whole group at the beginning of the next session.*



N.B. – John Wesley did not assign the same priority to all four. For him, the Bible (the 66 books of the OT and NT) is the supreme authority, the rule of faith and practice. That is why in the diagram the Holy Scriptures is shown at the bottom, since it is the foundation of all doctrine.

## II. The Priority of Scripture

What place did Wesley assign to Scripture? He gave it a pre-eminent role when formulating doctrine.

When reading the writings of Wesley, it is striking the number of biblical citations. His thought was truly impregnated by the Word of God.

“From the very beginning, from the time that four young men united together, each of them was *homo unius libri* – a man of one book. God taught them all to make his ‘Word a lantern unto their feet, and a light in all their paths.’ They had one, and only one rule of judgment with regard to all their tempers, words, and actions, namely, the oracles of God. They were one and all determined to be *Bible Christians*. They were continually reproached for this very thing ; some terming them in derision Bible-bigots ; others Bible-moths – feeding, they said upon the Bible as moths do upon cloth. And indeed unto this day it is their constant endeavour to think and speak as the oracles of God.”

- from the 1787 John Wesley sermon, *On God’s Vineyard* ; in *Works* [BE], 3:503-17

To determine if a behavior is Christian, we must refer to the Word of God. For Wesley, the Bible served as a supreme court.

- The Bible is a source of religious knowledge. Theologians mine the 66 books of the Holy Scriptures to find Christian doctrines. To determine if a belief or behavior is biblical, we refer to the Bible.

According to Jones (p. 42), Scripture has priority, though it is interpreted in-light of tradition, experience, and reason.

## III. The interpretive role of tradition

New sources:

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City, Missouri : Beacon Hill Press, 1988.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God : Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative* Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1994.

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What do we mean by the word "tradition"?

Tradition = the wealth of the historic church's attempts to interpret and apply the biblical writings

- Lodahl, p. 50

2. Dunning (p. 77) identifies 2 roots of the word "tradition"

a. Greek paradosis = "that which is delivered"

b. Latin traditio = "that which is passed on"

From the Wesleyan point of view, what does "tradition" mean, according to Dunning (pp. 80, 83)?

a. the belief statements of your denomination

b. the 25 Articles of Methodism

c. the 39 Articles of the Church of England

d. theological work done in the Wesleyan tradition, but also scholarly work done by non-Wesleyan traditions

e. the ecumenical creeds (Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, Chalcedonian Creed)

Let's recite the Apostles' Creed (2<sup>nd</sup> century c.e.)

"I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended to the dead; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen."

Note: "Catholic" means universal, the Church in all places at all times.

These kinds of ecumenical creeds are summaries of what we believe the Bible teaches in its various parts.

#### **IV. The instrumental role of reason**

Sources : Rebekah Miles, in Gunter, c. 4 ; Dunning, pp. 85-87

- For John Wesley, "reason" = logic , that is to say, what organizes and systematizes truth (Dunning, p. 85).

For Miles, reason is not a source of religious knowledge. Rather, it is a tool that allows us to understand the other three sources.

#### **ILLUSTRATION : a mine and a pick**

Scripture is the mine from which theological truth is retrieved. Reason is the pick that allows us to mine the truth.

(summarize this illustration here in your own words)

John Wesley compared reason to a candle.

- What are the two extreme positions to avoid when it comes to the role of reason in the Christian life?
  1. enthusiasm (fanaticism) – reason is undervalued
  2. pure rationalism – reason is overvalued
- What Reformer famous for his principle of *sola scriptura* nevertheless left an important place for reason? Martin Luther

#### **V. The enriching role of experience**

Dunning (pp. 88-89) asks: What characterizes a religious experience?

1. the awareness of the Other impinging upon one's consciousness;
2. a basic orientation or reorientation of one's life and being.

Rebekah miles believes that experience is a source of religious knowledge. However, Ray Dunning (p. 89) believes that experience is merely a means by which the content of theology is received. The value of experience is that it

forces us to re-evaluate our doctrine if the consensus experience of believer's does not confirm its validity.

John Wesley attempted in the 1760s to compile the testimonies of those who had experienced entire sanctification. It's in considering the overall witness of these testimonies that one may conclude that a given interpretation of the Bible concerning sanctification is accurate. If on the other hand the consensus experience of God's people does not confirm a given formulation of the doctrine, John Wesley believed that the doctrine should be re-visited.

(ex) the assurance of salvation – Because so many testified to the assurance of their salvation, Wesley believed that his understanding of the Bible's doctrine of the "witness of the Spirit" was accurate.

### **Discussion**

1. Debate this proposition: "It's not at all necessary for a Christian to study God's Word. All we need to do is obey it."
2. A brother asks you: "Why does the Church of the Nazarene put any stock in tradition? Isn't the Bible sufficient?" Give a reply, based on what you've learned from this lesson.
3. Wesley believed that our experience is important, especially when one considers over a long period of time the overall experience of believers. Using this standard, are there certain Nazarene beliefs that would be confirmed? On the other hand, are there some that should be re-evaluated in the light of Scripture?

