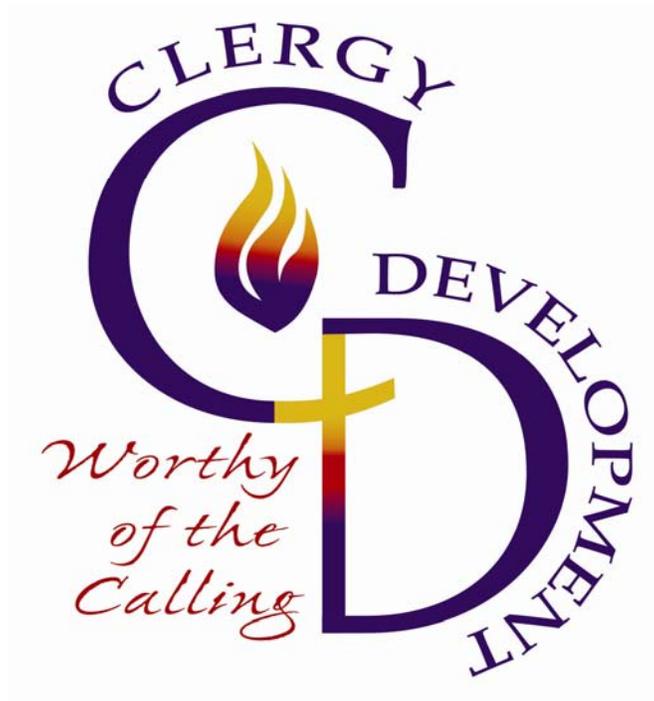

Student Guide

Becoming a Holy People



Clergy Development
Church of the Nazarene
Kansas City, Missouri
816-333-7000 ext. 2468; 800-306-7651 (USA)
2004

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The **Modular Course of Study** is an outcome-based curriculum designed to implement the educational paradigm defined by the Breckenridge Consultations. Clergy Development is responsible for maintaining and distributing the Modular Course of Study for the Church of the Nazarene.

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Series Foreword

A Vision for Christian Ministry: Clergy Education in the Church of the Nazarene

The chief purpose of all persons—indeed, all of the creation—is to worship, love, and serve God. God has made himself known in His deeds of creation and redemption. As the Redeemer, God has called into existence a people: the Church, who embody, celebrate, and declare His name and His ways. The life of God with His people and the world constitutes the Story of God. That story is recorded principally in the Old and New Testaments, and continues to be told by the resurrected Christ who lives and reigns as Head of His Church. The Church lives to declare the whole Story of God. This it does in many ways—in the lives of its members who are even now being transformed by Christ through preaching, the sacraments, in oral testimony, community life, and in mission. All members of the Body of Christ are called to exercise a ministry of witness and service. No one is excluded.

In God's own wisdom He calls some persons to fulfill the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and caring for God's people, in a form referred to as the ordained ministry. God is the initial actor in this call, not humans. In the Church of the Nazarene we believe God calls and persons respond. They do not elect the Christian ministry. All persons whom God calls to the ordained ministry should continue to be amazed that He would call them. They should continue to be humbled by God's call. The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene states, "we recognize and hold that the Head of the Church calls some men and women to the more official and public work of the ministry." It adds, "The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord's call" (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 400).

An ordained Christian minister has as his or her chief responsibility to declare in many ways the whole Story of God as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His or her charge is to "tend the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2-3, NRSV). The minister fulfills this charge under the supervision of Christ, the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Such ministry can be fulfilled only after a period of careful preparation. Indeed, given the ever-changing demands placed upon the minister, "preparation" never ceases.

A person who enters the Christian ministry becomes in a distinct sense a steward of the gospel of God (Titus 1:7). A steward is one who is entrusted to care for what belongs to another. A steward may be one who takes care of another person or who manages the property of someone else. All Christians are stewards of the grace of God. But in addition, in a peculiar sense a Christian minister is a steward of the "mystery of God," which is Christ, the Redeemer, the Messiah of God. In all faithfulness, the minister is called to "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6:19, NRSV). Like Paul, he or she must faithfully preach "the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph 3:8-10, NRSV).

In fulfilling this commission, there is plenty of room for diligence and alertness, but no room for laziness or privilege (Titus 1:5-9). Good stewards recognize that they are

stewards only, not the owners, and that they will give an account of their stewardship to the master. Faithfulness to one's charge and to the Lord who issued it is the steward's principal passion. When properly understood, the Christian ministry should never be thought of as a "job." It is ministry—uniquely Christian ministry. No higher responsibility or joy can be known than to become a steward of the Story of God in Christ's Church. The person who embraces God's call to the ordained ministry will stand in the company of the apostles, the Early Fathers of the Church, the Reformers of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers, and many persons around the world today who joyfully serve as stewards of the gospel of God.

Obviously, one who does not recognize, or who understands but rejects, just how complete and inclusive a minister's stewardship must be, should not start down the path that leads to ordination. In a peculiar sense, a Christian minister must in all respects model the gospel of God. He or she is to "shun" the love of money. Instead, the minister must "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness." He or she must "fight the good fight of the faith" and "take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called" (1 Tim 6:11-12, NRSV).

Hence, the Church of the Nazarene believes "the minister of Christ is to be in all things a pattern to the flock—in punctuality, discretion, diligence, earnestness; 'in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left' (2 Cor 6:6-7)" (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 401.1). The minister of Christ "must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching . . . able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." (Titus 1:7-9, NASB).

In order to be a good steward of God's Story one must, among other things, give oneself to careful and systematic study, both before and after ordination. This will occur not because he or she is forced to do so, but out of a love for God and His people, the world He is working to redeem, and out of an inescapable sense of responsibility. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the attitude one brings to preparation for the ministry reveals much about what he or she thinks of God, the gospel, and Christ's Church. The God who became incarnate in Jesus and who made a way of salvation for all gave His very best in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. In order to be a good steward, a Christian minister must respond in kind. Jesus told numerous parables about stewards who did not recognize the importance of what had been entrusted to them (Mt 21:33-44; 25:14-30; Mk 13:34-37; Lk 12:35-40; 19:11-27; 20:9-18).

Preparation for ministry in Christ's Church—one's education in all its dimensions—should be pursued in full light of the responsibility before God and His people that the ministry involves. This requires that one take advantage of the best educational resources at his or her disposal.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes how large is the responsibility associated with the ordained Christian ministry and accepts it fully. Part of the way we recognize our responsibility before God is seen in the requirements we make for ordination and the practice of ministry. We believe the call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. We believe God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, personal, and professional standards. We are not reluctant to expect those

standards to be observed from the time of one's call until his or her death. We believe Christian ministry should first be a form of worship. The practice of ministry is both an offering to God and a service to His Church. By the miracle of grace, the work of the ministry can become a means of grace for God's people (Rom 12: 1-3). One's education for ministry is also a form of worship.

The modules comprising the Course of Study that may lead a person to candidacy for ordination have been carefully designed to prepare one for the kind of ministry we have described. Their common purpose is to provide a holistic preparation for entrance into the ordained Christian ministry. They reflect the Church's wisdom, experience, and responsibility before God. The modules show how highly the Church of the Nazarene regards the gospel, the people of God, the world for which Christ gave His life, and Christian ministry. Completing the modules will normally take three or four years. But no one should feel pressured to meet this schedule.

The careful study for which the modules call should show that before God and His Church one accepts the stewardly responsibility associated with ordained ministry.

Acknowledgments

Every module is the accumulation of effort by many people. Someone writes the original manuscript, others offer suggestions to strengthen the content and make the material more easily understood, and finally an editor formats the module for publication. This module is no different. Many people have contributed to this module. Every effort has been made to represent accurately the original intent of the principal contributors.

Principal Contributor

The principal contributor for this module is Dr. Diane Leclerc. Dr. Leclerc is professor of Historical Theology and Homiletics at Northwest Nazarene University, where she has taught since 1998. She is an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene and has pastored two congregations, in Maine and in Idaho. She received the Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Eastern Nazarene College, the Master of Divinity degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary, and both her Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Drew University.

She has published articles in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* and has contributed to two books, including *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*. Her full-length book, *Singleness of Heart: Gender, Sin, and Holiness in Historical Perspective*, won the Wesleyan Theological Society Book of the Year Award in 2002. Leclerc is an active member of the Wesleyan Theological Society and the Wesleyan-Holiness Women Clergy Association. She resides in Nampa, ID, with her husband and son.

Responder

Each module was reviewed by at least one content specialist to ensure that the content did not represent a single, narrow view or opinion. The responder provided suggestions the principal contributor could integrate into this module.

John A. Knight, Ph.D. was the responder for this module. Dr. Knight is a general superintendent emeritus in the Church of the Nazarene. Prior to assuming the highest position in his denomination in 1985, he served with distinction as president of Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University) and Mount Vernon Nazarene College (now University), editor of the *Herald of Holiness (now Holiness Today)*, as well as pastor and professor. He has written several books and many articles for the church.

Contents

	Page
Series Foreword.....	3
Acknowledgments	6
Syllabus	8
Lesson 1: Preliminary Issues.....	20
Lesson 2: Theological Foundations	24
Lesson 3: Old Testament Foundations	30
Lesson 4: New Testament Foundations	43
Lesson 5: Tradition: Pre-Wesley Foundations.....	48
Lesson 6: Tradition: Wesley on Christian Perfection.....	52
Lesson 7: Tradition: The Holiness Movement	57
Lesson 8: A Reasonable Doctrine: The Substance of Entire Sanctification	63
Lesson 9: The Experience: The Structure of Entire Sanctification	68
Lesson 10: The Experience: The Means to the End	72
Lesson 11: The Experience: Holiness Ethics	76
Lesson 12: Holiness for the 21st Century.....	80
Endnotes	82

Syllabus

Becoming a Holy People

Educational Institution, Setting, or Educational Provider:

Location of the Course:

Course Dates:

Name of the Instructor:

Instructor's Address, Telephone, and E-mail Address:

Module Vision Statement:

The Church of the Nazarene identifies itself as a “holiness” denomination. This signifies two realities. First of all, our roots grow out of a tradition known as the “Holiness Movement” that arose in 19th-century America. We relate ourselves closely to other denominations born out of the same tradition. Holiness is an integral part of our historical identity. Yet, this “holiness” historical context also necessarily implies a “holiness” *theology* that undergirds subsequent historical events. The denominations and other associations of the movement all claimed—and claim—a particular understanding of a “doctrine of sanctification,” which can also be articulated as a “theology of holiness.” The very word “holiness” became an abbreviation for both of these realities—the “holiness movement” and “holiness doctrine.”

The roots of this holiness doctrine can be traced back to the Early Church writers, particularly in the East—those Patristics who wrote in Greek. Aspects of the doctrine can be found throughout the history of the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and Anglicanism. John Wesley, of course, was the one who articulated a fully developed doctrine of sanctification; his theological vision, as well as his historical placement, led to the formation of the Methodist denomination—established in America in 1784. And yet, when Wesley’s theology of “Christian Perfection” met the 19th-century cultural, religious, and historical context, theological changes necessarily arose.

