

ACCOUNTABLE --- DISCIPLESHIP

Living in God's Household

Leader's Guide

**Accountable Discipleship:
Living in God's Household
Leader's Guide**

by Steven W. Manskar

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Introduction

Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household is a book about pastoral leadership in the Wesleyan tradition. Pastoral leadership is the ministry of caring for the household of God. Both the laity and clergy are called to this ministry. Those who read and study this book will be invited to discover their own ministry as pastoral leaders.

All who follow Jesus Christ and seek to obey his teachings to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself” have the potential to be a pastoral leader for their congregation. They are pastoral leaders because others see and experience the grace of Jesus Christ through their lives. They are spiritual, servant leaders who follow the example of Jesus. These are ordinary people. They are laity and clergy. They are people like you.

Biblical Foundation

The Bible offers numerous examples of leadership that could provide a foundation upon which to build this study. Leaders such as Abraham, Moses, Deborah, Samuel, David, Mary, Jesus, Peter, and Paul each share common characteristics while also remaining very distinct in personality and context. These biblical figures are part of the Jewish/Christian heritage and serve as models of leadership for the church today.

However, we must also acknowledge that some leaders are better examples than others when we are looking for models to emulate in the church. With this in mind, this study will focus on Jesus' leadership. His life and ministry exhibits important characteristics that will inform the theories underlying this study. Jesus experienced an intimate relationship with God. He emerged from an environment of poverty and focused his energies on bringing freedom to people suffering in slavery and oppression. He was often misunderstood by the people he served. And he shared power and authority with others. Jesus represents the predominant leadership paradigm in the Bible.

What is the paradigm for leadership in the Bible? How does Jesus represent this biblical pattern?

The biblical model for leadership has at least four essential elements. I say this model is predominant in Scripture by virtue of its presence in the central figures of Moses and Jesus. These four elements are:

1. God is relational. “God is not only free but has chosen to use that freedom to enter into relationship. Freedom alone could result in the picture of an aloof, uncaring God. But the Exodus story is of a God who freely chooses to respond to human need.”¹ God works through people whose personality and motivational orientation are open to grace. These are people who are willing to listen and discern. They understand that their power does not come from within themselves but from their creator. And these people are willing to make themselves so available to God that this power flows through them in service with others. The power that flows from God to and through them is grace. Leadership, as it exists in the world of the Bible, has its beginning and end in God and God's grace. Those individuals whose personality is oriented toward love of God, neighbor, and self are likely to become leaders.

¹Birch, Bruce C. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 119.



2. Biblical leadership is egalitarian. It does not seek the building up of self. Leaders grounded in Scripture do not strive to get and hold onto power in order to gain wealth, prestige, and position for themselves. Rather, they seek the common good. In other words, biblical leaders are prophetic. “The prophetic ethic ... seeks a societal order that values the worth of every person before God. Therefore, when any member of the community is denied the resources of full life and worth, the entire community is diminished and broken.”¹ Leaders are channels of grace. They work to ensure that everyone has what they need to live and participate fully in the life of the community. Since all people are equal in the eyes of God, leaders cannot set themselves above those whom they lead and serve.

3. Biblical leaders share power and responsibility with others. They lead from the center. Biblical leadership is not hierarchical because its power is not derived from domination but from partnership with God and with neighbor. This form of leadership is not leadership “over.” It is leadership “with.” The Hebrew word that best describes this characteristic is *hesed*. Most often translated as “steadfast love,” *hesed* characterizes God’s relationship with Israel and, in Jesus Christ, with all the world (God’s household). “It is a difficult concept to capture in any one English word and has been represented variously by ‘mercy,’ ‘grace,’ ‘loyalty,’ ‘goodness,’ ‘loving-kindness,’ and ‘compassion.’ This alone witnesses to the breadth of divine activity encompassed in the term.”² Leaders living in God’s household reflect this trait in their lives and work. Such leaders understand that they cannot do everything themselves. They share the responsibilities of leadership with others who are willing to accept them. In so doing, these leaders build up the community into the image and likeness of God.

4. Biblical leaders focus their energies on a clearly defined vision and mission. Their leadership has purpose and direction because they are aligned with God’s promised future. “Trust in God’s promised future requires leadership in ways expressive of that trust and in confidence that God’s purposes will be served. It requires involvement in the confrontations and struggles that lead to the freedom God has planned.”³ The source of the leaders’ clear vision and mission is their trust in God and God’s promised future of salvation. Because of this trust, also known as faith, they know where they are going and they know how to get there.

The leaders’ personal vision and mission are intertwined with the vision and mission of the community. With the guidance of grace, they are able to articulate the mission and vision for the community and then focus all their energies upon the realization of that mission and vision.

Jesus embodied these four elements of biblical leadership. While there may be additional characteristics of faithful leadership, we will limit our study to these four. Let us look at passages that attest to these leadership traits in the life of Jesus.

Jesus exhibited the four essential elements of biblical leadership. He was a man of humble origins. The son of a Jewish carpenter from Nazareth, Jesus was a man who made his living with his hands. His spirit was open to God’s Spirit. Of course, given the church’s belief that Jesus was God incarnate — fully divine and fully human — Jesus is a unique case. Yet the Scriptures tell us that he struggled to discern his call

¹Birch, Bruce C. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 269.

²Ibid, 152.

³Ibid, 127.



(Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). The accounts of his baptism by John (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22) and of his spending forty days and nights of fasting and prayer in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13) are evidence of Jesus' struggle with his identity and mission. Because of Jesus' willingness to engage God in this struggle, God was able to help him discover who and whose he was. **Jesus lived his life in intimate relationship with God.**

Jesus was an egalitarian leader. He cared for all people, rich and poor (Matthew 14:13-21). And his special concern was directed toward those who were the least, the last, and the lost (Luke 4:18-19). He was a prophet who strove for the kingdom of God. His teaching and preaching painted a picture of the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:1-12). Jesus gave himself for the salvation of the world.

Jesus shared himself and his power with others. The first thing he did as he began his public ministry was to gather a community of disciples around him. He realized that his mission was too big and too important for him to attempt to complete it alone. He knew he couldn't do it all by himself. Jesus called the disciples and equipped them to carry on his ministry after he was gone. Jesus trusted that God would continue the work of bringing the good news of the kingdom to the world through the life and witness of the community formed around him.

Jesus had a clearly defined vision and mission that was the focus of his life. His vision was the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 4:16-18) and his mission was bearing witness to that good news to the world (Matthew 28:19-20). Everything Jesus did was focused upon the fulfillment of his vision and mission.

Jesus' life provides examples of the leadership paradigm presented by the Bible. Examining his life, vision, and mission will give us some clues to the paradigm of faithful leadership the church needs to foster as it seeks faithful, effective pastoral leaders for the future.

Theological Foundation

The theological foundation for this study will be the Wesleyan way of salvation by grace through faith. Grace calls people into relationship with Christ, and that relationship is lived out through the community of the church. Christ calls people into community through baptism. God also calls and equips leaders who are responsible for teaching and mentoring those who are new to the faith and for keeping the community focused on its vision and mission. This leadership emerges from the community as women, men, and youth answer God's call and claim upon their lives.

The theological focus of this study will be the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification. This doctrine is useful for understanding the nature of Christian leadership because its dynamic is that of a process of growth and maturation. Harald Lindström says, "The idea of a gradual advance in sanctification is thus a typical feature of Wesley's view of salvation."¹ Randy Maddox adds, "Wesley's 'holy tempers' (habitual dispositions) would not be simply infused by God's sanctifying grace in instantaneous completeness; they would be developing realities, strengthened and shaped by our responsible participation in the empowering grace of God. The dimension of a gradual 'growth in grace' would be integral to sanctification."² Wesley believed that the nature of sanctifying grace was such that God empowered human beings to cooperate with God and participate in

¹Lindström, Harald. *Wesley & Sanctification* (Nappanee, Indiana: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 120.

²Maddox, Randy L. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 179.



their own salvation. Hence, sanctification is a process that happens over time as persons grow in grace and love for God and their neighbor. This growth in grace is not unlike the stages of human development.¹ Those who have made progress become leaders, by the nature of their growth, for those who are “younger” in faith.

Sanctification begins at the moment of justification and new birth. Just like a newborn infant, the “born again” Christian begins growing in a new life in Christ. Growth comes through watching and learning from others with more years of experience in discipleship, and via Bible study and learning with those who have spent much time with the Scriptures. As these “newborn” Christians learn about and practice the means of grace, they grow and mature. Some of them even answer the call to leadership.

Sanctification brings about a real change in the character and life of human beings and their relationship with God. It is a process of drawing closer and closer to God. It is the way by which the image of God within the human heart is restored and healed. “The second dimension (after the New Birth) of sanctification evident in Wesley’s mature descriptions is precisely our gradual spiritual recovery of the likeness of God following the New Birth ... Wesley recognized that this gradual transformation was the primary referent of biblical uses of ‘sanctification.’ Among his own common terms for this process were ‘growth in grace’ and ‘going on from grace to grace.’”² By grace the person is formed into the image of Christ. In this sense, sanctification may be referred to as Christian formation.

For this process to take place and have efficacy in people’s lives, they must be active participants. Full or final sanctification (Christian perfection) comes only through human cooperation with God and God’s grace. God has provided the means for human cooperation with God’s work of sanctification. These are the “means of grace.” They are the spiritual disciplines that make the human heart, mind, and body available to God’s grace. “The means of grace are regarded as the usual channels by which God accords to persons His prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. Wesley is insistent that the means of grace should be used, but at the same time he is careful to warn against their misuse. They are means and must not be turned into ends ... The function of the means of grace is to ‘advance inward holiness,’ to ‘conduce to the knowledge and love of God.’”³ They are the good works that enable divine grace to flow through human lives into the world. Wesley has this to say about the necessity of good works and sanctification:

It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And these 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.⁴

¹Maddox, Randy L. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 177-178.

²Ibid, 177.

³Lindström, Harald. *Wesley & Sanctification* (Nappanee, Indiana: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 122.

⁴John Wesley, sermon on “The Scripture Way of Salvation” III:5 (in Albert C. Outler, ed., *Sermons* [Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987; 4 vols] 2:164).



It stands to reason that those persons who diligently incorporate the means of grace into their daily lives are candidates for leadership within the church. They are the ones whom others can look to as they struggle with their own faith and daily witness.

This process of Christian formation is grounded in this Wesleyan understanding of sanctification. It will operate out of the belief that the people best suited for leadership roles in the church are those who display an active faith and practice the means of grace in their daily lives, and that the foundation for leadership training and empowerment needs to be centered in Christ as opposed to being centered in serving the program of the church. Leaders are those who are “working out their salvation” (Philippians 2:12-13). They are the members of the congregation who are actively participating in and cooperating with God’s grace which is working toward their salvation and the salvation of the world.



Introductory Session

(75 minutes)

Goal: To introduce ideas and concepts central to Wesleyan spirituality and Accountable Discipleship. The focus of this lesson is the Household of God and helping participants understand God as “home maker.”

