

Three Simple Rules Group Discussion Guide

Week One: Salvation

Our Methodist heritage can help us discover the “one thing needful,” how to be restored to the image of God in which we were created. Read Genesis 1:27.

Share what you know about John and Charles Wesley and the history of Methodism. How important is it to know the heritage from which we emerged? Or is it just ancient history that no longer is relevant for us?

Discuss the meaning of Colossians 1:15, which reads, “[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...”

Can you trace the role of grace in your spiritual journey? How did God act to draw you toward a relationship with himself?

How did you first respond to God’s love?

What is salvation in your opinion? What are we saved from? What are we saved for? What role, if any, does salvation play in THIS life?

John Wesley taught that saving grace is a process of becoming Christ like. Steve Harper, author of *The Way to Heaven, the Gospel According to John Wesley*, says that Wesley’s view of saving faith begins in repentance and climaxes in belief. Can you think of a time when you turned around from life without Christ? Can you remember when you completed that turn by embracing Christ’s way as your way?

Read carefully as a group Philippians 2:12-13 and Ephesians 2:8-9. Discuss what Paul meant by “work out your own salvation.” What is God’s role in our salvation? What is our role, if any? If having faith is something we must do for salvation, is that a “work?”

How does your life story reflect the dynamic, ongoing nature of salvation?

Week Two: Do no harm

Wesley said that to continue on the way of salvation, that is living in harmony with God, we should begin “by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced” Discipline, 2004, p. 29 Job

Rueben Job asserts that this first step demands radical trust in God’s presence, power, wisdom, and guidance and a radical obedience to God’s leadership. How can we foster trust in God in daily situations? How can we enhance our inclination to obedience?

How did Jesus demonstrate his trust in God? What are some ways that Christ obeyed God? What are some basics you can practice in order to become more Christ-like in your everyday living?

We often “do harm” with words. What are other common ways that we harm others? How would you rate yourself in treating each and every person as a child of God?

In what area of your life are you most tempted to “be right” or have the last word? How can you model unconditional love to those with whom you disagree?

Sometimes we establish harmful or hurtful habits that consistently hurt the people in our lives. Do I do anything on a regular basis, as a practice, that harms others?

Name a common practice in your community/neighborhood/school/workplace that is harmful to a person or group of people. How do you think personal holiness, or spirit-filled living can expand into social holiness that transforms institutions or societal norms? How can you be accountable to others as you practice doing no harm?

Week Three: Do Good

“By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all . . .”
Discipline, 2004

Acts 10: 38 (Peter said) “You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him”

How has God equipped you to do good? Can you recall a time when God supplied your needs so that you could help others?

John Wesley said. “A true lover of God hastens to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven.” (Jackson, Works, 5:120) Make a list of daily opportunities you have to do good.

Sometimes negative attitudes toward certain situations or people block our willingness to do good. What attitudes need to change in your heart to make room for doing good? When have you had the opportunity to do good, but didn't because of a judgment you made?

What does healthy self-denial mean to you? When given the opportunity, have you done good for someone else even if it was inconvenient?

What do you do to remind yourself how much God loves you? If this is hard for you, choose a Scripture or word to use as a reminder of God's love. Perhaps it would help to remember a good deed someone has done for you and how it made you feel?

Week Four: Stay in love with God

“By attending upon all the ordinances of God . . .” Discipline, 2004

Wesley advocated the use of means of grace as a way to grow to maturity in Christ. He divided them into two groups – the instituted means (those ordained by Christ) and the prudential means (those ordained by the church). The **instituted means** are prayer, searching the Scriptures, the Lord’s Supper, fasting and group fellowship. The **prudential means** are the ones we are studying this month: Do no harm, do all the good you can and attending the private and public worship of God. Steve Harper writes, “The key to Christian growth is not feeling but faithfulness. God has expressed his faithfulness by providing means of grace. We express our faithfulness by taking advantage of them. And in that divine/human encounter, the connection is made, grace flows into our lives, and we are led to greater conformity to the image of Christ.” (The Way to Heaven, p. 76)

Fill in the blank: I feel closest to God when I _____.
(Ex: Pray, worship, sing, work, serve, read the Bible)

Another way to think about your need for the means of grace is this: If I were told I could not (fill in the blank – pray, worship, read Scripture, take Communion), which would I miss the most?

What do you do regularly to “stay in the game” with God?

How do you express your love to God?

What evidence is in your life that you love God and others?

Consider the equation: Grace + Response = Growth
What does this mean in your life right now?

What can you do to be more intentional in your everyday life to stay in love with God?
What spiritual discipline would you most like to add to your practice?

Wesley believed that God had raised up the people called Methodist to “spread scriptural holiness across the land.” (Harper, The Way to Heaven, p. 88) As we pray, worship, read Scripture together, share Holy Communion and other means of grace we are united around a common purpose and together the body of Christ experiences greater power.

What are some ways that our community of grace at Chapelwood can unite around a common purpose and spread holiness across the land? When you participate in the means of grace, do you identify with the other Christians who are also seeking God in similar ways? How can we feed the lambs, tend the sheep and provide for the needs of others?