In the last few decades a debate has arisen. This must be acknowledged at the very beginning of our explorations here. There have been scholars and preachers who have seen the 19th-century changes as *grand improvements* on Wesley, to be celebrated and held fast. On the extreme opposite side, there are scholars and preachers who see such changes as a theological *disaster*, and cry for a return to Wesley’s 18th-century articulation. There are other scholars and preachers who no doubt stand somewhere in the middle, often confused about the crucial issues, interpretations, and ultimate distinctives of the debate itself. Sides of the debate can be associated with names of scholars who represent them. The debate in some cases has been engaged fervently. Foremost, it is important here simply to recognize that the roots of the Church of the Nazarene grow from both sources, Wesleyan and Holiness. We are a Wesleyan-

Holiness denomination. It will be the attempt of this author to give both of these sources due attention. It is her opinion that besides taking what is best from both, there is another critical agenda for the denomination today: how best to articulate a theology of holiness for the 21st century. Both the cry “back to Wesley” and “back to the holiness revival” need to be redirected toward the future.

Another crucial facet of holiness theology in today’s context needs to be articulated before we begin. For various reasons—which will be presented and pondered in the lessons to follow—holiness theology, particularly the doctrine of entire sanctification, is losing emphasis in the churches of our denomination. There is either a generalized apathy, or such confusion about key definitional elements, that constructive, clear, healthy, realistic, and God-centered articulations of the doctrine are harder and harder to find. If this doctrine is our clear “distinctive” as a denomination, it is not too strong to say that there is no assurance it will be passed *well, if at all*, to the next generations. The only true way we can reclaim and re-proclaim our distinctive doctrine is through the preparation and education of our clergy. The author has committed herself to this project in light of what she believes to be a present “crisis” as articulated above. It is hoped that this specific module will provide a means of such crucial preparation for preaching and teaching holiness, now.

The structure of this module is not without an underlying support, namely, the Wesleyan quadrilateral. This is a methodology that holds to the primacy of Scripture. Yet, Wesley believed the Scriptures should be interpreted dynamically: *Scripture* has been interpreted by *tradition*—a history of interpretation that requires some fidelity; it witnesses to an *experience* of Christ and the Christian gospel that is dynamic and communal in character; it should be understood, organized, and effectively communicated through the aid of *reason*. Thus, the lessons in this module will examine the theology of holiness from the perspective of: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. It will also examine related doctrines that are intricately involved in a strong interpretation of holiness—the doctrines of humanity, sin, and salvation. It will deal with the realm of “holiness ethics” and finally make some recommendations for articulating the theology of holiness and the doctrine of entire sanctification in the present context. It is extremely important that those preparing for ordained ministry in the Church of the Nazarene catch, hold, and employ the dynamism of the Wesleyan-Holiness theological paradigm, particularly in its expression of the doctrine of sanctification. This module is designed with our future denominational identity firmly in mind.

Module Recommendation

It is strongly recommended that students complete the module *Exploring the Theology of John Wesley* before enrolling in this module.

Educational Assumptions

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to any process of Christian education at any level. We will consistently request and expect the Spirit’s presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community (people being and working together). Community is the gift of the Spirit but may be enhanced or hindered by human effort. Communities have common values,

- stories, practices, and goals. Explicit effort will be invested to enhance community within the class. Group work will take place in every lesson.
3. Every adult student has knowledge and experiences to contribute to the class. We learn not only from the instructor and the reading assignments, but also from each other. Each student is valued not only as a learner but also as a teacher. That is one reason so many exercises in this course are cooperative and collaborative in nature.
 4. Journaling is an ideal way to bring theory and practice together as students synthesize the principles and content of the lessons with their own experiences, preferences, and ideas.

Outcome Statements

This module contributes to the development of the following abilities as defined in the *U.S. Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- CN 22 Ability to articulate the distinctive characteristics of Wesleyan theology
- CN 23 Ability to identify and explain the doctrine of holiness from a Wesleyan perspective
- CN 27 Ability to identify the formative influences of the American Holiness Movement and the Church of the Nazarene
- CP 10 Ability to synthesize, analyze, reason logically for discernment, assessment, and problem solving, and live with ambiguity
- CP 11 Ability to analyze the validity of arguments and to identify their presuppositions and consequences
- CP 21 Ability to envision, order, participate, and lead in contextualized, theologically grounded worship

OUTCOME STATEMENTS

- To recognize misconceptions about holiness that have been detrimental to understanding and articulating the doctrine, even keeping some from seeking the experience
- To relate holiness to Wesleyan theology as a whole, specifically to theological anthropology, the doctrine of sin, and the doctrine of salvation—broadly defined
- To identify and articulate Old Testament foundations for the doctrine of holiness
- To identify and articulate New Testament foundations for the doctrine of holiness
- To become familiar with figures and movements that are precursors of Wesleyan holiness
- To understand John Wesley's theology of holiness
- To understand the 19th century's theology of holiness
- To compare and contrast Wesley and the 19th century's articulation of holiness
- To articulate the theology of holiness and doctrine of entire sanctification in both traditional and innovative language
- To differentiate the process and crisis of sanctification
- To identify important landmarks on the holiness journey
- To explain how holiness relates to the Wesleyan doctrine of the "means of grace"
- To articulate the foundations of a "holiness ethic"

- To articulate the substance—what it is—and the circumstance/structure—how it happens—of holiness theology
- To give students opportunity to write a holiness sermon
- To give students opportunity to deepen their own experience of holiness

Recommended Reading

Building your personal library:

For those interested in building your personal/professional library, the principal contributor recommends the following books. (Complete bibliographic citations can be found in the bibliography beginning on page 15.)

Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*

Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*

Knight, *All Loves Excelling*

Greathouse, *Wholeness in Christ*

Lawrence Wood, *Pentecostal Grace*

Dunning, *A Layman's Guide to Sanctification*

Bassett/Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness, Vol. 2.*

Obtaining materials to complete homework assignments:

One of the assignments—Lessons 5 and 6—is to read *The Way of Holiness* by Phoebe Palmer. It might be helpful to begin reading before Lesson 5. Copies should be available in most libraries—public, college, district, or church. You may want to purchase one for your own library—available through Amazon and Wesley Books. It is one title of over 2000 such texts included on a CDROM that can be purchased from the Wesley Center Online (<http://wesley.nnu.edu>).

The Way of Holiness by Phoebe Palmer is also available online at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyctr/books/indices/index-p-authors.htm>. An electronic copy is included on the Modular Course of Study CDROM. The editor wishes to thank Rev. Duane V. Maxey for the creation of the scanned and edited document and the Wesley Center Online with granting permission for its use.

Another assignment—Lessons 4 and 5—is to read John Wesley's sermon "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection." This is also available through the Wesley Center web site (<http://wesley.nnu.edu>) or your instructor may have copies available for you from the Modular Course of Study CDROM.

Course Requirements

1. **Class attendance, attention, and participation** are especially important. Students are responsible for **all** assignments and in-class work. Much of the work in this course is small-group work. Cooperative, small-group work cannot be made up. That makes attendance imperative. Even if one does extra reading or writing, the values of discussion, dialogue, and learning from each other are thwarted. If one lesson is missed, the instructor will require extra work before completion can be acknowledged. If two or more classes are missed, the student will be required to repeat the whole module.

Small-Group Work. Nothing is more important in this course than small-group work. The class members will be assigned to groups of two to four students each. The group members will serve as study partners for explorations and discussion.

2. Assignments

Journaling: The only ongoing assignment for this module is your journal. It is to be used regularly, if not daily. On at least one occasion during the term, the instructor will check the journals. In each lesson a journal assignment is included.

The journal should become the student's friend and treasury of insights, devotions, and ideas. Here the integration of theory and practice occurs. The spiritual life nature of the journal helps guard against the course of study being merely academic as you are repeatedly called upon to apply the principles studied to your own heart and your own ministry situation.

This journal is not a diary, not a catchall. It is, rather, a guided journal or a focused journal in which the educational experience and its implications are selected for reflection and writing.

The framers of this curriculum are concerned about the way that students fall into learning "about" the Bible, or "about" the spiritual life rather than learning—that is coming to know and internalize the Bible and spiritual principles. The journaling experience ensures that the "Be" component of "Be, Know, and Do" is present in the course of study. Be faithful with all journaling assignments.

Daily Work: This module has regular homework assignments. It is called daily work because even though the class may only meet once a week, the student should be working on the module on a "daily" basis. Sometimes the homework assignments are quite heavy. The assignments are important. Even if homework is not discussed in class every session, the work is to be handed in. This gives the instructor regular information about the student's progress in the course. The normal time for homework to be handed in is at the beginning of each class session. **All** assignments are to be completed.

Course Outline and Schedule

The class will meet for 18 hours according to the following schedule:

Session Date	Session Time	
		1. Preliminary Issues
		2. Theological Foundations
		3. Old Testament Foundations
		4. New Testament Foundations
		5. Tradition: Pre-Wesley Foundations
		6. Tradition: Wesley on Christian Perfection
		7. Tradition: The Holiness Movement
		8. A Reasonable Doctrine: The Substance of Entire Sanctification
		9. The Experience: The Structure of Entire Sanctification
		10. The Experience: The Means to the End
		11. The Experience: Holiness Ethics
		12. Holiness for the 21st Century

Course Evaluation

The instructor, the course itself, and the student's progress will be evaluated. These evaluations will be made in several ways.

The progress of students will be evaluated with an eye for enhancing the learning experience by:

1. Carefully observing the small-group work, noting the competence of reports, the balance of discussion, the quality of the relationships, the cooperation level, and the achievement of assigned tasks
2. Careful reading of homework assignments
3. Completion of all homework assignments
4. Journal checks

The course materials and the teacher will be evaluated by frequently asking and discussing the effectiveness and relevance of a certain method, experience, story, lecture, or other activity.

Some evaluation cannot be made during the class itself. Some objectives will not be measurable for years to come. If students encounter the transforming power of God at deeper levels than ever before, learn devotional skills and practice them with discipline, and incorporate the best of this course into their own ministries, the fruit of this educational endeavor could go on for a long time. In truth, that is what we expect.

Additional Information

A reasonable effort to assist every student will be made. Any student who has handicaps, learning disabilities, or other conditions that make the achievement of the class requirements exceedingly difficult should make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to see what special arrangements can be made. Any student who is having trouble understanding the assignments, lectures, or other learning activities should talk to the instructor to see what can be done to help.

Instructor's Availability

Good faith efforts to serve the students both in and beyond the classroom will be made.

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

Participating in the course of study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each course you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, write papers, and take exams. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The course work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritually formative work will weave all

you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head to your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work to faithfully spend time daily in your journal. Many people confess that this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling as time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, an ah-ha that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet, family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with course material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems that we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your course work, and your

experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration, weaving together faith development with learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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Lesson 1: Preliminary Issues

Due This Lesson

None

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- identify misconceptions about holiness
- recognize the complexity of our Nazarene heritage
- identify some key issues in a theology of holiness
- differentiate holiness and sanctification

Homework Assignments

Write a three-page essay on what you believe about humanity, the image of God, and sin, from a theological perspective.

Write in your journal. This assignment is ongoing. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

We believe in the grace of God to transform us in this life, so that we might grow in love and live victoriously.

Misconceptions

False: Entire sanctification is the destination of the Christian life.

Three dangerous implications:

- It implies that the experience of entire sanctification is the *end* of Christian growth
- It implies that we have arrived at the pinnacle of the Christian experience and that God's grace has done all that it can do
- We must never imply that we are seeking after an *experience*

False: Entire sanctification takes away our ability to sin.

Nothing will ever take away our *ability* to sin. Our free will is always in play; it is our choice to respond to the Holy Spirit.

False: We do not receive the Holy Spirit fully until we are entirely sanctified.

Romans 8: if we are in Christ we have received the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is very active in our lives even *before* we ever know Christ, in His ministry of prevenient grace.

Misconceptions

False: Those not entirely sanctified are sinners and second-class citizens.