Materials:

- Copies of *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH)
- Bibles
- Copies of “A Prayer From John Wesley” (p. 8) and “The Household of God” (p. 9) (one per person)
- Copies of *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household* and Journal (one per person)

I. Devotion (10 minutes)

Read Ephesians 2:11-22 to the group.

All sing (or read), “All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord” (UMH 554).

Pray this prayer from John Wesley:

You are never weary, O Lord, of doing good in, with, and for us. Let us never be weary of serving you. But, as you have pleasure in the well-being of your servants, so let us take pleasure in the service of our Lord, and abound in your work, and in your love and praise evermore. O fill up all that is lacking, reform whatever is broken in us, and perfect your holiness in us. Let the witness of your pardoning love ever abide in all our hearts. O speak into every one of our souls the peace that passes all understanding; and let us always look upon you as our Father reconciled to us in Jesus Christ. Amen. (Works, 11:255)

II. Group Building (20 minutes)

1. Instruct participants to find a partner, preferably someone they do not know well. They are to learn their partner’s name, their favorite hobby or interest, and where and when they were baptized. Have everyone ask their partner,
 - Can you name a spiritual leader who has been an influence on your life and faith?
 - Why did this person have an influence on you?
2. Have participants introduce their partners to the group.



III. Bible Study on “The Household of God” (25 minutes)

1. Have everyone read the handout “The Household of God” (p. 9). This page is intended to provide context for understanding discipleship as life in God’s household. The purpose of this section is to help the participants explore who God is, who they are in relation to God and neighbor, and what it means to live responsibly in the household of God.
2. Divide the group into small groups of 3 or 4.
3. Assign the following scripture lessons to the groups. Divide the lessons among the groups as evenly as possible.
 - Romans 8:12-17
 - Ephesians 2:19-22
 - 1 Corinthians 12:12-26
 - Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45
 - Luke 8:19-21; 14:15-35
 - Matthew 22:36-40
 - John 15:1-17
 - John 13:1-17, 31-35

Ask each group work together to answer these questions:

- What does the passage say about God and God’s household?
- What does the passage say about human beings?
- What does the passage say about the relationship between God and human beings?

IV. Distribute Books and Journals (10 minutes)

Distribute copies of *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household* and journals, explain how to use them, and answer any questions.

V. Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Lead the group in prayer concerns and closing prayer.



A Prayer From John Wesley

You are never weary, O Lord,
of doing good in, with, and for us.
Let us never be weary of serving you.
But, as you have pleasure in the well-being of your servants,
so let us take pleasure in the service of our Lord,
and abound in your work,
and in your love and praise evermore.

O fill up all that is lacking,
reform whatever is broken in us,
and perfect your holiness in us.
Let the witness of your pardoning love
ever abide in all our hearts.

O speak into every one of our souls
the peace that passes all understanding;
and let us always look upon you as our Father
reconciled to us in Jesus Christ.

Amen.





The Household of God

The language of God's relationship with God's people in the Bible is the language of household. God is called "Father" (Psalm 68:5; 89:26; 103:13; Isaiah 9:6; 63:16; 64:8; Jeremiah 3:19; 31:9; Malachi 1:6; Matthew 6:9; 28:19; Luke 11:2; 23:34; John 5:17; 14:2; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; Revelation 3:5) and, on occasion, "Mother" (Isaiah 66:13). The people of Israel are God's "children" (Numbers 26:15; Deuteronomy 14:1; Isaiah 29:23; 45:11; Jeremiah 3:14; Hosea 1:10; John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 1:5; 5:1-2; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2), members of God's household. This is the language of familial relationship. It is the language of intimate, self-giving love. God is the loving parent who is head of the household. God is the One who provides for God's children. God gives of God's self to ensure that everyone is known by name, is loved and accepted, has a place at the family table, and shares in its bounty. God's love is covenant love, which is the love that creates "home."

God's household is the center of compassion and justice for God's children. There are several dimensions to God's household. In its broadest sense, it encompasses the whole of creation. It is the world which God so loved that God gave God's own Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (John 3:16). (It is important to understand "eternal life" as life with the Eternal One, which is life with God.) Like God, the earth brings forth and sustains life. God's children depend upon the earth for water, air, and food. As members of God's family, they are given the responsibility to care for and respect the earth so that it will provide for future generations.

God's household is also the whole of human community. All people are created by God and bear God's image within them (Genesis 1:27). God is like a loving parent for all of humankind. As members of God's household, each human being is entitled to life, liberty, and love. In like manner, God's relationship with each person is characterized by compassion and justice, the defining spirit of covenant love.

Finally, God's household is the church. The church is the community given birth by Jesus Christ. It is a covenant community that exists for the world. The household of the church is God's representative to the broader human community. It is the "family" called by God to be salt and light for the world (Matthew 5:13-16). In other words, the church is to be a sign community that points the way to God through its life, witness, and mission. That is why one of the apostle Paul's favorite names for the church is "the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 12:27; Ephesians 4:12). The church is the community through and in which the spirit of Christ carries on Christ's work of bringing good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19).

The church is God's covenant community. It is the household that exists to reflect the light of Christ for all the world to see. It is a household with open doors through which all are invited and welcome without regard to race, gender, class, or creed. The church is the household of the living God that exists for the world.



Session 2

Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household

(90 minutes)

Goal: To help participants process the material they have read in Chapter 1 and wrestle with the meaning of Accountable Discipleship for their life and their church.

Materials:

- Copies of *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH)
- Bibles
- Copies of Wesley handouts (pp. 13-14) (one of each per person)

I. Devotion (10 minutes)

Read the excerpt from *The Character of a Methodist* by John Wesley (p. 14).

