

A prayer guide in the series: The Way to the Kingdom

The Way to Christian Perfection

By Kevin M. Watson

John Wesley could remember a time before Methodism existed. He witnessed the beginnings of the Methodist movement, where the Holy Spirit moved in powerful, surprising, and at times, even indescribable ways. If at the end of his life, John Wesley looked back over the more than fifty years of his ministry and said, “this is the reason God raised us up,” well, I would pay attention! Wouldn’t you?

Did you know that Wesley did just that?

Less than six months before he died, on September 15, 1790, John Wesley wrote a letter to a Methodist preacher named Robert Carr Brackenbury. In this letter, Wesley identified “the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up.”

The big deposit that God entrusted Methodists to preach and teach so that it could be experienced was the doctrine of entire sanctification or Christian perfection.

Wesley believed that Methodism was raised up to offer a way of receiving God’s perfect love. We receive the gift of entire sanctification by faith, in the same way that we receive the gift of justification and pardon by faith in the work of Jesus Christ.

Wesley offered Methodists a simple test of whether they were seeking to be made holy by faith or by their own works in his sermon “The Scripture Way of Salvation.”

And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first, before you are sanctified. You think, I must first be or do thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are; and expect it now. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connexion between these three points, --expect it by faith; expect it as you are; and expect it now!

But what is entire sanctification or Christian perfection? Positively, entire sanctification means that we are empowered to obey the Greatest Commandment, to love God and neighbor with everything that we have. Negatively, Wesley defined entire sanctification simply as “love excluding sin.”

The way of Christian perfection requires turning our eyes from ourselves and our inability and looking to Jesus as the author, pioneer, and perfecter of our faith. Because of Jesus, the power of his resurrection, and his ascension to the right hand of God the Father, we can live the lives he intends for us to live. We can live victorious lives now!

A Suggested Pattern of Prayer

As you pray through the following prayer points, invite the presence of the Lord into your time of prayer. Each day's prompt has a Scripture reference for you to pray through. As you pray allow time to also listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. When you have prayed through the Scripture and prayer point, you may be led to add your own prayers. Pray and consider what action steps might you take in response to the Lord's leading. Repeat this prayer pattern weekly for the month.

Prayer points:

Sunday: Give thanks for the Church and the opportunity to gather together with brothers and sisters in Christ to watch over one another in love. (Acts 2: 43-47)

Monday: Invite Jesus to show people whether their efforts to grow in their faith are grounded in the assurance in what He has already done or based in their own ability. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Tuesday: Remember that it is God's will that you be sanctified. Confess any sins you have committed that have created a barrier to your sanctification. Pray for others to confess their sins as well. (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8)

Wednesday: Give thanks to the Father for the lives of those who have witnessed to receiving the gift of Christian perfection. Pray for others to receive the gift of Christian perfection. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Thursday: Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring conviction to leaders of our movement that the way of Christian perfection is *the* thing that God has deposited in our tribe. Ask the Spirit to give us eyes to see that there is still living water here. (Genesis 26:17-19)

Friday: Thank God for the rich heritage we are privileged to steward. Ask Jesus to give the Global Methodist Church the courage and strength to leave the wilderness wandering and cross over to reclaim the best of our heritage. (Joshua 1:1-9)

Saturday: Ask Jesus to give the Church the gift of full salvation, to sanctify her entirely! (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

Want to know more about the way of Christian perfection? See Kevin's new book: Perfect Love: Recovering Entire Sanctification – The Lost Power of the Methodist Movement. Available here: <https://my.seedbed.com/product/perfect-love/>