There have been times in our history when sanctification has been overemphasized to such a degree that the new birth experience has been de-emphasized to a dangerous point; if we are in Christ, we are thoroughly Christian.

False: Only those who are entirely sanctified go to heaven.

This gross misconception grows out of the error of collapsing holiness into the experience of entire sanctification; holiness has a much broader meaning.

False: Legalistic self-righteousness is what holiness looks like.

If holiness is reduced to a list of do's and don'ts, legalism is quick to follow; all righteousness comes from God.

False: Sinlessness is the goal of the sanctified life.

If we conceptualize holiness as the absence of something, namely sin, we are in danger of losing the very heart of the Christian life. Holiness is about the *presence* of something—love; “Love for God and neighbor” *is* Wesley's definition of holiness.

Misconceptions

False: The entirely sanctified do not face temptation.

Scripture explicitly tells us Jesus was tempted in every way, just like us, except He did not yield to temptation. And so, we believe even though Jesus was without sin from birth, and holy in every way, He Himself faced temptation.

False: Holiness and entire sanctification are synonymous.

To be theologically technical, holiness and sanctification begin when a person is born again. God begins then the *initial* work of sanctification in the heart. The person then grows in grace, *progresses* in holiness and sanctification. Later, the person experiences what we have termed *entire* sanctification. But this is not the end. *Progressive* sanctification continues from that point, until our *final* sanctification, also known as glorification, when we die. God's grace enables every step in holiness along the way.

False: It is impossible to live up to the expectations of the sanctified life.

It is our message as Wesleyans that the Christian life is not doomed to a cycle of perpetual sin and failure, where the power of sin seems greater than the power of grace! God is faithful in His calling us to holy lives.

Lesson 2: Theological Foundations

Due This Lesson

Essay
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- relate theological anthropology to the doctrine of holiness
- explain the effects of sanctification on the image of God
- distinguish between human nature and sin nature
- relate the doctrine of sin to the doctrine of holiness

Homework Assignments

Read the following Old Testament passages and consult commentaries if available to you: Genesis 3; Leviticus 17:1-26:46, specifically 19:18; 20:7; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 10:16; 30:6; Psalms 15, 29, 37, 51, 93, 110; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 36:23-27; Zechariah 13:1. Write out possible questions or ideas that come to mind as you read. Be prepared to participate in discussion.

Develop a sermon outline based on one of the Old Testament passages from above. Make two copies.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

We do not seek holiness for our own sakes, but for the sake of loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbor as ourselves. When we do this, we are being who God created us to be.

Humanity

Foundational to a Wesleyan understanding of humankind is that human beings are relational. They were created for relationship. They were created for love, created to love; the very definition of the image of God—*imago Dei*—is this capacity to love.

Other understandings:

- Western interpreters of the image: our human capacity to reason (Thomas Aquinas).
- Humanity resembles God in its relationship to lesser creation.
- The image is that of human freedom.

We were created to love God, love others, and have an appropriate love for self and for the world.

Key to understanding the Wesleyan view of humanity is the fact that after the Fall, the image remains. It is severely distorted but not obliterated. Salvation is the process of the restoration and renewal of the image of God in us.

Personal Sin

According to John Calvin, sin is falling short of the glory of God, or missing the mark; Calvinists claim we sin in thought, word, and deed daily.

Sin, for Wesley, is a willful transgression of a known law of God. In other words, sin is always a conscious act of rebellion against what God desires for us.

The closer we draw to God, the deeper our need to live a "confessional" life, confessing our complete dependency on God at the very deepest level of our being. The issue of breaking an obvious law or even omitting a good deed may become less and less the issue as we grow in grace.

We do not seek holiness for our own sakes but for the sake of loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbor as ourselves. When we do this, we are being who God created us to be. As Wesley stated, love will exclude sin.

Original Sin

Wesley: *idolatry* is unmistakably classified as the primary definition of original sin, with "pride," "self-will," and "love of the world" listed under it.

In other words, there are two forms of original sin: inordinate love of self (pride) and inordinate love of others, here listed as "love of the world."

"Spiritual Idolatry"

Undoubtedly it is the will of God that we should all love one another. It is his will that we should love our relations and our Christian brethren with a peculiar love; and those in particular, whom he has made particularly profitable to our souls. These we are commanded to "love fervently;" yet still "with a pure heart." But is not this "impossible with man?" to retain the strength and tenderness of affection, and yet, without any stain to the soul, with unspotted purity? I do not mean only unspotted by lust. I know this is possible. I know a person may have an unutterable affection for another without any desire of this kind. But is it without idolatry? Is it not loving the creature more than the Creator? Is it not putting a man or woman in the place of God? giving them your heart? Let this be carefully considered, even by those whom God has joined together; by husbands and wives, parents and children. It cannot be denied, that these ought to love one another tenderly: they are commanded so to do. But they are neither commanded nor permitted to love one another idolatrously. Yet how common is this! How frequently is a husband, a wife, a child, put in the place of God. How many that are accounted good Christians fix their affections on each other, so as to leave no place for God! They seek their happiness in the creature, not in the Creator. One may truly say to the other, I view thee, lord and end of my desires. That is, "I desire nothing more but thee! Thou art the thing that I long for! All my desire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name." Now, if this is not flat idolatry, I cannot tell what is.¹

Original Sin

Original sin was also a key issue in the development of Holiness theology in America.

The first commandment, then, enables the second: Loving God with *all* one's being—unrivaled—enables love for others. Thus Wesley's own preferred definition of holiness, love, is made possible not only through an overturning of the traditional idolatry of *self* but also through an overturning of an idolatry of others.

Wesley and the Holiness Movement strongly believed what Adam and Eve did in the garden had lasting effects on the rest of humanity; Western theology states that being in the state of original sin, the corruption of humanity into which we are born, makes us guilty before God, even though we did nothing individually and volitionally to deserve it. The guilt as well as the corruption are inherited.

Pelagius held that not only did human beings not inherit guilt from Adam, but they also did not inherit any corruption; *natural freedom*.

Augustine, on the other hand, pushed hard for a very strong doctrine of original sin, total depravity, and inherited guilt.

The *via media* comes through Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace. The grace God gives to every human being born into the world gives that person *graced freedom*.

Salvation

It is important to understand that in a Wesleyan scheme, salvation technically is the whole of the Christian journey; the saving act of God continues through the process of sanctification until we die.

We use the language of the *way* of salvation, not just the point or moment of salvation.

Justification: To be justified by God implies that our sins are forgiven. The guilt of our sins is taken away. God no longer condemns us for our transgressions against Him.

Regeneration: Wesley's favorite word for salvation is "new birth." This concept implies that we are regenerated, "born again," and are new creations in Christ.

Adoption: Paul strongly affirms the significance of being a child of God and co-heir with Christ. This aspect of salvation also implies that we are born into a family, a community of brothers and sisters in Christ. This prevents us from imagining salvation as a purely private event and life.

Redemption: Redemption implies liberation from sin. Exodus acts as a metaphor for redemption. Redemption also implies receiving a new purpose, namely, to love God with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves. Our lives are redeemed from sin and for love.

Reconciliation: We are reconciled to God. This is the sense that the alienation and estrangement from God implicit in sin is overcome when we come into a new relationship with God.

Initial Sanctification: This signifies the belief that the moment of salvation begins the process of being made righteous, as God actually makes us clean, not only in the sense of our sins being forgiven, but more deeply, in the sense that our intentions, our inclinations, our purpose, and destination change through the grace of God.

Lesson 3: Old Testament Foundations

Due This Lesson

Old Testament readings
Sermon outline
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- articulate the themes of the “analogy of faith”
- relate the “analogy of faith” to Old Testament theology
- identify key passages for holiness in the Old Testament
- identify basics of moving from text to sermon

Homework Assignments

Read the following New Testament passages and consult commentaries if available to you: Matthew 5-7; John 17; Romans 6-8; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:17-24; Philippians 3:12-15; Colossians 1:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23; James 1-2; 1 John. As you read make notes of thoughts or questions that arise. Be prepared to participate in discussion.

Develop a sermon outline based on one of the New Testament passages from above. Make two copies.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

The Bible finds its authority in its faithful witness of Christ and in the fact that its truth of salvation and sanctification through Christ has been experienced and verified by believers through the centuries.

Wesleyan Ways of Reading Scripture

- aware of the crucial necessity of finding the context of a passage, and avoiding “proof-texting”
- used the original languages
- investigated the historical and cultural situation in a text
- “analogy of faith”—refers to a connection of biblical doctrines that arise out of the “whole tenor of Scripture”
- should ask of every passage in the Bible: What does it add to our understanding of human sin, justification by faith, new birth, and present inward and outward holiness?

The word “holy” or “holiness” appears more than 830 times in Hebrew in the Old Testament. In most cases the word conveys the meanings of radiance, separation, and purity.

Sanctification is a derivative of the word for holy, most often meaning “to set apart” for an intended purpose.

Pentateuch

Genesis

- Find the foundational theology of humanity and sin that will shape our understanding of God's commandment to be holy.
- Genesis also calls persons to live holy lives.
- God continues to call for relationship with humanity based on His love for His creation.

Exodus

- The entire book can be seen as a metaphor for freedom from sin, freedom from the bondage of its effects, and movement toward a promised land of holiness.
- The giving of the Ten Commandments offers the people the parameters for holy living.

Leviticus

- Holiness Code, found between chapters 17 and 26.
- The deeper meaning of the ethical code can be seen in 20:7, "be holy, for I am holy."

Deuteronomy

- Jews most sacred text, known as the Shema (6:4-5).
—Leviticus 19:18 completes [Jesus'] idea of the greatest command.
- These verses were Wesley's primary source of his definition of holiness as love.
- New symbol for inner cleansing, the concept of "circumcision of the heart"

Historical Books, Psalms, Prophetic Books

Historical Books

- Inhabiting the Promised Land, Canaan, has become a great metaphor for spiritual victory, sometimes even equated with the experience of entire sanctification.
- A recital of how the chosen people fail the covenant.
- Also see particular persons whose stories are highlighted as examples of godly agents of righteousness.

Psalms

- Insight into the nature of piety.
- Describes the type of character possible to those who walk with God.

Prophetic Books

- Isaiah chapter 6 is an incredible passage; symbol of cleansing in a powerful way; a clear message that those who have been called into a sanctifying relationship with God are blessed, called to live out this sanctified life.
- Jeremiah examines the effects of sin and the sinful nature on persons; hopes for a new day when the law will be written on persons' hearts.
- Ezekiel echoes sentiments of hope.
- Joel prophesies about the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The Cleansing Blood of Jesus²

By Wesley D. Tracy

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 John 1:5—2:2, NKJV).³

In the end Norma had to resign. After barely a year as chaplain at a shelter for battered women, she gave it up. She loved ministering to the women. But even though the center was owned and funded by a Christian organization, Norma was not permitted to speak of sin or of Jesus Christ. The director repeatedly warned her that she could only refer to "the god within." "These women have within themselves," she would say, "all the resources they need. They do not need talk of sin and saviors." To Norma the teachings of 1 John 1:5—2:2 are as timely as tomorrow's newspaper.

At least three contemporary schools of thought deny the reality of sin. The New Age devotees, like the director Norma worked for, not only deny the existence of sin but also claim that human beings are really gods in disguise. The human potential movement affirms that what we need is not redemption from sin but a nice environment in which we can "become."

A third influential group to which the idea of sin is a non sequitur is the behaviorists. Led by thinkers like B. F. Skinner, they declare that men are mere passive lumps that environment shapes. Whether a person ends up as a missionary or a murderer, no praise or blame is due. Labels like "honorable" or "sinner" do not apply.