### **Note:**

*Each group should be ready to give a 5 minute report on their discussion to the whole group at the beginning of the next session.*

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## ***Lesson 2***

### **(Part Two)**

#### **"John Wesley's Hermeneutical Principles"**

New sources:

Oden, Thomas. *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. Co., 1994.

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#### **I. What are the characteristics of Holy Scripture?**

A. The Bible is the supreme rule of faith and practice.

➤ Article of Faith # 4, Church of the Nazarene

"...inerrantly revealing the will of God in all things necessary to our salvation"

Two areas where the Bible has the last word concerning us:

a. soteriology (the doctrine of salvation)

b. Christian Ethics

One area where the Bible does not claim to be the final authority is science.

B. The Bible is clear when it comes to its central teachings.

➤ What term refers to the clarity of the Bible? perspicuity

C. The Bible is a whole that is best understood in its totality.

#### **II. What are John Wesley's 7 rules of biblical interpretation?**

(source: Scott Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*)

1. Speak as the oracles of God.

- Wesley encouraged his preachers to use Scripture as much as possible during their prayers and sermons.

2. Follow the literal sense of the passage unless to do so contradicts another Scripture passage or leads to an absurdity.

3. Interpret the text in-light of its context.

- The context includes the verses immediately before and after a verse or phrase.

4. Scripture interprets Scripture, according to the analogy of faith and in the light of parallel passages.

- The analogy of faith refers to the overall meaning of Scripture as determined by reading the various parts of the Bible (Oden, p. 57).

5. A commandment is a veiled promise.

- If God commands us to do something, it is implied that God will also give us the means to obey the commandment, i.e. the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

6. Interpret literary techniques correctly.

(ex) Be aware when symbolism should not be taken literally, such as when Jesus returns with a "sword in his mouth" (Rev. 19:15). The symbol points to the reality, i.e. Jesus will crush his enemies.

7. Find the best text by finding the best translation.

For the preacher today, that means having access to at least two different versions of the Bible so they may be compared. Three translations are even better. There are websites that have multiple versions: [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com). A basic knowledge of New Testament Greek is helpful to determine the original meaning of the text.

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## **Discussion**

1. How much time would be necessary to prepare a sermon that put into practice Wesley's seven techniques?

2. Is there a doctrine popular today in churches that contradicts the analogy of faith, i.e. the overall meaning of Scripture in its various parts? Debate the question.

3. John Wesley taught that a "commandment is a veiled promise." Was John Wesley right?

*Each group should be ready to give a 5 minute report on their discussion to the whole group at the beginning of the next session.*

**Quiz 2** – Be ready to administer this quiz at the beginning of the next session.

- 1) What did Wesley call “the candle of the soul”? (reason)
- 2) To what did Wesley assign a dominant (or priority) role? (the Bible)
- 3) What serves to confirm the validity of our biblical interpretation? (experience)
- 4) Fill in the blank: Miles said that reason is like a \_\_\_\_\_ that mines coal. (pick)
- 5) What Reformer known for his doctrine of *sola scriptura* also gave an important role to reason? (Martin Luther)
- 6) Fill in the blank: For Wesley, it’s necessary to consider a text in relation to its \_\_\_\_\_. (context)
- 7) Fill in the blank: When it comes to reason, there are two extremes to be avoided: Reason should not be overvalued, nor should it be \_\_\_\_\_. (undervalued)
- 8) True or false: In the Wesleyan quadrilateral, tradition is the ultimate authority. (false – It’s the Bible).
- 9) Give an example of an ecumenical creed. (The Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Creed)
- 10) What word means that the Bible is clear? (perspicuity)

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### **Lesson 3**

#### **(Part One)**

#### **“The Image of God and Original Sin”**

New sources :

Collins, Kenneth J. *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology*. Nashville, Tennessee : Abingdon Press, 1997.

Maddox, Randy L. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology*. Nashville, Tennessee : Kingswood Books/Abingdon Press, 1994.

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#### **I. What is the image of God ?**

- In Latin, it’s *imago Dei*.

Gen. 1:27 – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

- To be created in the image of God means to resemble Him.

N.B. – This does not mean that we participate in God's divinity.

➤ **3 aspects of the image of God**

- a. natural image = understanding, will, and liberty (including spirit)
- b. political image = the capacity to govern Creation, including developing a theology of the environment
- c. moral image = righteousness and holiness

## II. **Original Sin**

✓ In 1760, John Wesley identified 3 doctrines that unite Christians of a Wesleyan and Calvinistic persuasion:

1. original sin
2. justification by faith
3. holiness of heart and life

✓ Definitions of "original sin"

1. Ken Collins (p. 31) – "...the inheritance, both physical and spiritual, mediated to humanity by the fall."
2. Article of Faith # 5, Church of the Nazarene :

"We believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually."

✓ Effects of original sin, according to Wesley

- **natural image** – Our understanding no longer functions correctly because of doubt and error. Our perceptions of reality are no longer accurate. Sickness and death play a negative role. Our will is affected by negative emotions, such as anger, shame, and hatred. Negative effects on our understanding and will result in a loss of freedom and well-being.
- **political image** – Our duty is to take care of Creation, but instead we abuse it.
- **moral image** – The life of God in the soul has been snuffed out and holiness lost.