Read Micah 6:8.

All sing stanza 1 of "Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine" (UMH 606)
(to the tune of "Amazing Grace").

Lead the prayer (from *The Works of John Wesley*):

O Savior of the world, God of Gods, light of light,
you are the brightness of your Father's glory,
the true image of his character.
You that has destroyed the power of the devil,
that has overcome death,
"that sits at the right hand of the Father";
you will speedily come down in your Father's glory
to judge all people according to their works:
Be my light and my peace.
Destroy the power of the devil in me,
and make me a new creature.
O Christ who cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene,
cast out of my heart all corrupt affections.
O Christ who raised Lazarus from the dead,
raise me from the death of sin.
Christ Jesus who cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind,
heal the diseases of my soul;
open my eyes, and set them on the prize of my high calling,
and cleanse my heart from every desire but that of advancing your glory.
Amen.



II. Bible Study: Luke 15:11-32 (30 minutes)

Goal: To use the parable of the prodigal son (or parable of the Father's love) to help participants experience and understand the nature of life in God's household. Discipleship is the life we live in response to grace. It is how Christians take responsibility for their place in the household of God.

1. Divide the class into groups of three.
2. Invite a volunteer to read Luke 15:11-24 aloud.
3. (10 min.) Instruct the small groups to put themselves in the role of the younger son and invite them to consider the following:
 - Describe your relationship with the father in the parable.
 - Why did you ask for your portion of the inheritance?
 - What does your request reveal about yourself and your relationship with your father?
 - What made you think you could go home?
 - What does your reception at your father's home reveal about your father?
4. Read Luke 15:25-32 aloud.
5. (10 minutes) Instruct the small groups to put themselves in the role of the older son and invite them to consider the following:
 - Describe your relationship with the father in the parable.
 - How did you feel when you discovered your father was throwing a party for your prodigal brother?
 - Why did you feel this way?
 - What does this say about how you feel about yourself?
 - What does this say about your relationship with your father? with your younger brother?
6. (10 minutes) Bring the whole group together to discuss these questions:
 - What does this parable tell us about God?
 - What does this parable tell us about ourselves?
 - What does this parable tell us about our relationship with God?
 - What are the implications for living in God's household?

III. Baptism and Discipleship (20 minutes)

Goal: To help participants see the connection between baptism and discipleship. Baptism is Christ's action in the church for us. In baptism we are accepted and claimed as God's own daughters and sons. Discipleship is the life lived in response to this grace. It is how Christians remember who and whose they are.



You may want to have a pitcher full of water and a bowl to use for this section. At the beginning of this section, pour the water from the pitcher into the bowl, then ask the following questions.

Look at the Baptismal Covenant I on pages 33-39 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

- What are the promises made by God?
- What are the promises we make?
- How is it possible to live the promises? How does the church help people live their baptismal covenant?

IV. A Structure for Living Our Baptism — Living as God’s Children (25 minutes)

Goal: To help participants understand the General Rules and the General Rule of Discipleship as a *rule of life*. They provide a structure for Christian discipleship. They are liberating and a means of opening people to the movement and power of grace at work in the world and in, with, and for them.

Divide the group into small groups of four. Invite them to discuss the following:

1. Have the group read the General Rules on pages 24-25 in *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household*.

- How do these General Rules help to shape life in the household of God?

2. Look at the General Rule of Discipleship on pages 25-29 in *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household*. Explain that these are “general” rules because they are intended as guides for living one’s life in God’s household. They set the boundaries for life together with God and others. They are not proscriptive or prescriptive. Rather, they are directive. They are like a sign that points us toward our destination.

- What kind of *household* do they represent?”
- What are the characteristics of these Rules?
- What is the purpose of these Rules?

Bring the small groups together to discuss this question:

- How can the General Rules and the General Rule of Discipleship help churches help Christians live out their baptismal covenant?”

V. Conclusion (5 minutes)

1. Look at Week 2 in the journal and Chapter 2 in *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household*.

2. Lead the group in prayer concerns and closing prayer.

3. Sing stanza 3 of “Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine” (UMH 606).



A Prayer From John Wesley

○ Savior of the world, God of Gods, light of light,
you are the brightness of your Father's glory,
the true image of his character.
You that has destroyed the power of the devil,
that has overcome death,
“that sits at the right hand of the Father”;
you will speedily come down in your Father's glory
to judge all people according to their works:
Be my light and my peace.
Destroy the power of the devil in me,
and make me a new creature.
○ Christ who cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene,
cast out of my heart all corrupt affections.
○ Christ who raised Lazarus from the dead,
raise me from the death of sin.
Christ Jesus who cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind,
heal the diseases of my soul;
open my eyes, and set them on the prize of my high calling,
and cleanse my heart from every desire but that of advancing your glory.
Amen.





From *The Character of a Methodist* by John Wesley

A Methodist is one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul, which is continually crying, “Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides you.” My God and my all! “You are the strength of my heart, and my destiny for ever.” He is therefore happy in God. Indeed, he is always happy, as if he had in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life, and overflowing his soul with peace and joy. Perfect love having now cast out fear, he always rejoices. Yes, his joy is full and all his bones cry out, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has given me new life into a living hope of an inheritance trustworthy and pure, reserved in heaven for me.”

And loving God, she “loves her neighbor as herself”; she loves every person as her own soul. She loves her enemies, and even the enemies of God. And if it is not in her power to “do good to those who hate” her, yet she does not cease to “pray for them,” though they spurn her love, and still abuse her, and persecute her.