Exegesis

In general, scholars agree that the apostle John wrote both the Gospel of John and 1 John. Similarities of style, structure, and theology make this a valid conclusion. According to the tradition, after leaving Jerusalem, probably about A.D. 70, John settled in Ephesus in Asia Minor and developed a network of house churches.

The Epistle of 1 John was written sometime between A.D. 85 and 96. Several divisions had arisen in the cluster of house churches shepherded by John. This Epistle was to be read in each of the churches to correct error and to restore unity. The various factions had made theological and ethical diversions—and worst of all, it appears that they were using John's own Gospel to justify their aberrations.⁴

The Epistle appears to be addressed to at least four groups of people. First, there was the group of faithful and orthodox believers whom John addresses as **my little children** (2:1). Another group that got John's attention were Jewish Christians who

were heretically inclined toward minimizing Jesus and exalting the Law. For their benefit John stressed the divinity and preexistence of the Son.

The third group needed instruction about the humanity of Jesus—His real humanity. They were heretically inclined ex-pagans for whom flesh was evil and unimportant, and the bloody sacrifice of Jesus was hard for them to handle. The fourth group was apparently a group of pre-Gnostic Christians who had already left the Johannine fellowship. "They went out from us, but they were not of us," John observed (2:19). This group receives the most negative attention in our text.

Structure. The structure of this Epistle is important because one cannot properly preach or teach from a text in it without understanding its unique construction. Western scholars insist on dividing the epistle into some sort of linear, deductive, Aristotelian outline. But this document simply will not yield to such treatment.

The argument might be depicted as a series of concentric circles like one sees on an archery target. John's first circle of argument may speak of justification, sanctification, loving service, obedience, worldliness. In subsequent circles, John will touch on all these topics again but not necessarily in the same sequence. And subsequent treatments present a different angle of approach with an ascending intensity. R. R. Williams says that John's structure is "rather like a man strolling round the outside, and then the inside of an old church."⁵ David Jackman describes the structure as that of a spiral staircase: "As you climb the central staircase in a palace or stately home, you see the same objects or paintings from a different angle, often with new appreciation."⁶

The result of this cyclical structure is that one cannot study one text and master what the author has to say on this subject. John will take up the topic again and again, each time showing it in a different light and in a different relationship to other key concepts. The passage being treated in this study is an example of this.

Analysis of the Text. Visualizing the Epistle as a target with concentric circles one finds in the bull's-eye, **God is light** (v. 5). We might have to make room in the bull's-eye for "God is love" as well, but at the center of this text is the declaration that **God is light**. Both the Old and New Testaments as well as the Qumran writings use the light motif. Gnosticism itself claimed to be a "religion of light." Here we see John borrowing the language of the pre-Gnostic heretics and using it against them.

God is light. He is "absolute in His glory (the physical connotation of light), in His truth (the intellectual) and in His holiness (the moral)."⁷ John repeats the same truth in reverse form, **in Him is no darkness at all**. Or, literally, "and darkness, in Him, no not any at all!"⁸ This premise furnishes the foundation of John's blazing condemnation of the disruptive clique.

A summary of the beliefs of these troublesome early Gnostics includes these affirmations:

1. They believed themselves to be the rationally and spiritually elite, possessing a special anointing (*chrisma*) that made them superior to ordinary Christians.
2. They believed that material things, such as human flesh, were base, vile, and insignificant.

3. Belief number two resulted in the idea that the Son of God could not have come as a human. Therefore, Jesus Christ was not truly human but only seemed to be. The belief in a phantom Christ became known as docetism, the label coming from *dokein*, "to seem." For their benefit John emphasizes in the very first sentence of the Epistle that he had seen, heard, and touched Jesus Christ himself—and He was no phantom.
4. The conviction that the body was base and insignificant contributed to the self-serving notion that what one did with the body (e.g., gluttony, fornication, drunkenness) was not spiritually important.
5. Because of their own spiritual enlightenment they themselves were not to be charged with sinfulness nor sinful acts—whatever their behavior.

The Six "If" Clauses. The apostle sets forth his condemnation of the Gnostic secessionists in six "if" clauses framed in three pairs of negative and positive statements. Each "if" clause is followed by a consequential statement.

The Negative Charges

Verse 6. **If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

Verse 8. **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

Verse 10. **If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**

The Positive Affirmations

Verse 7. **If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Verse 9. **If we confess our sins, He is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

2:1. **If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.⁹**

The Way of Death

Looking first at the negative charges we note an ascending spiral in the intensity and gravity. Level 1: they **lie and do not practice the truth** (v. 6). Level 2: they **deceive** themselves, convincing themselves that their lie is true, the "lead themselves astray." The result is that the **truth** (for John "truth" means the gospel) finds no dwelling place in them (v. 8). Level 3: they make God **a liar, and His word is not** to be found in them (v. 10).

Let us look more closely at these verses. In verse 6 we see that the heretical secessionists claimed to have fellowship (*koinonia*) with God, yet their lives exuded sin. Their transgressions included denying the incarnation of Christ, trivializing His atonement, and fracturing the Body of Christ.

In verse 8 we hear them reject the idea that they have sinful hearts. **We have no sin** refers to the sin principle and not to acts of sin, according to B. F. Westcott, author of the standard work on 1 John. He notes, "The thought here is of *sin* not *sins*: of the spring, the principle . . . as the sinful principle is distinguished from the sinful act . . . it describes a state."¹⁰ Smalley agrees, saying, "To *have sin* is the equivalent of possessing a sinful character or disposition."¹¹ These wayward Gnostics "argued that they did not need cleansing from sin because they had no sin from which to be cleansed."¹²

In verse 10 the offenders have declared that they are not guilty of committing acts of sin. Note the plural usage, which Smalley and Westcott take to be the expression of sin in behavior rather than the state of sinfulness.¹³ Brown indicates that they may have indeed recognized that their deeds were wrong, but they denied any guilt because sin had no effect on such spiritually advanced persons as themselves.¹⁴ Thus they asserted that God, who has declared that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), is in fact a liar. How could such persons claim to have the word of God in them?

The Way of Life

Turning to the three "if" clauses that express the way of truth, light, and life in Christ, we discover another ascending spiral. It begins with walking in the light, leads to fellowship with God and His children (v. 7), moves to confession of sin, and moves upward to cleansing of sin (vv. 7, 9) and, at the top of the spiral, we discover that this provision is not only for us **but also for the whole world** (2:2).

The immediate purpose of the apostle is not to define the *ordo salutis*. Through what he says is correlatively compatible with, and stands on the foundation of, the "plan of salvation," John is giving particular attention to what the believer should do if and when sin is found on his or her hands. This text shows that the path to death is to deny sin; the path to life is to confess and forsake sin.

In verse 7 we are told to **walk in the light as He is in the light**. To live in the light is "to be true to God as He is true to himself."¹⁵ Further, walking in the light produces **fellowship** (*koinonia*) **with one another**, that is with other Christians. This is an indirect punch line that John, apparently, could not resist. One would naturally expect him to say that walking in the light produces fellowship with God. Such fellowship is an assumed background reality here. John elaborates the theme of communion with God in his Gospel, yet because the very sin of the gnosticizing church-splitters was a disruption of the fellowship, John slams home the truth that fellowship with God and humans go together.

Walking in the light keeps us informed about our own sins, for the pure light of God's holiness makes our imperfections even more apparent. That is why many of the greatest saints saw themselves as "the chief of sinners" (e.g., Paul, John Wesley, Thomas à Kempis). John uses the common word for sin in this text (*hamartia*), missing the mark, or falling short. He also uses "lawlessness" (3:4) and "unrighteousness" (5:17) as words for sin.

The blood of Jesus Christ His Son (v. 7) is the agency of cleansing from sin. John emphasizes this using both the human and divine names for our Lord and citing His

Sonship and His spilled blood. This is diametrically opposed to the phantom Christ of the gnostic crowd.

Verses 7 and 9 both accent the benefits of confessing one's need of the Savior. The term translated **confess** in **If we confess our sins** is *homologeō*. This word is constructed from two Greek words: *homo*, "same" or "alike," and *logos*, which means "word," "speech," or "idea." The compound word then means "to agree" or "declare alike."¹⁶ To confess our sins is to speak out our "agreement with God" on the matter of our spiritual condition. The person who does this discovers that God will **forgive us our sins** (v. 9). Forgive, in Greek, means "to leave behind," or "abandon," or "let go."

But sin is more than "offense"; it is also "stain."¹⁷ John asserts in verses 7 and 9 that confessed sins will be cleansed. Our word *catharsis* comes from the Greek word used here to mean "cleanse." The verb is in the continuous present, meaning that the blood of Jesus Christ "goes right on cleansing" the confessed sin of the sincere Christian. The subject under discussion is not how an unsaved person finds God but what happens when a sincere Christian falls into sin and confesses it. As Westcott puts it, "The question is not of *justification*, but of *sanctification*."¹⁸ This is part of the process dimension of sanctification that Westcott called "progressive hallowing of the Christian."¹⁹ This process goes on all through life, even after an instantaneous experience of sanctifying grace.

Cleanses us from all sin (v. 7). This is an affirmation of the adequacy of the atoning blood of Christ to meet the deepest spiritual needs of humankind. The blood can cleanse "every kind and degree" of sin both "original and actual," wrote John Wesley.²⁰ Most commentators impose their own tradition's doctrine of sin on this verse rather than letting it speak for itself. Some come dangerously near to saying that in spite of Christ's cleansing blood sin must continue in the heart even though God has, in this text and through every part of His revelation, declared the contrary. Adam Clarke writes, "He that says the blood of Christ either *cannot* or *will not cleanse us* from all sin in this life, gives also the lie to his Maker."²¹

John's statement about forgiveness and cleansing for every sin is especially meaningful in light of the early ecclesiastical discipline of not absolving sins of adultery and apostasy and of giving a backslider only one second chance.²²

I write to you, so that you may not sin (3:1). Having been misinterpreted before, John interrupts his discourse for a personal aside to his **little children**. He does not want them to think that he is endorsing a doctrine of sinning more so that grace can abound even more. No, they are not to sin. This theme he takes up in even stronger language in 3:7-9. John "shrinks naturally from regarding sin as a normal element in the Christian life."²³

"But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense" (2:1, NIV). The final "if" clause cites the priestly advocacy role of our Lord. He is called **an Advocate**, "the one who pleads for us." John uses *parakletos*, which means "the one called alongside of to help." John refers to the Holy Spirit as "another Paraclete" in his Gospel; Jesus was the first Paraclete.

He Himself is the propitiation for our sins (2:2). The use of **propitiation** (*hilasmos*) is somewhat troublesome. In Greek literature it usually refers to a sort of religious bribe whereby an angry god is made friendly, or *propitious*.²⁴ This is plainly sub-Christian. Westcott, Dodd, and the RSV prefer to us "expiation." This make God

the subject of the offering for sin rather than the object. Smalley likes to regard these seeming opposites as complementary. Thus he prefers the NIV translation "atoning sacrifice," which embraces both the objective and the subjective elements.