In the Minutes of the first Methodist Conference (1744), Wesley responds to a question:

Q.15. In what sense is Adam's sin imputed to all mankind?

A. In Adam all die; that is, (1) Our bodies then become mortal. (2) Our souls die, that is, were disunited from God. And hence, (3) We are all born with a sinful, devilish nature. By reason whereof, (4) we are children of wrath, liable to eternal death (Romans v. 18; Ephes. ii. 3).

### ✓ **Importance of Romans 5:12-21**

John Calvin believed that this refers to our corruption, and that it is both inbred and hereditary.

The order is as follows: First, Adam sinned, then we also sinned.

According to Dunning (p. 298), we are not held guilty for our sinful nature. However, we are guilty because of our own sinful acts. Wesley taught that the guilt of original sin was cancelled out by the death of Jesus.

Wesley does not present a solution for the corruption of the natural and political image, except the return of Jesus. However, there's an immediate solution for the corrupted moral image:

*Justification restores us to the favor of God; sanctification restores in us the moral image of God.*

### **Discussion**

1. Wesley did not address how the political image of God might be restored in us. Still, do you believe that humanity has a responsibility toward the environment?
2. It is difficult to understand how original sin is transmitted from generation to generation? What do you think?
3. John Wesley believed that original sin was the foundation on which the Christian system was built. If the doctrine that humans are by nature sinful and deprived of the glory of God were denied, then that system would immediately fall, according to Wesley. Debate this together. Was Wesley right? Defend your position.

*Each group should be ready to give a brief report on their discussion to the whole group at the beginning of the next session.*

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**Lesson 3**

**(Part Two)**

**“Soteriology and Preventive Grace”**

**I. What is soteriology?**

- Greek – *soterios* = salvation

Soteriology is therefore the study of salvation.

- The term *via salutis* = the way of salvation

**II. Double sickness, double cure**

In his sermon, *Original Sin*, John Wesley advises:

“Know your disease! Know your cure!”

- The disease is sin, original sin and acts of sin.

**Jeremiah 17.9**

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”

This passage describes sin as a state, a principle, or an interior condition.

**1 John 3.4**

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”

In this passage, we see the classical Wesleyan definition of sin:

*Sin is a voluntary transgression against a known law of God.*

- The remedy is salvation.

Salvation is the renewal of our soul after the image of God.

- Ray Dunning

"By nature, you are totally corrupted; by grace you shall be wholly renewed."

- John Wesley

### **III. The divine-human encounter: two inadequate explanations**

#### **A. synergism**

Def. – cooperation between God and the individual in order to obtain salvation

The weakness of this conception is that it underestimates human inability, an incapacity caused by original sin.

#### **B. monergism**

Def. – all action or initiative originates in God

The weakness of this conception is that it appears to take away any ethical \_\_\_\_\_ from the individual.

### **IV. Prevenient grace: the middle way**

x \_\_\_\_\_ (prevenient grace) \_\_\_\_\_ x  
*synergism* *monergism*

#### **A. What is prevenient grace?**

- Latin *prae* = before  
*venire* = to come

- 2 definitions (Kenneth Grider)

1. divine initiative; preparatory or preceding grace

2. the diverse ways – prior to our conversion – that God displays His favor toward us

## **B. prevenient grace and Scripture**

1. John 6:44 and 12:32
2. 1 John 4:19
3. Acts 8 and 10, 16:9
4. Romans 2:14-16

## **C. some questions resolved by the prevenient grace concept**

1. Why do some respond positively to the salvation offer, while others reject it?
  - *Calvinist response*: If one does not respond, it's because one is not among the "elect" chosen by God for salvation.
  - *Wesleyan response*: Everyone receives the prevenient grace of God, but only some use it by ceasing to resist.

For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by *nature*, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of what is vulgarly called "natural conscience." But this is not natural; it is more properly termed "prevenient grace." Every man has a greater or lesser measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man. Everyone has sooner or later good desires, although the generality of men stifle them before they can strike deep root or produce any considerable fruit. Everyone has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that comes into the world. And everyone, unless he be one of the small number whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron, feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his own conscience. So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath.

- John Wesley, in the 1783 sermon *On Working Out Our Own Salvation*, in *Works* [BE], 3:207.

2. How does one explain the presence of good qualities in a non-Christian?

Some say that these are traces of the image of God in individuals. Wesley said instead that these qualities are a manifestation of the prevenient grace of God.

3. On what basis will God judge the non-Christian who has never heard the Gospel?

Let's read Romans 1:18-32.

The Wesleyan response is that we'll each be judged according to the light that we have received.

### **Discussion**

1. If we'll each be judged "by the light we've received," wouldn't it be better not to bring more light to others, to avoid them receiving a stricter divine judgment? Debate this question.

2. Does prevenient grace come closer to synergism or monergism? Defend your answer.

3. Is it possible to resist prevenient grace? If we don't resist it, does that mean that we have a role to play in our salvation? If "yes," are we still in conformity with Ephesians 2:8-9?

