

Devotional Thoughts :: The Secrets of John Wesley's Devotional Life

The Secrets of John Wesley's Devotional Life - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/17 20:49

The Secrets of John Wesley's Devotional Life

(1) It was disciplined

Wesley valued his time with God and so he was willing to discipline himself to get the most out of it. He set his alarm for 4 in the morning just to begin the day with at least two hours of devotions. He rigorously kept a daily diary to record personal thoughts and scripture verses that were meaningful to him. This does not mean that Wesley did not suffer from dry times, or times when he felt God was far away. Discipline however kept him in his daily devotions in spite of what he felt. Wesley kept his daily devotions not because it made him feel good but because he knew it would make him better.

What do you value about your daily devotions?**What difficulties do you face in keeping daily devotions?**

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/july/wesley01.jpg>]

(2) It was realistic

Wesley was realistic. He realised that getting up early would not be possible unless he slept early. Thus he would turn in no later than 10 at night. Wesley did have his struggles. It took him several months before he could get up so early for his morning devotions. He knew the difficulties of a disciplined spiritual walk. Wesley also learnt to adapt his style. There was a time when he morbidly noted all his failures on a chart in his journal. However, as he grew older and wiser, he realised the need to apply God's grace instead. He did away with his chart of failures and reflected more on God's goodness in his life.

How have you made your devotional life more suited to the schedule you keep?

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/july/wesley02.jpg>]

(3) It had depth

Wesley's life was rich with treasured readings which made his devotions have a depth of understanding of both man and God. His primary reading material was the Bible, of course. However, he read classics like "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas a' Kempis and "An Introduction to the Devout Life" by Francis deSales. Through these books he learnt how to apply his knowledge of the Bible to his everyday life. He also read extensively on a broad variety of subjects that ranged from philosophy to medicine. Wesley knew how to balance the study of the Word with the study of other works. If he had read widely without a focus on the Word, he would have become shallow-minded. If he had focused on the Word of God alone without tasting other literature, he would have become narrow-minded. He knew how to do both right.

What other materials beside your Bible do you use for your daily devotions?**(4) It had breadth**

Wesley's devotional life was hidden and rooted in private practice but its fruits were borne and shared in public. Wesley made it a point to extend his devotional time to a larger community. He had regular class meetings with fellow-believers where they heard each others' confessions and encouraged one another in the faith. He also found great meaning in sharing the Holy Communion regularly with others. Wesley's devotional life was a discipline which he shared in community. Church attendance was an important part of his devotions. He knew the importance of being part of the body of Christ. He was no Lone Ranger.

In what ways do you share your devotional experiences regularly with fellow believers?

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/july/wesley03.jpg>]

HOW TO LIVEN UP YOUR DEVOTIONAL LIFE

1) Writing

Wesley wrote out prayers to express himself. If you are good with words you can do the same. Here is an example:

Each moment draw from earth away
My heart, that lowly waits thy call;
Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
"I am thy Love, thy God, thy All!"
To feel thy power, to hear thy voice,
To taste thy love, be all my choice.
AMEN.

We can also speak to God through other means. You may try drawing out your thoughts. Or else clip special items or sayings that have inspired you like the following saying from Wesley:

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/july/wesley04.jpg>]

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/july/wesley05.jpg>]

(2) Reading Prayers

Wesley often read collections of prayers. These helped him focus on God and also prevented him from being too self-centered in his prayers. Try reading this prayer of his 3 times and let the words speak to you.

Take my poor heart, and let it be
Forever closed to all but thee;
Seal thou my breast, and let me wear
That pledge of love forever there.

Re: The Secrets of John Wesley's Devotional Life - posted by Will (), on: 2004/7/21 4:42

Thanks for this. There is no better way to start the day, than with 2 hours (or more) spent with God!

How did you find this out, like are you sure he went to sleep no later than 10pm?

Re: The Secrets of John Wesley's Devotional Life - posted by PastorEdP (), on: 2004/11/6 7:43

This is wonderful, Greg. Something I've noticed about the "old fellows." They didn't fudge when it came to prayer time. They must have really been able to concentrate. I'm lucky if I can go 15 minutes at a time, so I spread my prayer time throughout the day. And many a time have I prayed at night and found myself asleep on my knees. But the key is really not quantity but quality, isn't it?

Re: - posted by JoeA (), on: 2004/12/1 16:18

this is great. i've for awhile loved reading about John Wesley. a great man of God.

Re: Interest in interesting things - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/7/16 15:35

Quote:
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This paragraph from Wesley's devotional secrets was an answer to a question I had this week.

This thread is well worth reading. I'm happy to put it back into circulation...

MC

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/11/9 8:55

This is a good thread.

Re: - posted by tacklebox (), on: 2005/11/9 9:39

Wonderful post, Greg. Is this from a webpage?

I continue to thank God for you and this website. I have grown so much through it.

-Chris

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/11/9 10:14

Chris,

I do not remember if I scanned it in or used it from a webpage. I do remember it being from an old tract, possibly online. I love old methodism materials. I just got a book on the "history of methodism" and I want to scan in the 250 images found in it. Lots of helpful wisdom in these old books.