God is **faithful and just** (v. 9) when He forgives our sins. His faithfulness and justice cannot be fraudulent or cheap. What lifts our Advocate above ordinary propitiation is that Jesus Christ was at once the righteous, heavenly intercessor in our behalf, and the offering (not the offerer) for our sins. "John is declaring that the source of the offering is God the Father, but that the *means* are to be found in God the Son."²⁵

Theological Implications

A crucial step in the homiletical process comes at the point of affirming the theological implications of the text. The truths that may be affirmed on the basis of 1 John 1:5—2:2 include the following

1. The first and dominant theology of this text is that *the blood of Jesus Christ is the one effective atonement and remedy for sin*. Salvation will not be found in exotic religious experience, secret knowledge, or any other human resource. In and through Jesus Christ, God provides atonement, forgiveness, and cleansing for sin.

This text, in particular, affirms *Jesus as the adequate answer for those times when a Christian is betrayed into sin*. The answer is not two more trips to the altar but a quick confession that results in forgiveness and the blood of Christ "keeps on cleansing" from sin.

2. Another important theological point is John's identification of the nature of God as being the basis on which humans may have fellowship with God. In the light of the fact that **God is light** (1:5) and "God is love" (4:8), those who have fellowship with Him must reflect those same characteristics.
3. John's understanding of the holy life includes the elements of justification, sanctification, communion with God, fellowship with other believers and based on the rest of 1 John, obedience, resistance to worldliness, and loving sacrificial service.
4. Our text also clearly affirms that cleansing from all sin is available in this life. In other passages John deals with the giving of the Spirit and with perfect love. Early Methodists like John Wesley and Adam Clarke found support for several aspects of their doctrine of entire sanctification in the Epistle.

One aspect, in particular, of Wesley's doctrine can be affirmed on the basis of this text. That is the fact that the cleansing of sin is a moment-by-moment cleansing. Adam Clarke comments on 1:7 translating "cleanseth" as "continues to cleanse." He adds, "It requires the same merit and energy to preserve holiness in the soul of man as to produce it."²⁶

Consider these passages from Wesley: "The holiest of men still need Christ. . . . For he does not give them light but from moment to moment. . . . God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment nothing but unholiness would remain."²⁷ "[We need] the power of Christ every moment . . . whereby . . . we are enabled to continue in the spiritual life and without which, notwithstanding our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment."²⁸

5. Other theological points that may be legitimately derived from this passage include: (a) Unconfessed sin separates persons from God; (b) One sign of fellowship with God is fellowship with God's people; (c) To become like God, one must first admit his or her unlikeness to God.

Preaching Suggestions

Once the text has been thoroughly investigated and the theological implications of the text (and context) affirmed, the subject matter and its boundaries for preaching have been stated. The preacher must then find creative and effective forms to express the truths of the text to a particular congregation in a particular life situation. These exercises must be left entirely to the preacher, but some ideas about the possible homiletical treatment of the text and context are here provided.

1. The Six "If Clauses"

The six "if clauses" and their "compound consequence clauses" form a natural homiletic structure. Probably the best homiletic treatment would use them as three positive-negative pairs in a three sermon series.

2. Rings of Truth

The following homiletical structure accommodates the cyclical or spiraling structure of the Epistle.

- I. *The first "ring of truth" is that God has done something miraculous for us, justification.*

"The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (4:14, KJV).

"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (2:2, NIV)

And completing the ring: "He sent his one and only Son into the world . . . he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (4:9-10, NIV)

The band of golden truth here formed has profound meanings. But whatever else it may signify, it proclaims the miracle of grace called justification. Christ is the Expiation, the Propitiation, the atoning Sacrifice for my sins and yours. What God has done *for* me is to justify me freely.

- II. *But God has not only done something miraculous for us but also wants to do something marvelous in us, sanctification.*

Consider this second "ring of truth." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1:7, KJV)

"He is faithful . . . to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1:9).

"Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (3:3). And completing the ring, we find that the newly justified child is to dwell in God and God in him, for "he hath given us of his Spirit" (4:13, KJV), and "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (v. 12, KJV).

Studying this ring of truth, I see that what God wants to do *in* me has to do with

- A. The indwelling Spirit
- B. Perfect love
- C. Cleansing from all sin

Certainly something happens within in justification, regeneration, and adoption. But emphasize the inward focus of sanctification.

III. *God wants to do something redemptive through us, sacrificial service.*

Listen to this cyclical concert of truth:

"He that saith he abideth in him ought . . . to walk, even as he walked" (2:6 KJV).

"If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (4:11, KJV).

"This commandment have we from him. That he who loveth God love his brother also" (4:21, KJV).

And from the Gospel of John: "As my Father hath sent me, even so sent I you" (20:21, KJV).

And completing the ring: "He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16, KJV)

3. "What You Need to Know" Series

What You Need to Know About God

God:

- "is light" (1:5)
- "is faithful and just" (1:9)
- "is love" (4:8)
- "is Spirit" (John 4:24)
- is what He is and cannot be re-created by us in our own image. This was what the heretics of chapter 1 had done. They were the sort who started a lot of sentences with, "But I like to think of God as . . ." ²⁹

What You Need to Know About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ and His redeeming blood provides:

- the atoning sacrifice for us (2:2)
- forgiveness of sins (1:9)
- cleansing from our sinful nature (1:7, 9)
- communion with God (1:6)
- fellowship with the saints (1:7)
- advocacy in our behalf (2:1)

What You Need to Know About Sin

Sin:

- separates us from God (1:5, 2:4; 4:20)
- separates us from our fellow Christian (1:7)
- may be denied (1:6, 8, 10) with fatal results
- is twofold in nature—act and state (1:8, 10)

- may be confessed—and forgiven
- may be cleansed

What You Need to Know About Fellowship

Fellowship:

- with God (1:5)
- with on another (1:7)
- with the people of God is a sign of fellowship with God (1:7)
- leads to sacrificial service and care for one another (3:16)

What You Need to Know About Sin in the Life of a Christian

Saved and sanctified persons do not *have to sin*, but they *may sin*, and when they do, several things may happen.

- It can be *ignored* (1:6) and the person keeps on claiming to walk in the light, while actually walking in darkness, sin (1:6).
- It can be *denied* ("we have no sin") by persons who regard themselves as so holy, so chosen that they cannot see themselves as sinners (1:8).
- It can be *mislabeled*—such as calling it mistakes, weakness, or someone else's fault.
- It can be *trivialized*: "It doesn't really matter, after all, no one is perfect" (1:6, 8, 10).
- It can be *confessed* and *forgiven* and *cleansed* (1:7, 9).

What You Need to Know About Yourself

- You need to understand what you are (a sinner by nature and act).
- You need to agree with God (*homologeo*) about what you are (1:7)
- You need to know the marvelous capacity you (and all persons) have for hiding your sins (1:5-6), for deceiving yourself (v.8) and denying your sins (v. 10).
- You need to know what you need most—the redeeming, cleansing blood of Jesus.

Lesson 4: New Testament Foundations

Due This Lesson

New Testament readings
Sermon outline
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- identify key passages for holiness in the New Testament
 - relate the “analogy of faith” to New Testament theology
 - identify key passages for the concept of sanctification in the New Testament

Homework Assignments

Read the first half of John Wesley’s “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.” Write a 2- to 3-page response paper. You will be reading half of this document for this lesson’s homework and half for the next lesson. Your paper for this lesson should reflect your thoughts on what is said in the first half. (See “Recommended Reading” on page 11 of the syllabus for ways of obtaining this document.)

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley’s journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

The interpretation of issues such as righteousness, holiness, sanctification, and perfection are non-negotiable in maintaining our theological integrity. They are at the very heart of the “analogy of faith,” the primary lens by which Wesleyans interpret Scripture.

Small Groups

In your group carefully read through each other's sermon outlines. Note questions or comments you have concerning the outlines.

When everyone has read each of the outlines and made comments, talk through each of the outlines with the writer. Offer constructive critiques that will benefit each of you so you can improve your outline and write a sermon from that outline.

Divide the time wisely so each of the sermons can be discussed.

Each of you are to select one of your outlines and develop a sermon manuscript from that outline. A first draft is due Lesson 9 and a final draft is due Lesson 12.

Wesleyan-Holiness Agreement

1. The Christian life, as God designed before the very foundation of the world, is a life of growth toward holiness; Wesleyan-Holiness interpreters see the entirety of the New Testament message as one of great optimism about what the grace of God can do in the life of an individual, and even in a community, who are devoted to following Him.
2. We believe the righteousness God enables and produces in us, as we cooperate with His grace, is an actual righteousness, *not* just an “imputed righteousness.”
3. As one Early Church father once said, God became like we are—human—so that we might become like Him, namely like Jesus Christ. Christlikeness is the goal of the Christian life.

Jesus was the fullest manifestation of obedience and love; through His atonement and the work of the Holy Spirit we are enabled to love, being “filled to the measure with the fullness of God.”

4. To stand within the Holiness circle, one must affirm a second significant transition in the Christian life; it is *possible* to be Wesleyan and deny this; it is *impossible* for those who identify themselves as part of the Holiness tradition to do so.
5. There is a dynamic element in sanctification. In one sense, God makes us holy as a completed event. In another sense, we are always in process; we are continuously growing into what we have been made.

New Testament Overview

Gospels

- Words of Jesus, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5: 48).
- The word for perfection in the New Testament can be translated in different ways. In this verse, the best translation comes from the root word *telos*. This word implies moving toward the end or culmination with a deep sense of purpose.
- A command to move toward the purpose for which we were created
- The call to holiness is a call to love.
- The "heart" is the source of all moral or ethical corruption, or all good. Holiness is more than an external conformation to a righteous law.

The Acts of the Apostles

- In the Book of Acts we see the coming of the Holy Spirit and the grand effects of His coming.
- We should never forget that our sanctification experience is never, ever for ourselves alone. As it changes us, we seek to change the world.

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Holiness runs through every fiber of this letter.

1. The Christian life is not a life of antinomianism.
2. There is a deeper problem at work in us than just our own volitional choices of disobedience.
3. The futility of the law to save or sanctify us
4. Life in the Spirit is a life of victory through the conquering love of God.
5. Our appropriate response to the possibility of this type of spiritual life is none other than a complete and full consecration of our whole selves to God.

New Testament Overview

Corinthian Correspondence

- Perhaps more than any other, the letters to the church at Corinth reveal the conflict between the hope of fulfilling our potential as those created for love and righteous living, and the stark reality that many do not.
- Paul is no idealist with concepts too lofty to intersect with where we live. No, Paul the realist can look life right in the eye and proclaim that holiness is real.

Other Pauline Epistles

- In Galatians we find life lived in the Spirit described in chapters 3 and 5, and contrasts this life to life lived in the "flesh," *sarx*.
- Ephesians adds to our understanding of the corporate nature of holiness.
- Philippians is a rich book that gives us the assurance that God's work will be completed in us as we walk with Him.
- Colossians offers us a direct statement regarding the very purpose of our reconciliation to God (1:22-23).
- A crucial verse for the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. The tense of the verb implies that God's sanctifying work can happen now.

Hebrews, James, and the Epistles Attributed to Peter and John

- In Hebrews we find numerous symbols from the Old Testament applied to the new covenant in Christ, symbols that evoke cleansing, holiness, and sanctification.
- James offers insights into the nature of temptation, sin, and double-mindedness, and practical guidance for living the life of holiness.
- 1 John is rich with the theology of holiness and love.

Lesson 5: Tradition: Pre-Wesley Foundations

Due This Lesson

Reading "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection"
Response paper
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- identify theological movements that lay a foundation for an understanding of holiness and sanctification, prior to Wesley
 - identify persons influential on Wesley's understanding of holiness, from the patristic age to the 18th century

Homework Assignments

Read the second half of "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection." Write a 4-5 page review of this work, incorporating your response paper from the last lesson.