4. Can you think of an illustration of prevenient grace taken from everyday life? Share it with others, so they can use it in a sermon.

*As usual, have a spokesperson ready to give a short report at the beginning of the next session.*

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### **Quiz 3** – *Be ready to administer this quiz at the beginning of the next session.*

1. What does the Latin word "soterios" mean? (salvation)
2. Fill-in the blank: "Know your disease! Know your \_\_\_\_\_." (cure)
3. Give the classical Wesleyan definition of sin. (a voluntary transgression of a known law of God)
4. Of what word is this the definition? "cooperation between God and the individual in order to obtain salvation" (synergism)
5. What is the weak point of monergism? (It takes away any ethical responsibility from the individual.)
6. What is the Latin root for prevenient grace? (*prae venire*)
7. Name a Bible passage where the idea of prevenient grace is implied. (John 6:44, John 12:32, 1 Jean 4:19, Acts 8,10,16.9, Romans 2.14-16)
8. How did Calvin explain that some don't become Christians? (They are not among the elect.)
9. Fill-in the blank: "So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath."
10. True or false: According to Wesley, each person will be judged according to the light that he or she has received. (true)

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**Lesson 4**

**(Part One)**

**“Repentance, faith, and justification”**

New source

Collins, Kenneth J. *Wesley on Salvation : A Study in the Standard Sermons.*  
Grand Rapids, Michigan : Zondervan/Asbury Press, 1989.

**I. Importance of the moral law**

According to John Wesley, one should not preach the Good News before preaching the bad news.

The solution makes no sense unless one speaks first of the problem.

The one who is asleep must first be wakened. This is the role of the moral law.

**II. Meaning of the word “repentance”**

Write here the words of Matthew 5.3. \_\_\_\_\_

***Who are the “poor in Spirit” according to John Wesley?***

These are the humble, one who knows himself or herself and is convicted of sin, which is the “first repentance” that must precede faith in Christ.

- Kenneth COLLINS, p. 34

**First repentance** refers to the conviction of sin given by the Holy Spirit to the non-Christian, the recognition that one is a sinner. The instrument used by God to accomplish this is the preaching of the moral law.

**Second repentance** is the recognition by the Christian of the continuing presence of original sin in his or her heart, even after justification.

### **III. "Fruit meet for repentance"**

Def. – This is the evidence that God is in the process of doing a redemptive work in our heart.

From what Bible passage did Wesley take this expression ? Matthew 3:8 (King James Version). What does the NIV or other modern version say?

John Wesley believed that a person who has been awakened but it not yet justified should not simply cross his or her arms and do nothing. To do this would be to practice Quietism, the false doctrine of the Moravians of Fetter Lane.

Here's a list of certain actions that – for Wesley – augmented the activity of God's grace within us. These are known as the "means of grace":

1. attendance at church services
2. prayer
3. Bible reading
4. taking Holy Communion
5. giving gifts to the needy
6. visiting prisoners

N.B. – These are not "good works" by which we merit salvation.

### **IV. The only immediate condition of salvation: faith**

Even if John Wesley believed that "fruit meet for repentance" was important, the only immediate condition of salvation was faith.

Luke 23:43 – "Jesus answered him: 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

In his sermon, *Salvation by Faith* (1738), Wesley defined faith as follows:

- ✓ Faith is not...
  - a. the faith of a heathen
  - b. the faith of a devil (demon)
  - c. the faith of the apostles while Jesus was on earth

✓ So what is faith?

“Christian faith is then not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection...It is a sure confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God...”

- John Wesley, in *Works* [BE], 1:121

N.B. – Faith itself is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9).

## **V. Justification**

### ➤ **First justification**

1. It is forgiveness.
2. It is reconciliation.
3. It's cause is the life and death of Jesus Christ.
4. It precedes sanctification.

The biblical order of salvation: justification → sanctification

5. It differs from sanctification.
  - Justification is a relative change.
  - Sanctification is a real change.

### ➤ **Second justification**

Another term for this doctrine is final justification.

Read 2 Cor. 5:10. Holiness is the inevitable evidence of the sanctifying work of God in our lives.

See also Hebrews 12:14.

The only means by which we'll arrive at our objective is the grace of God, that is to say, the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Discussion**

1. It is easy for a pastor to regularly preach bad news, i.e. the severity of God's law, including hell? Do we need another order of preachers who can perform this task? Think about the life of Wesley, and debate the question.
  2. John Wesley was in favor of the practice of certain "means of grace" even for the unconverted. Do we place the same accent upon these practices for those who are slowly awakening to the call of the Lord? In other words, are we closer to the practice of the first Moravians of Fetter Lane than we are to those of the first Methodists?
  3. Are you satisfied by Wesley's definition of "faith"? Try to spell out the "head" elements vs. the "heart" elements of faith. What is the danger if one or the other is left out of the equation?
  4. What do you think of the concept of "final justification"? Are you satisfied with the balance that Wesley tried to find between the doctrines of justification and sanctification?
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## ***Part Two***

### **"Sanctification"**

#### New source

Purkiser, W.T., « sanctification, » in *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*

Wynkoop, Mildred B. *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1972.

