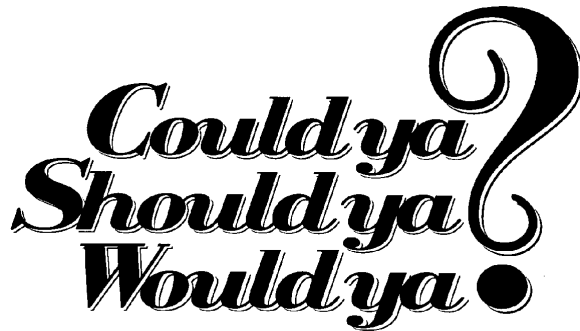


LESSON 8
Living for Christ



So, what does all this mean? We've now looked at the Church, the Methodist denomination, the Sacraments, the Trinity, worship, the Bible, and prayer. What do they all have in common, and how do they help us live our lives today?

Well, obviously, all these things have GOD in common! We learn about them in Confirmation so that we can see all the different things that make our faith what it is. What's important now is that we take all of these things and put them into ACTION. That means we take our belief in God and our trust in Christ and let it affect every area of lives! Have no fear, though – it is a great and wonderful thing to live for God and let others see Christ in you!

James 2:14 says, *“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?”* Basically, this verse is saying that all the faith in the world won't do you any good if you don't *do* anything about it. In the same way, all that we've learned in Confirmation will do us no good if we don't do anything about it. If we *believe* in Christ, but we don't *live* in Christ, we're missing out! Let's learn how we can live in a way that glorifies God and gives Jesus a good name!

You are what you do.

When all is said and done, people look at Christians to decide whether or not they want to be a Christian too. That means others are watching what we do and say and judging the Christian faith based on what they see! We have a huge responsibility then to make the right choices in our lives and do things that please God. Let's look at how we can make the right choices as a Christian. John Wesley had some good advice! He said these four things are important when we make choices in our lives:

- **Scripture**
- **Tradition**
- **Experience**
- **Reason**

SCRIPTURE:

Of all four, Scripture is the most important, according to John Wesley and the Christian faith. All of the other three help us understand and apply Scripture to our lives. Like we've learned, Scripture shows us God's perspective on what we're going through. If we think, "Ugh... my best friend betrayed me and gossips about me. It's impossible to forgive her," the Bible says, "nothing will be impossible with God," (Luke 1:37). If we think, "My family is falling apart. I am so sad," God's Word says, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds," (Psalm 147:3).

Scripture isn't a rule book. It tells us about who God is, who we are, and who we are supposed to become. The Bible may not give you specific answers right away, but it will show you what direction to go and even how to think about what you're going through. We can look at the stories in the Bible and see how people of faith responded to their joys or problems, and we can be encouraged to stay faithful.

TRADITION:

We have traditions in our families, in our churches, and sometimes even in our friendships. When we live for God, it's important to keep these traditions in mind. For example: It is a traditional Methodist belief that we are to always show *love*. When we see someone in our school who might be lonely and need a friend, then, what should we do? Show love!! The Church reminds us of our traditional beliefs and encourages us to make good decisions as Christians.

Creeds are an important part of our church traditions (you'll learn more about creeds in the next lesson). The first people of our church who wrote our creeds thought a lot about their faith. They read, they studied, they even *fought* for what they believed! We can trust what decisions they made and learn from them because these people sought God in all they did and relied on God's Holy Spirit to guide them. It's important that we value what they contributed to the Christian Church. For example, we should honor the rituals and sometimes boring stuff in church because it came from some really important people in the past. It is all part of the tradition that God blesses.

EXPERIENCE:

Think about your experiences in life. How have your actions in the past affected what's going on in your life now? Can you think of mistakes you've made in the past that had bad consequences? If so, those consequences probably (hopefully!) remind you not to make that mistake again! In the same way, can you think of good things you've done in the past? How have those decisions been blessings in your life?

When we live our lives for Christ, it's important that we pay attention to the things going on around us. God often uses the circumstances in our lives to show us God's way and to guide us through life. For example...

- If we want to have wonderful, loving Christian friends, but we have one friend who is mean and treats us badly, God might be telling us to seek out new friends or reach out and help the friend we don't like.

- If we really want to pray more, but we're super busy, God might be calling us to slow down and spend time with God.
- If we need an A in our history class, but we keep getting Cs on our papers, we know we need to work harder and study more.

We can also know God through experience when we look at and listen to those around us. Other people can show us God's plans for our lives.

- If God tells us in the Bible that we are supposed to honor our parents, and our parents keep telling us we are hurting their feelings, we can assume that we're not doing what we're supposed to do!
- If our life is stinky, a friend can tell us over and over again that God really *does* love us, even if it doesn't feel like God does. This is encouraging!
- If we're worried about a test coming up, a friend or tutor can help us study and do well.

See God at work? A friend can be God's way of helping us! Other people can tell us their experiences with God, challenge us to grow, or tell us when we're making a good or bad decision. And our Christian friends know God and make good choices for Christ, so they can help *us* to know God and make good choices for Christ. Pretty cool, huh?

**What's going on in my life right now? Who are the people who surround me?
What could God be telling me through these people and experiences?**

REASON:

Use your mind! Your head is as important as your heart when it comes to making decisions for Christ, so think through your decisions carefully.

- Consider all the different sides of what you're going through.
- Think of the consequences of all you do.
- Remember that God is seen in your actions and behavior.
- Ask for your friends' opinions.
- Pray for God's guidance! God will direct your steps every day if you ask.

It's easy to let every day decisions get the best of us. We think that the "little things" don't matter, but they do! **Every decision we make matters to God.** God loves us and wants the very best for us! Let's never forget that when we "claim the name 'Christian,'" people watch us and the things we do and say. We should do our best to honor God in *all* that we do because God is good, and God will bless our lives in huge ways as we live for Christ!

***Go The Extra Mile!**

Think of some decision you're facing right now. It might be something that has to be decided soon (like, "How am I going to treat that girl/guy I don't like tomorrow at school?"), or it might be a decision that will have to be made in the next year or two (like, "Should I be active in Youth Group at church?" ... **and by the way, the answer to that question is YES!!** 😊). Write down the question, and then spend a few minutes using Wesley's four guidelines to help you come closer to deciding what to do.

Decision to be made: _____

Scripture _____

Tradition _____

Experience _____

Reason _____

"Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more." ~1

Thessalonians 4:1

JOURNAL – LESSON 8

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