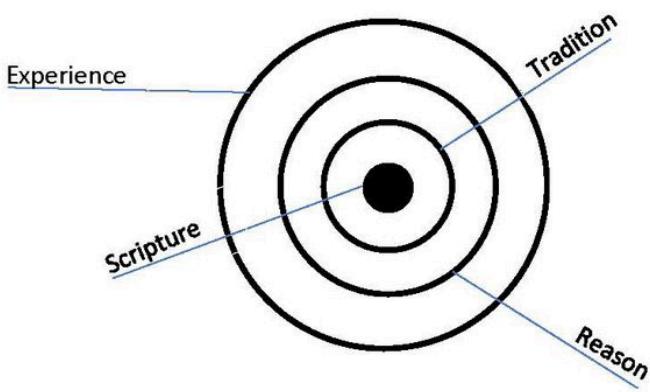


Unraveling Questions



Exploring God's Word
the Wesleyan Way

Wesleyan Quadrilateral

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a four-part way of study and reflection to determine God's truth on a particular question or topic. It was developed by John Wesley (1703-1791) - a clergyman, theologian, and evangelist responsible for a revival movement within the Church of England in the 1700s. The four parts of study are:

- Scripture
- Tradition
- Experience
- Reason

It may seem odd to intentionally think about God and His character in this way, but the reality is the four aspects of Wesley's teaching impact our faith even if we don't recognize it.

This way of study can highlight areas where our tradition has turned to legalism, our experience has become a form of pride, or we've become dependent on our own reason above all else. First and foremost, we must remember, "Scripture is primary". Not just the parts we like and understand, but all of it. We must consider Scripture as a whole and enter into it with a heart to learn who God is, and who we are before Him.

This guide leads you in using Wesley's way of discernment to find God's truth. Beginning your time of study with prayer sets your heart in line with God's. The Shema - a prayer from the Jewish tradition based on Deuteronomy 6:4-5 - is a prayer for God to be of first importance in your life and heart.

"Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God,
the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your
God with all your heart, all your soul,
and all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Use the space below to write a prayer based on Deuteronomy 6:4-5 to use as you work your way through the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

Choose the topic you would like to explore. Then use the steps on the following pages to discern what God's truth is concerning your particular question.

Scripture

First things first. Use a concordance or internet search to find scriptures that relate to the word or subject you have chosen to study. Read at least three of the references. Write one or two that seem significant to you below.

Diving Deeper into Scripture

Take the verses you've discovered and explore even further. Read them in another translation or Bible version. Is there a difference that draws your attention?

Are there other verses in the Bible that connect in some way?

Is there a word that needs further definition? Look it up in a dictionary or find its original meaning in Hebrew or Greek. The NETbible.org site is great for this.

Insights

What insight have you discovered in your study of Scripture?

What questions come to mind?

Tradition

Tradition includes more than the beliefs of your chosen church or denomination. Tradition is what has been passed to us from generation to generation. It flows from the things we've learned directly from others.

This is the area we ask the question... What have I been taught by my family...? church...? others?

Explore historical information about the topic in church history or teachings from others.

Reflect on the first memory you have about this topic.

Insights

Remember... Scripture is primary. Compare your tradition to God's Word. How does it measure up?

Does this tradition trace its roots to the Apostles' teachings? One way to consider it is to compare it to the Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed.

What insights have you gained from your tradition about this topic?

Reason

This is not the kind of reason that says, "If you can't see it or prove it, then it just can't be." Nor is it the kind that depends on knowledge, research, or scientific evidence. Because our own reason is flawed and limited, we must be careful to depend on the Holy Spirit to inspire our reason in order to embrace God's truth. This is a time to consider your motives behind your understanding.

When you think about the topic or question you are exploring, what comes to mind? What motivation is behind your desire to learn more in this area?

What seems reasonable about what you understand so far? What feels unreasonable?

What lies at the root of your reasoning? Is it based on what you know of God's character? Or the world's understanding?

Insights

What insights did you gain when you considered your reasoning about the chosen topic? Were you surprised by your motives? or where the basis for your reasoning was rooted?

John Wesley taught reason cannot be divided from God. He went on to explain that although reason cannot produce faith, when impartial reason speaks it helps us understand new birth, inward holiness, and outward holiness. What new understanding have you gained so far?

Experience

Experience is personal and the final part of this study practice. It points to the understanding that your faith is a personal daily-lived relationship with God. After studying Scripture, exploring tradition, and considering reason, what is your personal experience with your chosen topic or question?

What's your story? How does it fit within God's story?

Examine the emotions that surfaced in your time of study. Do they point to something deeper?

Does your story reflect the truth of Scripture? or the world?

Insights

What insights have you gained from your own experience?
Has it changed or transformed in some way?

Sharing Your Exploration

Review what you discovered as you explored your question. What have you learned? How does it line up with God's entire story or Word? How does it measure up to what you know and understand or believe about Jesus -- the Word made flesh?

What is God calling you to share with your community?



Unraveled Love

a free resource from
UnraveledLove.com