Begin reading *The Way of Holiness* by Phoebe Palmer. (See "Recommended Reading" on page 11 of the syllabus for ways of obtaining these documents.)

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

It is extremely important to know that the doctrine of holiness is a biblical doctrine. It is no less important to see that it is also an historical one, sewn securely into the fabric of Christian orthodoxy from the beginning.

The Early Church

	West	East
Language	Latin	Greek
Ecclesiastical center	Rome	Constantinople (Istanbul)
Socioeconomic state	Entered dark ages in 400s	Did not experience dark ages
Leadership	Popes—varied in strength	Bishops remained strong

In 1054, Eastern and Western Christianity officially split into Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

The two theological issues that were explicit were:

- the role of icons
- an addition to the Nicene Creed made by the Western Church but not endorsed by the Eastern Church

Theological Method	Give rational arguments and systematic treatments of doctrines.	Directed toward liturgy and worship; influenced by ascetic movement.
Theological Anthropology	The Fall severely damaged, if not destroyed, the <i>imago Dei</i> ; Adam and Eve seen as mature.	View the human person in a very, very positive light; stress the significance of the <i>imago Dei</i> ; Adam and Eve seen as children.
Sin	Conceptualized as guilt that needs to be forgiven. Justification emphasized.	A “disease” or aberration of original humanity, to be cured. Sanctification emphasized.
Christology	Emphasis is placed on Jesus’ death and the “substitutionary” atonement.	Significance of Jesus Christ’s incarnation; His entire life is seen as salvific.
Pneumatology	Downplayed the individuality of the Spirit; added a line to the creed that basically subordinated the Spirit— <i>Filioque</i> Controversy.	The Holy Spirit seen as a person; did not want Trinitarian hierarchy.
Trinity	“Economic Trinity”—the distinct functions of each individual person.	“Essential Trinity”—the unity and interpenetration of the Godhead.
Soteriology	Salvation is an act of God alone. This is known as “monergism.”	Salvation is a dynamic cooperation between humanity and God. This is known as “synergism.”

East and West

Eastern thinkers include: Shepherd of Hermas, Irenaeus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Pseudo-Macarius, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, and Ephraem Syrus.

Western thinkers include: Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine.

From the Eastern theologians we find

- an understanding of Christ as the Second Adam and a theory of the Atonement known as “Recapitulation”
- a strong doctrine of human free will
- a formidable doctrine of Christian ethics and character formation
- a clear association of holiness with love
- a clear emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the expectation of heart purity and perfection

It is perhaps easy to see that Wesley and his theological descendents were highly influenced by the Eastern form of Christian theology; we can be remolded into the image of God, progressively restored to our original design, enabled to fulfill our purpose in God, and filled with love to fulfill the great commands.

Wesley’s reading of Eastern sources: an optimism he saw come alive before him as he preached the message of new creation and sanctification to his Methodist followers. The Holiness Movement becomes even more intensely optimistic in the next century.

Western Medieval Influence

Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153)

Bernard was the founder of a new order, the Cistercians; by portraying the relationship of a person with God as that of a marriage, he extols the depth of love God has for each individual.

Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274)

Thomas implies our inclination to virtue cannot be totally destroyed. This is crucial to Wesley's own understanding of sin and the image of God. From Thomas, Wesley also gains insights into the doctrine of prevenient grace, sin as a volitional act, and the meaning of perfection.

Post-Reformation Catholic Mysticism

Francois de Sales (1567-1622)

Francois Fenelon (1651-1715)

Madam Guyon (1648-1717)

From the Mystics, Wesley gained a deep appreciation of the transforming power of an inner life and their understanding of perfection. The specific means of grace, of prayer, and of solitude he incorporated into his own understanding.

Reformed Pietism

Johann Arndt (1555-1621)

Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705)

Pietism began concentrating on the practices of piety, which was rooted in the inner experiences of the religious life.

Lesson 6: Tradition: Wesley on Christian Perfection

Due This Lesson

Reading "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection"
4- to 5-page paper
Reading *A Way of Holiness*
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- identify Wesley's conclusions about Christian perfection
 - understand the developmental nature of Wesley's thought
 - articulate Wesley's definitions for the following terms: Christian perfection; entire sanctification; *via salutis*; purity of intentions; love for God and neighbor

Homework Assignments

Finish reading *The Way of Holiness* by Phoebe Palmer and write a four-page book review of this book. (See "Recommended Reading" on page 11 of the syllabus for ways of obtaining this document.)

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the holy Scripture . . . It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what God hath promised He is able to perform . . . 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 that persons He is pleased to honour . . . 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. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are; and if as you are, then expect it now . . . 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.³⁰

Wesleyan Sola Fide

“The Wesleyan reconstruction of the Christian ethic of life is an original and unique synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace and the Catholic ethic of holiness.”³¹

George Croft Cell

Holiness has been a part of the quest of the devout.

Martin Luther’s agenda was to proclaim the doctrine known as *sola fide*—salvation comes by grace through faith alone.

John Wesley: take the aim of the Christian life, holiness, and extend *sola fide*; we can be *sanctified* by faith alone.

Wesley’s own life agenda arose in the Oxford Holy Club. The pursuit of holiness must always include social action toward the poor and needy, and not just personal piety and study.

Wesley through the Years

Before 1738

Influences

- Thomas à Kempis (1379-1471), *The Imitation of Christ*
- Jeremy Taylor (1686-1761), *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying*
- William Law (1686-1761) *Christian Perfection and Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*

From these three “practical mystics”

1. Christian perfection purifies the intentions of the heart.
2. The imitation of Christ is crucial to the life of holiness.
3. Love for God and neighbor is both definitive and normative of a holy life.

1741

Christian Perfection

- On the negative side, Wesley believes Christians, however mature they are, do not approach the absolute perfections of Godlike characteristics such as omniscience, infallibility, or omnipotence.
- On the positive side, Wesley claimed even newborn Christians are perfect in the sense of being free from needing to commit outward sin; more mature Christians are perfect in the sense of being free from evil thoughts and inward tempers.

1761

On Perfection

- It involves having the mind of Christ, being renewed in the image of God, being perfected in love, and this love perfects both inward and outward holiness.

Integrate and balance his belief in the possibility of present attainment of entire sanctification with his strong emphasis on gradual growth and progressive sanctification both before and after.

Christian perfection is none other than perfect love, abounding in the heart, cleansing anything counter to that love.

Sanctification, or the means by which perfect love enters the Christian, is seen as an event that is both instantaneous and gradual.

1766 Wesley

In 1766 Wesley published *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as Believed and Taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, From the Year 1725 to the Year 1765*.

1. There is such a thing as perfection; for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture.
2. It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to "go on to perfection" (Heb 6: 1).
3. It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect (Phil 3: 15).
4. It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to man, nor to angels, but to God alone.
5. It does not make a man infallible: None is infallible while he remains in the body.
6. Is it sinless? It is not worthwhile to contend the terms. It is "salvation from sin."
7. It is "perfect love" (1 John 4: 18). This is the essence of it; its properties, or inseparable fruits, are rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks (1 Thess 5: 16ff).
8. It is improvable. It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before.
9. It is amissible, capable of being lost; of which we have numerous instances.
10. It is constantly both preceded and followed by a gradual work.
11. But is it in itself instantaneous or not? . . . It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies; yet there is an instant when life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it.

Small Groups

In your group read each other's papers from your reading of Wesley's "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection."

Critique and discuss the papers. Challenge each other to defend statements that have been made.

Write out at least three key statements/ideas—that the three of you agree on—of major significance from this work. Be prepared to report to the class.

Lesson 7: Tradition: The Holiness Movement

Due This Lesson

Reading *The Way of Holiness*
Review paper
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- identify the roots of the American Holiness Movement
 - identify key persons within the movement
 - identify Holiness denominations of the 19th century
 - articulate the synthesis of Wesley's theology and American revivalism
 - connect the movement with social reform

Homework Assignments

Work on your full sermon manuscript. First draft is due Lesson 9.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

American Holiness Movement

The beginning of what would later be known as the American Holiness Movement started with a strong emphasis on the doctrine of Christian perfection *in* the Methodist Church.

Scholars mark the launching of *Guide to Christian Perfection*, a magazine edited by Timothy Merritt, as highly significant to later developments of the Holiness Movement.

America during the 19th century evidenced an intense optimism about human nature, human potential, and this only increased in the minds of those who held to the Christian paradigm of grace; concepts of the American dream, American independence and freedom, the hope of the American frontier all affected American theology.

Important Persons and Places

Phoebe Palmer

A cruel series of intimate personal tragedies—the deaths of three children—led to a religious experience (entire sanctification) in 1837 that impelled Phoebe Palmer to enter a religious vocation, which in turn influenced the lives of thousands, began a movement, and birthed several denominations that today count her their matriarch.

- Led the famous “Tuesday Meetings” held in her home—often considered the birthplace of the Holiness Movement.
- Wrote dozens of books and tracts.
- Edited the most influential holiness magazine of the century.
- Started an inner-city mission.
- Was influential in Methodist higher education.
- Was a revivalist.

She is perhaps best known for providing a three-step *formula* known as “the altar covenant.”

1. A seeker of entire sanctification first *consecrates* all completely to God by placing everything on God’s altar.
2. He or she must then have *faith* that the “altar sanctifies the gift.”
3. The individual must *testify* to the experience.

Important Persons and Places

Oberlin College

The revivalistic Calvinism of the 19th century met the traditionally Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection at Oberlin College in Ohio.

Oberlin theology was not disconnected from its social agenda. Calvinists such as Charles Finney and Asa Mahan were attentive to one new revivalist theme spreading across America, Canada, and Great Britain: entire sanctification.

Entire sanctification can be defined as a second crisis experience following regeneration. In its Wesleyan form it is an experience that “eradicates” original sin or cancels out the “carnal nature” and the “bent toward sinning.”

Calvinists such as Finney rejected a necessary connection between the doctrine of Christian perfection and Methodism, and began preaching a new synthesis of Calvinism and sanctification that became known as “New Theology” or “New Calvinism.”

Keswick and Suppressionism

The first conference of a theological stance—which eventually became known for a place, Keswick, England—was held in 1873.

Its historical and theological significance is found in its relationship to and reinterpretation of the doctrine of entire sanctification held by the Methodist-related churches of the later 19th century.

Calvinist Keswickians, like Wesleyans, emphasized a distinct moment of full consecration, but they differed in their belief that the power of the old nature is *countered* by the presence of the Holy Spirit, rather than cleansed away.

The movement became associated with D. L. Moody and Billy Graham’s revivalism, and institutions such as Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and Dallas Theological Seminary.

Theological and Ecclesiastical Developments

In this new American cultural context, Wesley's doctrine of sanctification was rescripted in several key ways.

1. The blend of holiness theology with revivalism was seen clearly in the emphasis on the *instantaneousness* of entire sanctification.
2. The movement also modified Wesley in its adoption of a linkage of entire sanctification with "the baptism of the Holy Spirit."
3. Connecting entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit clearly connected the doctrine with the New Testament image of Pentecost.
4. Arising out of the utilization of baptism language is the linking of holiness with Pentecostal power.
5. Far from being a culmination, as Wesley finally came to conceive it, the 19th-century form of Holiness doctrine stressed entire sanctification as a new beginning.
6. The Holiness Movement also made direct connections to social reform: abolition, temperance, suffrage, and female ordination.

Major denominations affiliated with the Christian Holiness Partnership.

