

Our Wesleyan Theology

To Parents: This week's lesson is on *Our Wesleyan Theology*. This lesson will explore the influence of John Wesley on our beliefs.

The foundation and distinctiveness of the Church of the Nazarene is our belief in holiness, being set free (Romans 8:2) through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22) from the powers that separate us from God (Colossians 2:15). This transforming grace enables believers to live free from the bondage of sin, transforming the sinner through new birth in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit, then, takes up residence in the Christian and effects transformation, purifying the believer of all that is contrary to the nature of God. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18a, *NIV*).

You may read this and wonder how realistic is this new life in Christ, recognizing in others or even yourself the pull of old sinful habits. Does life in Christ really offer a better life, a life more reflective of God Himself? The New Testament answers it this way: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4). "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20). [All from *NIV*]

We are called "Wesleyan" after John Wesley. He believed the Bible says that God could transform us, that we don't have to stay stuck in our sinful ways but can live in a way that pleases God. It is called holiness. This wonderful life God offers to all who accept Him as Lord and Savior is a life that is lived not in our own flesh, but through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-8).

Lesson Objective:

To help children see how being Wesleyan shapes how we view scriptures and how that enables and empowers us to live lives of holiness as well as sharing the message of holiness.

Bible Story with Discussion: The Story of Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10)

After reading the Bible story, ask these questions:

What did you like about this story?

What happened because Jesus went to Zaccheus' house?

What does it mean to be transformed?

Is your life different because of Jesus?

How do you think God wants us to live?

Scripture and Memory Verse: Romans 1:16 (*NIV*)

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."

Personal Challenge:

Discuss with your children how Jesus may want us to live as a result of hearing this Bible story. Listen to their responses. Nazarenes believe that God, out of His grace-filled love for us, transforms our self-centered, hearts into a pure-love-for-others centered heart. After our heart is changed, we continue to grow in our understanding of how God wants us to live. Our motives are continually growing more like Christ, and that shows in how we live with and for others. We call that holiness or holy living. Nazarenes believe that God's spirit can live in us and help us to not sin and to live a holy life instead.

This week, look for opportunities to share Jesus love with others. Talk about possible scenarios and engage in some role play. What are things you think people should know about Jesus and how he feels about the people he created? Look for opportunities to tell someone about Jesus and how much He loves them.

PRAYER:

God, thank You for loving us. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. Transform our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. Help us share your transforming love with others. Help us to be more like You. In Jesus' name, amen.