For he is “pure in heart.” Love has purified his heart from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind habit. It has cleansed him from pride, from which “comes only contention”; and he hath now “put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience.” And indeed all possible ground for discord, on his part, is removed. For no one can take from him what he desires, seeing he “does not love the world, nor any of the things of the world”; but “all his desire is for God, and the remembrance of his name.”

Her one intention at all times and in all places is, not to please herself, but Him whom her soul loves ... For, because she loves God she “keeps his commandments”; not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest.



Session 3

(90 minutes)

Goal: This session will help participants understand that Scripture is central to Wesleyan theology and practice. The quote from Wesley himself reveals the importance of Scripture as divine revelation. Everything we believe, say, and do must be grounded and supported by Scripture.

Materials:

- Copies of *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH)
- Bibles
- Copies of “From Wesley’s Preface to the Collection of Sermons” (p. 19) and “A Prayer From John Wesley” (p. 18) (one per person)
- Large sheets of paper and markers

I. Devotion (5 minutes)

Read Psalm 119:33-48 (UMH 842) responsively.

Explain that Wesley was a man of the 18th century and his writing style and usage is a reflection of his times. Terms such as “men” and “man” were assumed to include all people, male and female. You may choose to edit Wesley to make the language inclusive.

Read the passage from Wesley’s Preface to the Collection of Sermons (p. 19) aloud.

Sing stanza 1 of “Come, Divine Interpreter” (UMH 594) (sung to TOPLADY, “Rock of Ages”).

Pray (in unison) the prayer from John Wesley:

We offer up again our souls and bodies to you to be governed, not by our will, but yours. O let it be ever the ease and joy of our hearts, to be under the conduct of your unerring wisdom, to follow your counsels, and to be ruled in all things by your holy will. And let us never distrust your abundant kindness and tender care over us; whatsoever it is you would have us to do or to suffer in this world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

II. Questions and Comments From Last Week’s class and/or This Week’s Reading (5 minutes)

III. What is a *covenant*? (35 minutes)

1. Explain that the Bible is a book of covenant. A covenant is a binding agreement made between two or more persons or parties. It is like a shackle or fetter or handcuff. Covenants are different from contracts in that they involve parties of dissimilar standing or power. A party of greater power enters into a covenant with one of lesser power. A covenant is generally initiated by the party of greater power.



2. Divide the group into small groups of four. Assign each group one of the following passages of Scripture and ask them to read the passage and discuss the questions below. (If yours is a small group, you may choose to give each group more than one scripture.)

Genesis 8:8-17

Genesis 15:1-21

Deuteronomy 5:1-21

2 Samuel 7:1-17

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Matthew 26:26-29

John 15:1-17

- Describe the covenant.
- Who were the participants?
- Who initiated the covenant? Why?
- What was God's responsibility in the covenant?
- What was the human responsibility in the covenant?
- What meaning does the covenant have for us today?

3. Ask everyone to come together and look at Matthew 28:16-20. Discuss the same questions as above.

4. Review the characteristics of covenant in Scripture.

IV. Wesley was a “man of one book.” (15 minutes)

1. Read or paraphrase the following passage for the group:

Wesley consistently identified the Bible as the most basic authority for determining Christian belief and practice. Indeed, at times he declared it the *sole* or only authority. These declarations must be balanced by his equally emphatic statement that anyone who says that they need no book but the Bible is a rank enthusiast. In reality, Wesley interpreted the Protestant *sola Scriptura* (in good Anglican fashion) to mean that Scripture is the *primary*, rather than exclusive, Christian authority.

Wesley identified Scripture as the most basic authority for Christian faith and life; he approached Scripture in terms of the best scholarly principles of his day; he focused on the major soteriological themes of Scripture and sought to interpret all passages in their light; and he was explicitly aware that Scripture did not definitively address every possible issue. While several of his specific appeals to Scripture may have been called into question by more recent scholarship, his general approach seems congenial to postmodern trends (such as canonical exegesis).¹

¹ Maddox, Randy, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 39.



2. Invite the group to respond to the statements below. Do they agree or disagree? Why? Why not?

- Scripture is foundational for Christian faith and life.
- In Scripture we find God's story. The Holy Spirit helps us find our story within God's story.
- God's story, as it is revealed in Scripture, is characterized by covenant love — *agape*.

V. Given this understanding of Scripture, how are disciples to live? (20 minutes)

1. Look at Psalm 119:33-40 and Matthew 22:34-40.
2. Divide the class into two groups. Assign one of the passages to each group.
3. Instruct the groups to read their passage and use the large sheets of paper and markers to make a list of characteristics of the life described in the scripture passage.
4. Ask each group to present and describe their list of characteristics to the class.
5. Discuss the combined list with the following questions:
 - How do these characteristics reflect household life?
 - How balanced are these characteristics between “being” and “doing”?
 - Do they represent a life of wholeness? How or how not?
 - What do they tell us about God?
 - What do they tell us about the life God wants for us?
6. Say: “The Bible teaches a life, a discipleship, that is balanced and whole. It is a life characterized by *shalom*. It is balanced between being and doing. It shows us who and whose we are. And it shows us how to live in the world — we are to be reflections of God's love, forgiveness, compassion, peace, and justice.”

VI. Conclusion (10 minutes)

1. Look at Week 3.
2. Lead the group in prayer concerns and closing prayer.
3. Sing stanza 2 of “Come, Divine Interpreter” (UMH 594).



A Prayer From John Wesley

We offer up again our souls and bodies to you
to be governed, not by our will, but yours.
O let it be ever the ease and joy of our hearts,
to be under the conduct of your unerring wisdom,
to follow your counsels, and
to be ruled in all things by your holy will.
And let us never distrust your abundant kindness
and tender care over us;
whatsoever it is you would have us to do
or to suffer in this world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.