- Brethren in Christ Church
- Churches of Christ in Christian Union
- The Church of God (Anderson, IN)
- Congregational Methodist Church
- Evangelical Christian Church
- Evangelical Church of North America
- Evangelical Friends Alliance
- Evangelical Methodist Church
- Free Methodist Church
- The Church of the Nazarene
- Primitive Methodist Church
- The Salvation Army
- The Wesleyan Church

Holiness Denominations

The Free Methodist Church organized in 1860. "Free" implied stances on two important issues of the time: opposed slavery without question; called for free seats and rejected the idea of selling seating to support church ministries.

The Wesleyan Church also had roots in abolitionism and reform; originally called the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, organized in the early 1840s.

The Salvation Army, founded by William and Catherine Booth, was explicit about its commitment to holiness doctrine and social reform designed to help the poor.

The Church of God (Anderson) was founded by Daniel S. Warner in 1881. Besides a clear holiness message, one of its early premises was an anti-sectarian, anti-denominationalism stance.

The Church of the Nazarene is the largest Holiness denomination. Phineas Bresee was a Methodist minister who wanted an appointment to aid a Holiness-connected mission to the poor in Los Angeles. When his bishop refused to make the appointment with obvious distaste for "holiness," Bresee left his position as pastor. In 1895 he began a group he named the Church of the Nazarene; the Nazarenes were committed to the poor and the outcast. But Bresee also greatly emphasized the doctrine of entire sanctification.

Lesson 8: A Reasonable Doctrine: The Substance of Entire Sanctification

Due This Lesson

Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- define Christian perfection in relation to philosophical influences
- observe sanctification from the following perspectives: ontological, teleological, and relational
- describe what is meant by the substance of sanctification

Homework Assignments

Complete a first draft of a full sermon manuscript based on one of your two outlines. Make two copies.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

[Godly] love is as new as every new moment.

Entire Sanctification

Definition:

Entire sanctification can be defined as a second crisis experience following regeneration; it is an experience, received by faith, where God effectively deals with the “carnal nature” or the “bent toward sinning,” thus enabling an entirely sanctified person to significantly progress in a life of holiness and love—victorious and virtuous living.

Philosophy

Plato: perfection implied the absolute Good—or God; impossible for a human being to be perfect.

Aristotle: something—or someone—can be perfect if it is fulfilling the purpose for which it is created.

Calvinists tend to rely heavily on Plato.

While Wesley is Platonic in some respects, on the issue of perfection, he is Aristotelian.

The purpose for which we were created is to love God with our whole being and our neighbors as ourselves. Holiness optimism believes this is possible through God's grace. But the task is never done.

Ontological, Teleological, and Relational Effects

Ontological Effects

The “study of being”

- What does it mean to be?
- What does it mean to be, in relation to God?
- In relation to others? In relation to ourselves?
- Does sanctification change our very nature? If so, how?

Wesleyan-Holiness theology affirms that God does indeed transform our nature through sanctification, or more precisely, God renews our original nature.

Sin is an aberration of the human condition, a great malformation. It is *not* “only human” to sin. Sin takes us away from our humanity, not closer to it.

But to be truly human, through God’s inner transformation and restoration of our nature, is to become all we were created to be: holy, and wholly ourselves.

Teleological Effects

Greek word, *telos*

- “perfect”—complete, or full, in the sense of a culmination; maturity
- “end”—the maturity of time, circumstances, or character
- an intended end—a sense of destiny

Those who allow themselves to be influenced by the sanctifying grace of God are in line with their intended destiny.

Relational Effects

God, in triune nature, and in self-expression through the creation, is essentially relational. And we, created in God’s image, are also essentially relational.

To be human necessarily means being in relation, to God, others, self, and world. To be holy means to be in proper and loving relationship with each of these.

Sin is a distortion of these relationships; holiness necessarily implies restoration of not only our nature and our *telos* but also our very capacity for relationships.

Issues in Holiness Theology

1. Why is it significant to make our holiness doctrine “Trinitarian”?

In the light of the theological diversity in the Church so evident as we move into the 21st century, theologians are calling for a return to the Trinity as the basis for all other theological rendering.

Both salvation and sanctification are possible through God’s sacrifice of the only begotten Son. This proceeds through Jesus’ obedience to death, even death on a cross, which is applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit as we respond to and appropriate God’s free gifts of forgiveness and cleansing, through the drawing—preventive—grace, resulting in the assuring grace of this same Spirit. The whole work of God in the heart of a human is a work of the Trinitarian God.

2. Does a relational paradigm imply “positional” holiness?

A rediscovery of Wesley meant a rediscovery of the relational dynamic of holiness theology; there is a need to “retradition” ourselves if we have any chance of holding on to our Wesleyan-Holiness identity, in an age when Evangelicalism is increasingly synonymous with Fundamentalism.

Positional holiness is often used to describe a Calvinist or Keswickian understanding of sanctification; only made righteous through the *imputation* of Christ’s righteousness—our “position” through Atonement—God *perceives* us as righteous.

Wesleyan-Holiness thought wants to stress that God imparts righteousness to us—God makes us actually righteous through an inward work of grace.

3. Is the word “eradication” still valid?

The main problem with the word is its unfortunate implications. It is a metaphor, clearly. To eradicate something is to root it out; led, regrettably to a conceptualization of sin as a substance.

If the metaphor of cleansing is used—perhaps still in a medical meaning as if a wound is cleaned out—it is not impossible for an infection to return.

The most important aspect of sanctification is that sin is effectively dealt with by the work of God.

Lesson 9: The Experience: The Structure of Entire Sanctification

Due This Lesson

Sermon—first draft
Journaling
Manual, 2005-2009

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- articulate their own experience of sanctification
- precisely identify the “structure” of the experience of entire sanctification
- explain how one is entirely sanctified to a seeker of the experience
- differentiate the expectations of the process and crisis of sanctification
- articulate the importance of “secondness”

Homework Assignments

Write a three-page essay on what you believe about “growth in sanctifying grace” and spiritual formation.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/journal.htm>.

Bring your journals to class next lesson to share some of the thoughts and insights you have gained during this module.

Key Thoughts

It could be said that the experience of entire sanctification is as unique as each individual.

While we must certainly find ways to keep the articulation of entire sanctification dynamic, relevant, and realistic, and to allow for differences from person to person, to blend—unite—entire sanctification with progressive sanctification is to separate ourselves from what it means to be a Holiness church.

Reemphasizing Wesley's understanding of the “means of grace” is absolutely crucial to a balanced and healthy proclamation of God's sanctifying work in the lives of God's people.

Denominational Distinctive

Entire sanctification is subsequent to regeneration.

Entire sanctification frees us from depravity.

Entire sanctification is characterized by entire devotion to God.

Entire sanctification results in obedience and love.

Entire sanctification has an element of both taking away and giving to.

Entire sanctification is through faith—by grace—alone.

Entire sanctification is—usually—followed by the witness of the Spirit.

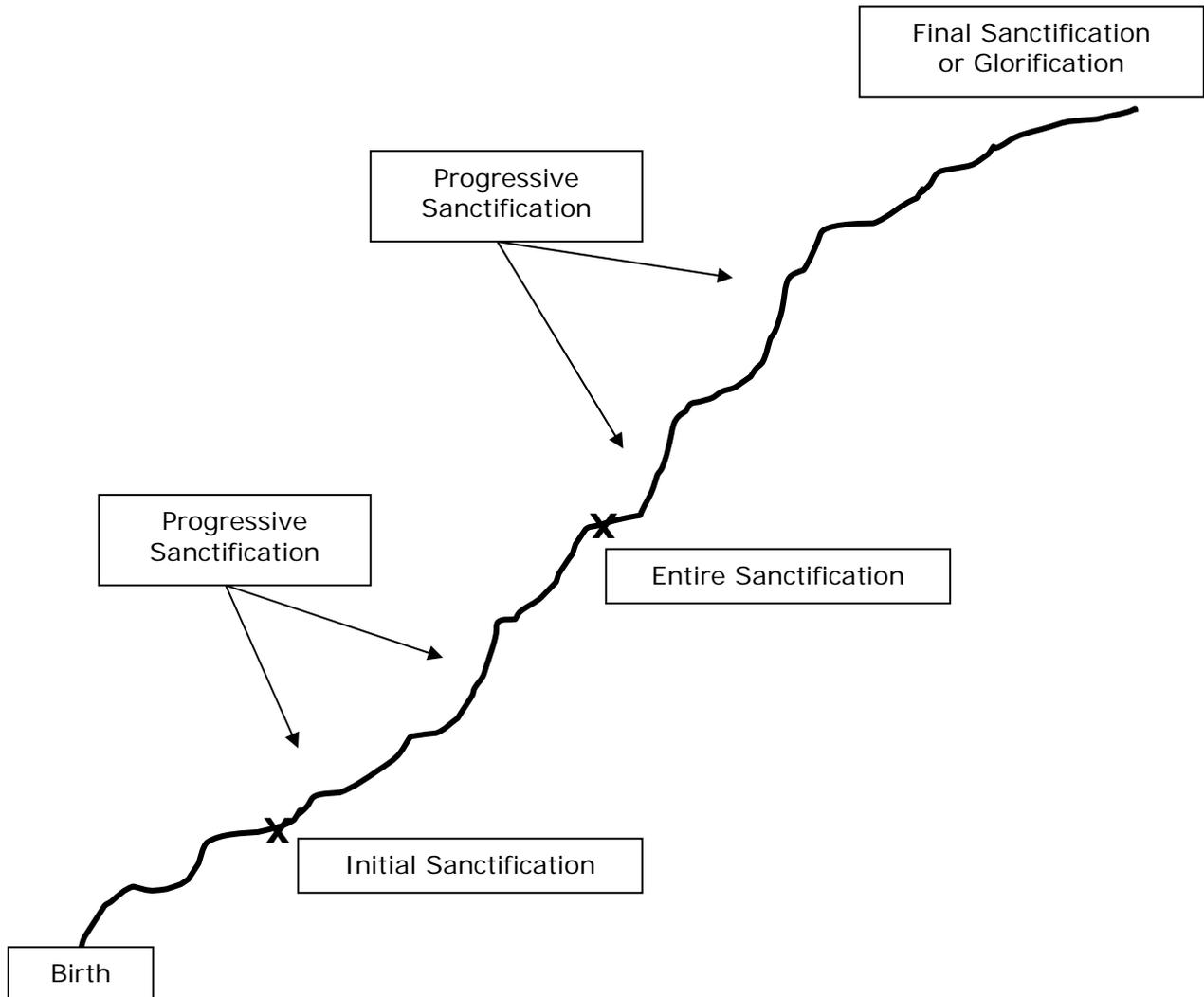
Several metaphorical phrases can be utilized to describe entire sanctification.

Entire sanctification requires subsequent growth, which must be intentionally nurtured.

This growth is growth in Christlike character.

The Structure of an Experience

This represents the *ordo salutis*, or the order of salvation. Some Wesley scholars prefer *via salutis*, or way of salvation.



Cautions

While this new revivalism of the 19th century—which preached salvation *and* entire sanctification as available now “for the taking”—allowed many to find the experience, it must be stated that the danger also exists to fix and solidify that model of the “way of holiness,” as if it is frozen in time as *the* truth.

We should not put the doctrine of entire sanctification in a box, nor propagate the notion that anything outside of our defined parameters is suspect.

- The experience for some is as quiet as a whisper; for others as loud as lightning.
- For some it simply requires the next step of obedience; for others it is a wrenching of the soul.
- For some it can come early in the Christian life; for others after years and years of seeking.
- For some it is a response to holiness preaching; for others it can be an experience to which they are drawn by God, having never heard it explained.