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#### **I. What is sanctification?**

- ✓ *hagiasmos* = sanctification (appears 10 times in the NT)
- ✓ *hagiazō* = to sanctify (a verb used 29 times in the NT)
- ✓ *qadosh* (OT) = holiness

#### **LA SANCTIFICATION...**

is the act or process by which a state of holiness is realized.

- W.T. Purkiser

## II. What is the relation between justification and sanctification?

- Roman Catholic position

sanctification ----- >>>>>>> justification

I am holy in the hope of being saved.

- Protestant position

justification ----- >>>>>>> sanctification

Because I am saved, I can be holy.

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not by yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

- Eph. 2:8-10

In the light of this passage, we see that the will of God concerning us is that we do good works – in other words, that we be holy.

What is the essence of this passage that John Wesley so frequently preached?

I don't do good works in order to be saved, but because I am saved, I will do good works.

## III. Holiness is the commandment of God

- **What is "holiness"?**

Wakefield – Holiness is the general character of God resulting from all his moral perfections.

Adam Clarke – Holiness is the glorious fullness of God's moral excellence, considered as the principle of His actions and the standard for His creatures

- **What God requires, He enables us to do.**

1 Peter 1:16 – "For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'"

N.B. – John Wesley taught that a commandment is a covered promise. In other words, it's a promise in disguise. If God calls us to be holy, then He will make a way for us to be holy.

Let's read together Lev. 11:44-45, 19:2, and 20:7.

*Hebrews 13.11-13*

*The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus suffered outside the city gate to make people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.*

*1 John 1.6-7*

*If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie and we do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

John Stott – “So the reference here must be to cleansing not from deliberate sins but from ‘every sin’ (NEB), even those committed unconsciously, or, as may be suggested by the use of the singular *sin*, from the defilement of our fallen nature.” (*Tyndale NT Commentaries*)

**IV. Sanctification : initial, progressive, and entire**

- *Initial sanctification* is a synonym of the new birth.

Let's read Titus 3:4-7.

What are the key words that appear in this passage?

Another word for the new birth is regeneration. We believe that the new birth, adoption, and regeneration happen simultaneously.

- *Progressive sanctification* refers to growth in grace.

Let's read 1 Peter 2:2.

What are the key words that appear in this passage?

Let's read 2 Cor. 3:12-18.

What does this phrase mean: "We are being transformed into his likeness with every-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit"?

It's about the renewal of the moral image of God in us.

- *Entire sanctification* is an idea contained in 1 Thess. 5:23-24.

Let's read the passage together. What are the key words?

*Article de Foi # 10, Church of the Nazarene*  
(first paragraph)

"We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect."

## **V. Negative and positive aspects of entire sanctification**

- From the negative point of view, entire sanctification is purification. From the positive point of view, it's being filled with love for God and one's neighbor.

### **A. purification**

Let's read Ps. 51:12. What does David ask God to do?

Dunning (p. 483) outlines three manifestations of sin:

1. self-sovereignty – If we have given up the throne of our lives to God, then all we have belongs to him. Otherwise, we will feel anger when others invade our “turf.”
2. self-gratification – This is the satisfying of our own appetites at any cost, and in ways that don’t bring glory to God, and often harm others.
3. self-centeredness – This may include a lust or a desire for revenge.

To be renewed in the image of God signifies a deliverance of self-domination.

Mildred Wynkoop (*Theology of Love* 158) defined sin as “love locked into a false center, the self.” On the other hand, holiness is characterized by a “love locked into the True Center, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

## **B. love of God and neighbor**

Let’s read Mark 12:28-34.

According to Wynkoop, the essence of Wesley’s theology is love, especially as it relates to holiness.

### **Discussion**

1. Is it sufficient to say that the essence of holiness is love? Whether you or agree or not, defend your position.
2. If we are purified from original sin, does that mean that’s it’s now impossible for us to sin? And if we fall, does that mean that our original sin wasn’t cleansed after all?
3. Is it possible to grown in grace even after having been entirely sanctified? Explain yourself.

## **Quiz 4**

- 1) True or false: According to Wesley, one shouldn't preach the "good news" until one talks about the bad news. (true)
- 2) According to Collins, what does the phrase "poor in spirit" mean? (to be convinced of our sin)
- 3) According to Wesley, what is the evidence of our repentance? (fruit meet for repentance)
- 4) What is the only immediate condition of justification and entire sanctification? (faith)
- 5) What is "second (or final) justification"? (It's the Christian's reward on the last day)
- 6) What is the meaning of the Hebrew word, *qadosh*? (holiness)
- 7) What is the Roman Catholic order of salvation? (sanctification precedes justification)
- 8) What is the Protestant (biblical) order of salvation? (justification precedes sanctification)
- 9) True or false: After entire sanctification, there can be no more spiritual growth, since one is already perfect. (false)
- 10). What is the positive aspect of entire sanctification? (God fills us with love for Him and for our neighbor)

In the next step of this course, we'll read together the sermon, *The Scripture Way of Salvation* (1765). It's the clearest explanation in the writings of John Wesley of the *via salutis*, including sanctification.