From Wesley's Preface to the Collection of Sermons

To candid, reasonable people I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God. Just hovering over the great gulf until, in a few moments, I am seen no more; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing: the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way. For this very reason he came from heaven. He has written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* [man of one book]. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of people. I sit down alone. Only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book, for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights. Lord, is it not your word, "If anyone lacks wisdom, let them ask of God"? You "give generously, and do not criticize." You have said, "If any be willing to do your will, they shall know." I am willing to do, let me know, your will. I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." I meditate on them with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.

John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, Vol. 5:3-4.



Session 4 (90 minutes)

Goal: To help participants process and integrate the material contained in Chapter 3 of *Accountable Discipleship: Living in God's Household*. This session will encourage them to see themselves as theologians and provide a Wesleyan framework for doing theology in the local church. Participants should become familiar with the Wesleyan understanding of grace and the way of salvation.

Materials:

- Copies of *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH)
- Bibles
- Copies of “Doing Theology” (p. 24) and “A Prayer From John Wesley” (p. 23) (one per person)
- Large sheets of paper and markers

I. Devotion (5 minutes)

Read Psalm 98 (UMH 818) responsively.

Sing or read together “Let Us Plead for Faith Alone” (UMH 385).

Lead the prayer by John Wesley:

Seeing there is in Christ Jesus an infinite fullness
of all that we can want or wish,
O that we may all receive of his fullness,
grace upon grace;
grace to pardon our sins, and subdue our iniquities;
to justify our persons and to sanctify our souls;
and to complete that holy change,
that renewal of our hearts,
whereby we may be transformed
into that blessed image wherein you created us.
O make us all worthy to be partakers
of the inheritance of your saints in light;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

II. Questions From the Reading and/or Session 3 (5 minutes)



III. Theology (30 minutes)

Theology in the Wesleyan spirit is practical. It emerges from Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Look at pages 53-54 of *Accountable Discipleship*. Talk about how every person of faith is a theologian. Anyone who believes, thinks, talks, and/or writes about God is doing theology. Theology belongs to the whole people of God. It is how we seek understanding, ask questions, and grow in faith and holiness of heart and life.

Invite different members of the group to read the scriptures listed below. Invite the group to listen for who God is, who human beings are, and how God relates to humans through *doxology*, *kerygma*, *didache*, and experience.

Doxology is a Greek word meaning “praise.” It is the beginning of theology. In doxology we acknowledge that God is other than ourselves; that God is greater than ourselves; that God is good and holy and just. Genuine doxology opens the heart and the mind to the presence and power of God and God’s Spirit.

Kerygma is a Greek word meaning “proclamation.” While doxology is directed toward God, kerygma is directed toward other human beings. It is telling others about the God we praise. We proclaim the good news of God revealed to the world in Jesus Christ. In kerygma we share the good news we have received with our neighbors and with all the world. We share this good news through word and deed; through worship and compassion and justice.

Didache is another Greek word. It means “teaching.” Once people have experienced God in doxology and heard and received the good news of God by kerygma they need to be taught who God is and who they are in relation to God and their neighbors. Didache is how the practices and doctrines of Christian faith are transmitted from generation to generation.

Finally, we do theology through personal experience of God in our everyday lives in the world. Doxology, kerygma, and didache equip us to discern the movement of God at work in the world. They awaken us to the presence and power of Christ in the ordinary people and events we encounter every day.

Divide the group into small groups of four. Assign one of the following Scripture lessons to each group. Invite group members to read the lesson twice. First read it silently, then read it again aloud. Then the small groups are to briefly share how God is revealed in the means of doing theology represented in the Scripture they have been given, as well as to share how they have experienced God in this way of doing theology.

1. Read Psalm 98 — Theology Is *Doxology* (Praise)
2. Read Romans 1:16-17 — Theology Is *Kerygma* (Proclamation)
3. Read Romans 3:21-31 — Theology Is *Didache* (Teaching)
4. Read Romans 7:14-25 — Theology Is Human Experience

When the small groups are ready, bring them back together and ask a representative from each group to give a brief account to the class of what their group discovered.



IV. Break (10 minutes)

V. A Theological Method (30 minutes)

People of faith have, over the centuries, developed theological methods that help them discern how God is working in the world and in their lives. These methods also help people as individuals and as faith communities to draw closer and closer to God. The more you come to know and understand a person, the more able you are to love that person.

A theological method has been employed by the people called Methodist for many generations. The method found in the writings, preaching, and life of John and Charles Wesley has four essential elements: Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason (described in *Accountable Discipleship* on pages 55-58). Scripture is primary. All tradition, experience, and reason must be evaluated in the light of Scripture.

1. Discuss the importance of the Bible and Bible study in the life of the church and individual Christians. Why is Scripture the foundation for Christian theology? Can human beings know anything about God apart from the Bible?
2. Which traditions of your church help to reveal God to the world? Which traditions have become barriers to knowing and revealing God?
3. How has reason helped you know and love God? How can reason sometimes be an obstacle between human beings and God?
4. Give some examples of experiences in your life through which God has been revealed. How do we know an experience is trustworthy or genuinely of God?
5. How does the church filter tradition, experience, and reason through Scripture?
6. How do you discern what is truly of God and what is not?