It could be said that the experience of entire sanctification is as unique as each individual.

Lesson 10: The Experience: The Means to the End

Due This Lesson

Essay
Journaling
Journals

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- identify all of the Wesleyan means of grace
 - clearly understand the meaning and purpose of: spiritual disciplines, growth in grace, progressive—gradual—sanctification, and spiritual formation

Homework Assignments

Read and review *Manual* paragraphs 33-41 on The Covenant of Christian Conduct. Write a two-page response.

Select a favorite Wesley quote and write why it has made an impression on you.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesely/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

Through saving grace we are Christian through and through. And yet we are always in the process of *becoming* Christian, becoming what we are.

Wesley has given us a model that allows for our intentionality that cooperates with God's gracious initiative. Progressive sanctification, then, is crucial in the Christian life; the process is a crucial follow-up to important moments of commitment. The Wesleyan understanding of the means of grace aims at Christian maturing, which never ceases in the journey.

Means of Grace

At the very heart of Wesley's understanding of progressive sanctification, of how a Christian grows, is his concept of the "means of grace." He writes: "By 'means of grace' I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained by God, to be ordinary channels whereby He might convey to persons prevenient, justifying, or sanctifying grace." Further, "All who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means that he has given."

There are three categories into which Wesley has placed certain activities.

- The "general" means of grace
- The instituted means of grace
- The prudential means of grace

Spiritual Formation

“The phrase ‘spiritual formation’ derives from Galatians 4:19 where St. Paul wrote, ‘My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.’ Paul uses the word ‘morphoo’ (form)—closely related to ‘metamorphoo’ (Transform)—and it refers to the essential nature, not mere outward form. Paul is praying that the inward nature of the Galatian believers would become so like Christ that one could say that Christ has been formed in them. They would be mere humans, not divine, not a Savior themselves, but they would have real Christ-like character and behavior.”³²

Wes Tracy

“The whole person in relationship with God,
Within the community of believers,
Growing in Christlikeness,
Reflected in a Spirit-directed, disciplined lifestyle,
And demonstrated in redemptive action in our world.”³³

The Sanctifying Sacrament

"The Lord's Supper is a 'sanctifying ordinance,' a sign of the continuity, necessity, and availability of God's enabling, communal, confirming, nurturing grace. Our characters are formed, sanctified, by such instruments of continual divine activity in our lives."³⁴

William Willimon

"Whereas baptism is the sacrament of initiation and consequently is not repeated, the sacrament of sanctification is to be celebrated again and again from baptism until death."³⁵

Rob Staples

The Eucharist in Wesley's eyes is a means by which the soul is peculiarly nourished; the act, which involves memory as well as the direct activity of the Holy Spirit, is a direct way of participating in the ongoing, transforming grace of God.

Lesson 11: The Experience: Holiness Ethics

Due This Lesson

2-page paper
Wesley quote
Journaling

Learner Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will

- explain both personal and social holiness and their interconnection
- explain the goal of the holy life
- explain Wesley's words, "affections" and "tempers"
- identify and theologically correct abuses such as legalism and antinomianism
- relate the Covenant of Christian Conduct to holiness theology

Homework Assignments

Finish a final, full manuscript of a Holiness sermon based on the outline, and peer and instructor critique of your earlier draft.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. It would also be helpful to read from John Wesley's journal throughout the course, available at <http://www.ccel.org/w/wesely/journal/journal.htm>.

Key Thought

Every aspect of Wesley's relentless focus on an individual's holiness was for the purpose of making that individual an agent of perfect love to those around him or her.

Aristotle—Character and Virtue

Aristotle believed there are four “causes” in all entities, including the human being.

- “Material cause,” which asks the question of why something does what it does.
- “Efficient cause”
- “Formal cause” makes a chair a chair, and not a house
- “Final cause” of an entity determines its end, or its *telos*. He believed the *telos* of the human being is happiness.

Happiness or fulfillment only comes when we act on what we know.

Four types of character that potentially emerge from this tension between knowing and doing

- The “vicious” character—knows what he or she ought to do but chooses to do otherwise, with no remorse
- The “incontinent” character—knows what ought to be done, chooses in fact to do it, but then fails to follow through
- The “continent” character—knows the good and does the good, but only out of duty
- The truly “virtuous” character—knows the good, does the good for the sake of virtue itself

Tempers and Affections

Inward change was a change in what Wesley called the “affections.” Most simply put, the “affections” were the converging point for the will and emotions. The affections are indispensable motivating inclinations that lie beneath all human action.

There is more here than individual acts enabled by the gracious action of God. The affections can and should be habituated into enduring “tempers” as we cooperate with God’s gracious action in our lives. It is then out of these good “tempers” that actions flow. The major and most primary temper to develop in us is love for God and neighbor.

We change within, or more appropriately, *we are changed within*—by grace—so that we act outwardly in life from a purified heart. Sanctification, in all its aspects, is the actualization of the potentiality of holy love.

Avoiding the Extremes

Moralistic or legalistic

- Losing the crucial balance between God's grace and our response, by falling toward the side of our own action
- Holiness then becomes defined by a prescribed moral list.

Antinomianism

Grace becomes "cheap."

A Wesleyan-Holiness ethic, then, is doing all we can to enable others to actualize their own human potential at any given moment, whether through

- acts of mercy—caring for the needy and suffering
- righting social injustice—addressing the oppressing structures underneath human suffering
- evangelism—giving hope to those suffering in despair by proclaiming the transforming power of God's love

"Holiness" and "perfect love," as taught and lived by John Wesley and his followers, is not only our past but also our future, if we let it guide us—not just as our "distinctive" but as our directive.

Lesson 12: Holiness for the 21st Century

Due This Lesson

Final draft of sermon
Journaling

Learner Objectives

- By the end of this lesson, participants will
- synthesize the Wesley vs. 19th century debate
 - recognize the relevance of holiness in the contemporary age
 - offer suggestions for adaptations in holiness language

Homework Assignments

Live holiness of heart and life.

Key Thought

If we affirm that the *reality* of what is known as “holiness” or “sanctification”—which we believe was faithfully preached by Wesley and his successors—transcends time and space, we must see it as a vital message to be passed to future generations.

This is the challenge: to regain or recreate an ethos, a vision, and a distinctive spirituality as we attempt to articulate the doctrine of holiness in the next century. This is not a task, however, for one theologian or one preacher or one teacher.

Excerpts from “Sanctified Eccentricity: Continuing Relevance of the Nineteenth-Century Holiness Paradigm”

by Douglas M. Strong

Since Calvinist forms of Christianity predominated within early American religion, Methodism was considered to be a theological intruder in relation to the dominant spirituality of the early Republic. Interestingly, this Calvinist critique has re-emerged among historians in the latter half of the twentieth century, articulated by self-proclaimed guardians of evangelical orthodoxy, nearly all of whom hail from Calvinistic or Calvinistically-inclined Baptist traditions and see the Wesleyan heritage as theologically dangerous.

These neo-evangelical historians interpret nineteenth-century American religious history primarily as the story of fanatical emotionalism, anti-intellectualism, and works righteousness. They agree that the nineteenth century was the “Methodist century” as some religious historians have called it. But they believe that this fact was exactly the problem of the nineteenth century.

Although this generic, late twentieth century, Baptisified neo-evangelicalism is not at all theologically congenial to the Wesleyan message, nevertheless many Holiness churches have been assimilated under its all embracing umbrella.

Holiness churches, for example, have happily participated in the burgeoning prosperity of American neo-evangelicalism. Ironically, although Holiness churches were long resistant to cultural accommodations, they have now fully identified with the consumerism that typifies today’s American evangelicals. It seems that late twentieth-century Holiness churches have forgotten their nineteenth-century roots. Many of them have largely lost their distinctiveness—thriving numerically, but without their saltiness. This may be what Keith Drury is referring to when he states that the Holiness Movement is dead. It is dead, because, on a popular level, it has accepted the Calvinist neo-evangelical paradigm in place of its own.³⁶

The problems with the nineteenth century are easily identifiable. Optimism could lead to a liberal stress on human sufficiency; decisionism could lead to Pelagianism; experiential immediacy could lead to emotional fanaticism; moral earnestness could lead to legalism; and inclusive fellowship could lead to sectarian separatism. But it is important to lift up commendable qualities, as well.

In my quest for a usable past, I have tried to discern the characteristic marks or features of nineteenth-century spirituality that have value for us. Rather than simply a particular doctrinal emphasis, Holiness men and women expressed an ethos, a vision, a distinctive spirituality.³⁷

Endnotes

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- ¹ Sermon 78, "Spiritual Idolatry," paragraph I.18, *Works* (Jackson), 6:441.
- ² Wesley D. Tracy, "The Cleansing Blood of Jesus," in *Biblical Resources for Holiness Preaching: from Text to Sermon, Vol. 2*, eds. H. Ray Dunning and Neil B. Wiseman (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1990-1993), 259-71. Reprinted by permission.
- ³ Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotes in this chapter are from the NKJV.
- ⁴ For a study of the passages in John's Gospel that were being misinterpreted see Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* in *The Anchor Bible*, eds. William F. Albright and David M. Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1982), 232-43.
- ⁵ R. R. Williams, *The Letters of John and James* in *The Cambridge Bible Commentary*, eds. P. R. Ackroyd, A. R. C. Leany, and J. W. Packer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 19.
- ⁶ David Jackman, *The Message of John's Letters*, in *The Bible Speaks Today*, ed. John R. W. Stott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 18.
- ⁷ Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John* in *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 51:20.
- ⁸ Jackman, *John's Letters*, 28.
- ⁹ Smalley arranges the positive and negative "if" and "consequential" clauses in this manner (p. 24). See also Raymond E. Brown's presentation of these declarations as protases and compound apodoses. *Anchor Bible*, 231-37.
- ¹⁰ Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), 22.
- ¹¹ Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 59.
- ¹² I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* in *New Century Bible Commentary*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 112-13.
- ¹³ See Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 33; Westcott, *Epistles of John*, 25.
- ¹⁴ Brown, *Epistles of John*, 234-35.
- ¹⁵ Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 23.
- ¹⁶ Earl F. Palmer, *1, 2, 3 John, Revelation* in *The Communicator's Commentary*, ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 12:31-32.
- ¹⁷ Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 32.
- ¹⁸ Westcott, *Epistles of John*, 21.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1981. Pages not numbered; see comments on 1 John 1:7, 9.
- ²¹ Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, n.d.), 6:905.
- ²² Brown, *Epistles of John*, 238.
- ²³ Westcott, *Epistles of John*, 41.
- ²⁴ Williams, *Letters of John and James*, 21.
- ²⁵ Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 40.
- ²⁶ Clarke, *Commentary*, 6:904.
- ²⁷ John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1978), 11:419.
- ²⁸ John Wesley, "On Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," Discourse III in *Sermons on Several Occasions* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, n.d.), 326.
- ²⁹ Jackman, *John's Letters*, 26.
- ³⁰ *Works*, 6:52-53.

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- ³¹ George Croft Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1935), 347.
- ³² Wes Tracy, *Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation, Faculty Guide* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2002), 1-9.
- ³³ Wesley Tracy, E. Dee Freeborn, Janine Tartaglia, and Morris A. Weigelt, *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 12.
- ³⁴ William H. Willimon, *The Service of God: Christian Work and Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 125.
- ³⁵ Rob Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1991), 204-5.
- ³⁶ Douglas M. Strong, "Sanctified Eccentricity: Continuing Relevance of the Nineteenth-Century Holiness Paradigm." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 35 (2000), 11-12.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.