After reading the sermon, answer the questions that follow.

If you have the time, you can read Wesley's classic *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

**Source: The Wesley Center Online: wesley.nnu.edu**

**The Sermons of John Wesley  
1872 Edition**

(Thomas Jackson, editor)

**SERMON FORTY-THREE**

**The Scripture Way of Salvation**

*"Ye are saved through faith."* -- Ephesians 2:8.

1. Nothing can be more intricate, complex, and hard to be understood, than religion, as it has been often described. And this is not only true concerning the religion of the Heathens, even many of the wisest of them, but concerning the religion of those also who were, in some sense, Christians; yea, and men of great name in the Christian world; men who seemed to be pillars thereof. Yet how easy to be understood, how plain and simple a thing, is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ; provided only that we take it in its native form, just as it is described in the oracles of God! It is exactly suited, by the wise Creator and Governor of the world, to the weak understanding and narrow capacity of man in his present state. How observable is this, both with regard to the end it proposes, and the means to attain that end! The end is, in one word, salvation; the means to attain it, faith.

2. It is easily discerned, that these two little words, I mean faith and salvation, include the substance of all the Bible, the marrow, as it were, of the whole Scripture. So much the more should we take all possible care to avoid all mistake concerning them, and to form a true and accurate judgement concerning both the one and the other.

3. Let us then seriously inquire,

I. What is Salvation?

II. What is that faith whereby we are saved? And,

III. How are we saved by it?

1. I. And, first, let us inquire, What is salvation? The salvation which is here spoken of is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness. It is not the soul's going to paradise, termed by our Lord, "Abraham's bosom." It is not a blessing which lies on the other side death; or, as we usually speak, in the other world. The very words of the text itself put this beyond all

question: "Ye *are saved*." It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing; a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, "Ye *have been saved*": so that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory.

2. If we take this in its utmost extent, it will include all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed "natural conscience," but more properly, "preventing grace"; --all the drawings of the Father; the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; --all that light wherewith the Son of God "enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world;" showing every man "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God"; --all the convictions which His Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man-- although it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all.

3. But we are at present concerned only with that salvation which the Apostle is directly speaking of. And this consists of two general parts, justification and sanctification.

Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and , what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us (commonly termed "the meritorious cause of our justification"), is the blood and righteousness of Christ; or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till He "poured out His soul for the transgressors." The immediate effects of justification are, the peace of God, a "peace that passeth all understanding," and a "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God" "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

4. And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit: there is a *real* as well as a *relative* change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel "the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"; producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honour, of money, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, into "the mind which was in Christ Jesus."

5. How naturally do those who experience such a change imagine that all sin is gone; that it is utterly rooted out of their heart, and has no

more any place therein! How easily do they draw that inference, "I *feel* no sin; therefore, I *have* none: it does not *stir*; therefore it does not *exist*: it has no *motion*; therefore, it has no *being*!"

6. But it is seldom long before they are undeceived, finding sin was only suspended, not destroyed. Temptations return, and sin revives; showing it was but stunned before, not dead. They now feel two principles in themselves, plainly contrary to each other; "the flesh lusting against the Spirit"; nature opposing the grace of God. They cannot deny, that although they still feel power to believe in Christ, and to love God; and although His "Spirit" still "witnesses with their spirits, that they are children of God"; yet they feel in themselves sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief. They find one or more of these frequently *stirring* in their heart, though not *conquering*; yea, perhaps, "thrusting sore at them that they may fall"; but the Lord is their help.

7. How exactly did Macarius, fourteen hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God: "The unskilful," or unexperienced, "when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny, that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again. For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were wellnigh burned up."

8. From the time of our being born again, the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled "by the Spirit" to "mortify the deeds of the body," of our evil nature; and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We so on from grace to grace, while we are careful to "abstain from all appearance of evil," and are "zealous of good works," as we have opportunity, doing good to all men; while we walk in all His ordinances blameless, therein worshipping Him in spirit and in truth; while we take up our cross, and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

9. It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification; for a full salvation from all our sins, --from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief; or, as the Apostle expresses it, "go unto perfection." But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love "rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks."

II. But what is faith through which we are saved? This is the second point to be considered.

1. Faith, in general, is defined by the Apostle, *elegcos pragmatv̄n ou blepomenv̄n*. *An evidence, a divine evidence and conviction* (the word means both) *of things not seen*; not visible, not perceivable either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God, and of the things of God; a kind of spiritual *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception thereof. Accordingly, the Scripture speaks of God's giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul: "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And elsewhere the same Apostle speaks of "the eyes of" our "understanding being opened." By this two-fold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*, we see the things which the natural "eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard." We have a prospect of the invisible things of God; we see the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being. And we see the *eternal world*; piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed.

2. Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine *evidence* and *conviction* not only that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," but also that Christ loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*. It is by this faith (whether we term it the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof) that we *receive Christ*; that we receive Him in all His offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King. It is by this that He is "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

3. "But is this the *faith of assurance*, or *faith of adherence*?" The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The Apostle says, "There is one faith, and one hope of our calling"; one Christian, saving faith; "as there is one Lord," in whom we believe, and "one God and Father of us all." And it is certain, this faith necessarily implies an *assurance* (which is here only another word for *evidence*, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me. For "he that believeth" with the true living faith "hath the witness in himself": "the Spirit witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God." "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father"; giving him an assurance that he is so, and a childlike confidence in Him. But let it be observed, that, in the very nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a childlike confidence in God till he knows he is

a child of God. Therefore, confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second, branch or act of faith.

4. It is by this faith we are saved, justified, and sanctified; taking that word in its highest sense. But how are we justified and sanctified by faith? This is our third head of inquiry. And this being the main point in question, and a point of no ordinary importance, it will not be improper to give it a more distinct and particular consideration.

III. 1. And, first, how are we justified by faith? In what sense is this to be understood? I answer, Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of justification. It is the *condition*: none is justified but he that believes: without faith no man is justified. And it is the *only condition*: this alone is sufficient for justification. Every one that believes is justified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words: no man is justified till he believes; every man when he believes is justified.

2. "But does not God command us to repent also? Yea, and to 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance'--to cease, for instance, from doing evil, and learn to do well? And is not both the one and the other of the utmost necessity, insomuch that if we willingly neglect either, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all? But if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of justification?" God does undoubtedly command us both to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; which if we willingly neglect, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all: therefore both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are, in some sense, necessary to justification. But they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree*. Not in the *same degree*; for those fruits are only necessary *conditionally*; if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be justified without them, as was the *thief* upon the cross (if we may call him so; for a late writer has discovered that he was no thief, but a very honest and respectable person!); but he cannot be justified without faith; this is impossible. Likewise, let a man have ever so much repentance, or ever so many of the fruits meet for repentance, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not justified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less repentance, he is justified. --Not in the *same sense*; for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary; necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* necessary to justification. It remains, that faith is the only condition, which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification.

3. "But do you believe we are sanctified by faith? We know you believe that we are justified by faith; but do not you believe, and accordingly teach, that we are sanctified by our works?" So it has been roundly

and vehemently affirmed for these five-and-twenty years: but I have constantly declared just the contrary; and that in all manner of ways. I have continually testified in private and in public, that we are sanctified as well as justified by faith. And indeed the one of those great truths does exceedingly illustrate the other. Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the *condition*: none is sanctified but he that believes; with out faith no man is sanctified. And it is the *only condition*: this alone is sufficient for sanctification. Every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is sanctified till he believes: every man when he believes is sanctified.

4. "But is there not a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification? And is it not incumbent on all that are justified to be `zealous of good works'? Yea, are not these so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified in the full sense; that is, perfected in love? Nay, can he grow at all in grace, in the loving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? Yea, can he retain the grace which God has already given him? Can he continue in the faith which he has received, or in the favour of God. Do not you yourself allow all this, and continually assert it? But, if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of sanctification?"

5. I do allow all this, and continually maintain it as the truth of God. I allow there is a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification. It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And there are so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified; he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus; nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received; he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God. What is the inference we must draw herefrom? Why, that both repentance, rightly understood, and the practice of all good works, --works of piety, as well as works of mercy (now properly so called, since they spring from faith), are, in some sense, necessary to sanctification.

6. I say, "repentance rightly understood"; for this must not be confounded with the former repentance. The repentance consequent upon justification is widely different from that which is antecedent to it. This implies no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God. It does not suppose any doubt of the favour of God, or any "fear that hath torment." It is properly a conviction, wrought by the Holy Ghost, of the *sin* which still *remains* in our heart; of the *ironhna sarkos, the carnal mind*, which "does still *remain*" (as our Church speaks) "even in them that are regenerate"; although it does

no longer *reign*; it has not now dominion over them. It is a conviction of our proneness to evil, of an heart bent to backsliding, of the still continuing tendency of the flesh to lust against the spirit. Sometimes, unless we continually watch and pray, it lusteth to pride, sometimes to anger, sometimes to love of the world, love of ease, love of honour, or love of pleasure more than of God. It is a conviction of the tendency of our heart to self-will, to Atheism, or idolatry; and above all, to unbelief; whereby, in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretenses, we are ever departing, more or less, from the living God.

7. With this conviction of the sin remaining in our hearts, there is joined a clear conviction of the sin remaining in our lives; still *cleaving* to all our words and actions. In the best of these we now discern a mixture of evil, either in the spirit, the matter, or the manner of them; something that could not endure the righteous judgement of God, were He extreme to mark what is done amiss. Where we least suspected it, we find a taint of pride or self-will, of unbelief or idolatry; so that we are now more ashamed of our best duties than formerly of our worst sins: and hence we cannot but feel that these are so far from having anything meritorious in them, yea, so far from being able to stand in sight of the divine justice, that for those also we should be guilty before God, were it not for the blood of the covenant.

8. Experience shows that, together with this conviction of sin *remaining* in our hearts, and *cleaving* to all our words and actions; as well as the guilt which on account thereof we should incur, were we not continually sprinkled with the atoning blood; one thing more is implied in this repentance; namely, a conviction of our helplessness, of our utter inability to think one good thought, or to form one good desire; and much more to speak one word aright, or to perform one good action, but through His free, almighty grace, first preventing us, and then accompanying us every moment.