VI. Closing

1. We will continue our study of Chapter 3 in the next session. Recommend that the class reread Chapter 3, particularly pages 62-77.
2. Distribute copies of “And Can It Be that I Should Gain” (p. 28) and encourage the class to read and reflect on its verses throughout the week.
3. Encourage the class to read the appendix to *Accountable Discipleship*.
4. Lead the group in prayer concerns with closing prayer and dismissal.



A Prayer From John Wesley

Seeing there is in Christ Jesus an infinite fullness
of all that we can want or wish,
O that we may all receive of his fullness,
grace upon grace;
grace to pardon our sins, and subdue our iniquities;
to justify our persons and to sanctify our souls;
and to complete that holy change, that renewal of
our hearts,
whereby we may be transformed into that blessed image
wherein you created us.
O make us all worthy to be partakers of the inheritance
of your saints in light;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.





Doing Theology

Theology in the Wesleyan spirit is practical. It emerges from Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Look at pages 53-54 of *Accountable Discipleship*. Every person of faith is a theologian. Anyone who believes, thinks, talks, and/or writes about God is doing theology. Theology belongs to the whole people of God. It is how we seek understanding, ask questions, and grow in faith and holiness of heart and life.

We listen for who God is, who human beings are, and how God relates to humans through *doxology*, *kerygma*, *didache*, and experience.

Doxology is a Greek word meaning “praise.” It is the beginning of theology. In doxology we acknowledge that God is other than ourselves; that God is greater than ourselves; that God is good and holy and just. Genuine doxology opens the heart and the mind to the presence and power of God and God’s Spirit.

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Didache is another Greek word. It means “teaching.” Once people have experienced God in doxology and heard and received the good news of God by kerygma they need to be taught who God is and who they are in relation to God and their neighbors. Didache is how the practices and doctrines of Christian faith are transmitted from generation to generation.

Finally, we do theology through personal experience of God in our everyday lives in the world. Doxology, kerygma, and didache equip us to discern the movement of God at work in the world. They awaken us to the presence and power of Christ in the ordinary people and events we encounter every day.



Session 5

(90 minutes)

Continuation of Session 4

Materials:

- Copies of *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH)
- Bibles
- Copies of “And Can It Be that I Should Gain” (p. 28) and “A Prayer From John Wesley” (p. 27) (one per person)
- Large sheets of paper and markers
- paints, crayons, pencils, pens, old magazines, scissors

I. Devotion (10 minutes)

Read Ephesians 2:1-10 aloud.

Sing or read together “And Can It Be that I Should Gain” (UMH 363).

Prayer:

I know, O Lord, that you have commanded me, and therefore it is my duty, to love you with all my heart, and with all my strength. I know you are infinitely holy and overflowing in all perfection; and therefore it is my duty so to love you.

I know you have created me, and that I have neither being nor blessing but what is the effect of thy power and goodness.

I know you are the end for which I was created, and that I can expect no happiness but in you.

I know that in love for me, being lost in sin, you sent your only Son, and that he, being the Lord of glory, humbled himself to the death upon the cross, that I might be raised to glory.

I know you have provided me with all necessary helps for carrying me through this life to that eternal glory, and this out of the excess of your pure mercy to me, unworthy of all mercies.

I know you promised to be my “exceeding great reward”; though it is you alone who thyself “worked in me, both to will and to do of your good pleasure.”

Upon these, and many other titles, I confess it is my duty to love you, my God, with all my heart. Give your strength to your servant, that your love may fill my heart, and be the motive of all the use I make of my understanding, my affections, my senses, my health, my time, and whatever other talents I have received from you. Let this, O God, rule my heart without a rival; let it dispose all my thoughts, words, and works; and thus only can I fulfil my duty and your command, of loving you “with all my heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.”



II. Theology in Hymns (30 minutes)

The early Methodists learned and shared their theology through learning and singing the hymns of Charles Wesley. He expressed through poetry what his brother John taught through preaching, teaching, and organizing.

1. Have the class divide into groups of three. Assign a stanza of “And Can It Be that I Should Gain” to each group.
2. Ask each group to apply their reading of Chapter 3 and the Appendix of *Accountable Discipleship* to the stanza, then to consider the following questions:
 - How does the stanza describe God and God’s grace?
 - Does it convey prevenient grace, justifying grace, sanctifying grace? How?
3. After discussing their stanza, ask each group to rewrite it in their own words.

III. A Wesleyan Theology Begins and Ends With Universal Grace (30 minutes)

What is grace? Briefly define grace and summarize the Wesleyan “way of salvation” (pages 62-77 in *Accountable Discipleship*). There is one grace with varying expressions and functions depending upon where a person is in relation to Christ. Grace is universal. God does not impose grace upon anyone. It is offered to all as a gift and as a way of life in this world and in the world to come.

1. Divide the class into three groups.
2. Assign each group one of the three expressions of grace: Prevenient, Justifying, and Sanctifying. Ask them to complete the following task:
 - Using notes from the reading and the Bible, give a one- or two-sentence summary of the assigned grace. Draw a picture, write a song, make a collage, or create a skit that represents your understanding.
3. Let each group present their project to the whole class.

IV. Small Group Presentations (15 minutes)

V. Summarize (10 minutes)

What does the theology present in the Wesleyan way of salvation mean for our discipleship?

VI. Look at Chapter 4 (5 minutes)

1. Lead the group in prayer concerns.
2. End with a closing prayer offered by a class member.



A Prayer From John Wesley

I know, O Lord, that you have commanded me,
and therefore it is my duty,
to love you with all my heart, and with all my strength.
I know you are infinitely holy and overflowing in all perfection;
and therefore it is my duty so to love you.
I know you have created me,
and that I have neither being nor blessing
but what is the effect of thy power and goodness.
I know you are the end for which I was created,
and that I can expect no happiness but in you.
I know that in love for me, being lost in sin,
you sent your only Son, and that he, being the Lord of glory,
humbled himself to the death upon the cross,
that I might be raised to glory.
I know you have provided me with all necessary helps
for carrying me through this life to that eternal glory,
and this out of the excess of your pure mercy to me,
unworthy of all mercies.
I know you promised to be my “exceeding great reward”;
though it is you alone who thyself
“worked in me, both to will and to do of your good pleasure.”
Upon these, and many other titles,
I confess it is my duty to love you, my God, with all my heart.
Give your strength to your servant,
that your love may fill my heart,
and be the motive of all the use I make of my understanding,
my affections, my senses, my health, my time,
and whatever other talents I have received from you.
Let this, O God, rule my heart without a rival;
let it dispose all my thoughts, words, and works;
and thus only can I fulfil my duty and your command, of loving you
“with all my heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.”





And Can It Be that I Should Gain by Charles Wesley, 1739

1. And can it be, that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me? Who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
2. 'Tis myst'ry all: th'Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore!
Let angel minds inquire no more.
3. He left his Father's throne above
(so free, so infinite his grace!),
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
for, O my God, it found out me!
4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
fast bound in sin and nature's night.
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray;
I woke; the dungeon flamed with light.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
5. No condemnation now I dread,
Jesus, and all in him, is mine.
Alive in him, my living head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach th'eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

(The United Methodist Hymnal, 363)



Session 6

(90 minutes)
Chapter 4

Goal: This lesson will facilitate learning and discussion about Christian community and how John Wesley and the early Methodists sought to create it in 18th-century England and America. The goal is to help participants look at their own faith community and see how it is (or is not) a reflection of genuine Christian community.

Materials:

- Copies of *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH)
- Bibles
- Copies of “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (p. 33) and “A Prayer From John Wesley” (p. 32) (one per person)
- Large sheets of paper and markers

I. Devotion (5 minutes)

Read responsively Psalm 105 (UMH 828).

Sing stanzas 1 and 2 of “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (UMH 384).

Prayer From John Wesley:

O merciful Father,
do not consider what we have done against you;
but what our blessed Savior has done for us.
Don't consider what we have made of ourselves,
but what He is making of us for you our God.
O that Christ may be “wisdom and righteousness,
sanctification and redemption”
to every one of our souls.
That his precious blood may cleanse us from all our sins,
and that your Holy Spirit may renew and sanctify our souls.
May He crucify our flesh with its passions and lusts,
and cleanse all our brothers and sisters in Christ across the earth.
O let not “sin reign in our mortal bodies,
that we should obey it in its lusts.”
But, “being made free from sin,
let us be the servants of righteousness.”
Let us commend our hearts to you,
and let all our ways be pleasing in your sight.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.



II. Questions From the Reading and/or Session 5 (5 minutes)

III. Christian Community (*koinonia*) (35 minutes)

Bible study: Matthew 5:1-12

Koinonia is a Greek word that means “community” — but not just any community. *Koinonia* describes a community that is characterized by love. The members of such a community care for one another. Everyone is accepted and valued and cherished. Everyone is included and no one is left out or left behind. Strangers are welcomed with open arms and with self-giving hospitality. It is no wonder, then, that *koinonia* is often used in the Bible to describe the community of the early church. It is synonymous with Christian community.

In the Beatitudes Jesus provides us with a glimpse of life in the reign of God. The church, as a sign community pointing the way to this reign, is to reflect it through its life and mission. You could say that in the Beatitudes Jesus is describing God’s vision for human community. If this is God’s vision, then should it not also be the church’s vision for itself? Let’s say that the Beatitudes are Jesus’ description of what Christian community needs to strive toward. How are we doing?

1. Divide into three groups.
2. Have each group read the text aloud, then answer the following:
 - List the characteristics of Christian community contained in the passage.
How does the church reflect the world described here?
 - List characteristics or images of leadership contained in the passage.
How does leadership in the church today measure up to these characteristics?

IV. John Wesley and the People Called Methodist (25 minutes)

Group discussion

- Based on the reading of Chapter 4 in *Accountable Discipleship*, how did the early Methodist societies and class meetings reflect the ideal of Christian community contained in Matthew 5:1-12?
- How would you characterize the early Methodist leadership?

V. Summarize (15 minutes)

Ask and discuss:

- What does this mean for our discipleship?
- How well does our congregation reflect the Christian community we have read about and discussed here tonight (today)?



VI. Sending Forth (5 minutes)

Look at Chapter 5 of *Accountable Discipleship*.

Lead the group in prayer concerns.

Ask a class member to offer the closing prayer.

Sing stanzas 3 and 4 of “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (UMH 384).



A Prayer From John Wesley

O merciful Father,
do not consider what we have done against you;
but what our blessed Savior has done for us.
Don't consider what we have made of ourselves,
but what He is making of us for you our God.
O that Christ may be "wisdom and righteousness,
sanctification and redemption"
to every one of our souls.
That his precious blood may cleanse us from all our sins,
and that your Holy Spirit may renew and sanctify our souls.
May He crucify our flesh with its passions and lusts,
and cleanse all our brothers and sisters in Christ across the earth.
O let not "sin reign in our mortal bodies,
that we should obey it in its lusts."
But, "being made free from sin,
let us be the servants of righteousness."
Let us commend our hearts to you,
and let all our ways be pleasing in your sight.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.





Love Divine, All Loves Excelling by Charles Wesley, 1747

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all they faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.
3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never,
nevermore they temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.
4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

(The United Methodist Hymnal, 384)