9. "But what good works are those, the practice of which you affirm to be necessary to sanctification?" First, all works of piety; such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet; receiving the supper of the Lord; searching the Scriptures, by hearing, reading, meditating; and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

10. Secondly, all works of mercy; whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as the endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded, to succour the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the

repentance, and these the "fruits meet for repentance," which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed His children to wait for complete salvation.

11. Hence may appear the extreme mischievousness of that seemingly innocent opinion, that there is no sin in a believer; that all sin is destroyed, root and branch, the moment a man is justified. By totally preventing that repentance, it quite blocks up the way to sanctification. There is no place for repentance in him who believes there is no sin either in his life or heart: consequently, there is no place for his being perfected in love, to which that repentance is indispensably necessary.

12. Hence it may likewise appear, that there is no possible danger in *thus* expecting full salvation. For suppose we were mistaken, suppose no such blessing ever was or can be attained, yet we lose nothing: nay, that very expectation quickens us in using all the talents which God has given us; yea, in improving them all; so that when our Lord cometh, He will receive His own with increase.

13. But to return. though it be allowed, that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation; yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree: --Not in the *same degree*; for these fruits are only necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them; otherwise a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. likewise, let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail: he is not sanctified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified. --Not in the *same sense*; for this repentance and these fruits are only *remotely* necessary, --necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to sanctification. It remains, that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to sanctification.

14. "But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, --saved from sin, and perfected in love?" It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the holy Scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step further. And one would imagine there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this, than the ancient promise, "Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." How clearly does this express the being perfected in love! --how strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?

15. It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what God hath promised He is able to perform. Admitting, therefore, that "with men it is impossible" to "bring a clean thing out of an unclean," to purify the heart from all sin, and to till it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing "with God all things are possible." And surely no one ever imagined it was possible to any power less than that of the Almighty! But if God speaks, it shall be done. God saith, "Let there be light; and there" is "light"!

16. It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that He is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to Him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is His will. And He cannot want or stay for any more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons He is pleased to honour. We may therefore boldly say, at any point of time, "Now is the day of salvation!" "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" "Behold, all things are now ready; come unto the marriage!"

17. To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more, --a divine evidence and conviction that He doeth it. In that hour it is done: God says to the inmost soul, "According to thy faith be it unto thee!" Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; it is clean "from all unrighteousness." The believer then experiences the deep meaning of those solemn words, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

18. "But does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously?" Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some; I mean in this sense, --they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin "by the breath of His mouth," in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so He generally does; a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. *Thou* therefore look for it every moment! Look for it in the way above described; in all those *good works* whereunto thou art "created anew in Christ Jesus." There is then no danger: you can be no worse, if you are no better, for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done *first, before* you are sanctified. You think, I must first *be* or *do* thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this

day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are*; and expect it *now*. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connexion between these three points, --expect it *by faith*; expect it *as you are*; and expect it *now*! To deny one of them, is to deny them all; to allow one, is to allow them all. Do *you* believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true then to your principle; and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but "Christ *died*." And if you look for it as you are, then expect it *now*. Stay for nothing: why should you? Christ is ready; and He is all you want. He is waiting for you: He is at the door! Let your inmost soul cry out,

Come in, come in, thou heavenly Guest! Nor hence again remove;

But sup with me, and let the feast Be everlasting love.

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### **QUESTIONS**

1. What are the three main points of John Wesley's sermon?

*I. What is Salvation?*

*II. What is that faith whereby we are saved? And,*

*III. How are we saved by it?*

2. What does Wesley say is *not* meant by the salvation spoken of in Eph. 2:8?

*Going to heaven, or life in the other world*

3. What does Wesley say is the result if we yield to "preventing grace," meaning "all the drawings of the Father"?

*The drawings will "increase more and more."*

4. How does Wesley define "justification"?

*It is pardon, or the forgiveness of sins.*

5. When does sanctification begin?

*the moment we are justified*

6. What does Wesley mean by the “repentance consequent upon justification”?

*It's the conviction experienced by the believer that sin still remains in his or her heart.*

7. What “seemingly innocent opinion” does Wesley call “extremely mischievous”?

*the belief that all sin is destroyed when we are justified*

8. Does Wesley think that the believer is “cleansed from all sin” gradually or instantaneously?

*He allows that it can happen either way.*

9. According to the sermon, place the following events in their proper order:

- 1) sanctification
- 2) repentance
- 3) fruit meet for repentance
- 4) justification
- 5) prevenient grace

*Correct order: 5, 3, 2, 4, 1*

10. At what moment does Wesley say the believer, by faith, should expect to be sanctified?

*now*

**-- Suggestions to improve this course --**

**ET 202 – Holiness 2: Wesleyan Perspectives**

**Grade sheet**

Name      Cert or dip ?    Participation (10%)    Q 1    Q2    Q3    Q4 (10% per quiz)      Lesson or report (50%)    Course Grade

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
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