

Rule #3: Stay in Love with God



“I Never Moved”

Life is complicated. Our airwaves, bandwidths and bookshelves are loaded with instructions aimed at making us prosperous, successful and fulfilled, not to mention fit and fabulous looking. Do you ever long for simplicity? A return to the basics? A clear, no-nonsense approach to living? John Wesley, the founder of Methodism and no stranger to complicated and chaotic times, originated three basic rules for the ‘People called Methodists.’

Sermon notes from January 20:

“I Never Moved”

Scripture Reference:

Isaiah 43:1-7

1. God calls us into a reciprocal relationship.
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2. We can stay in love with God by:

A. Worshipping regularly and actively.

B. Staying in communication through prayer and study.

C. Seeking to love those God loves.

Daily Readings and Devotions for the Week of January 21-26

Monday, January 21 Read Psalm 59:16-17

This is one of the royal psalms praying for deliverance from enemies, yet it is built upon the confident knowledge of God’s abiding love. How does the knowledge of another’s love provide strength and confidence for you?

How does knowing God loves you give you courage and hope for living? _____

Tuesday January 22 Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9

We are familiar with the call to love the Lord (Jesus echoed it in Matthew 22). Why is the scripture so insistent that we teach this fact repeatedly and write it down?

Given the subsequent history of the people of Israel and our own experience of discipleship, why is this repetition good advice and what does it say about our tendency to fall away? _____

Wednesday, January 23 Read Isaiah 43:1-7

There are times when we all feel separated or forgotten by God. How does this good news from Isaiah answer those fears and doubts? _____

Given that Egypt was the most powerful, Ethiopia and Seba the richest nations of the time, what does v. 3 tell us?

As a Christian, how does this prophecy link to the story of Jesus? _____

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Thursday, January 24 Read Luke 22:14-20

Love is an expression of sharing all we are with another. In what ways does the celebration of communion re-enact or re-member the love of God expressed in Christ? _____

How can a deeper appreciation for this sacrament help us stay in love with God? _____

Friday, January 25 Read Romans 8:24-27

Someone who really loves us understands us and accepts us even when we ourselves do not. In this passage, how does the Holy Spirit express this sort of love for us? _____

What might be some of the ways we could respond to this loving acceptance?

Saturday, January 26 Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

People who love us also hold us accountable to be our best and do what's right. How does God's gift of Scripture help in that part of His relationship with you? _____

How does seeing the Bible this way remind us of the importance of reading, studying and listening to it? _____

Staying in love with God

Avoiding harm and doing good stem from a close walk with God and the power and guidance He provides. Below are some possible activities to try in the coming week to strengthen your walk with God. Try one or more and share the results with a prayer partner or devotional group.

- **Add and extra 15 minutes to your prayer time this week. If you don't already have a daily prayer time, consider starting it. Be sure to include some time of silence to simply reflect and listen for God's answers.**
- **If you are not already in one, join a regular Sunday school class or Bible study and strive to be a regular participant**
- **Get to know someone in the church who you don't know very well yet. Sit with them (either on Sunday or Wednesday night). Invite someone to church with you.**

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Small Group Discussion Guide

1. **Read Psalm 59:16-17** Share with the group: This is one of the royal psalms praying for deliverance from enemies, yet it is built upon the confident knowledge of God's abiding love.
 - How does the knowledge of another's love provide strength and confidence for you?
 - How does knowing God loves you give you courage and hope for living?

2. **Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9** Share: We are familiar with the call to love the Lord (Jesus echoed it in Matthew 22).
 - Why is the scripture so insistent that we teach this fact repeatedly and write it down? Given the subsequent history of the people of Israel and our own experience of discipleship, why is this repetition good advice and what does it say about our tendency to fall away?

3. **Read Luke 22:14-20** Share and discuss: Love is an expression of sharing all we are with another.
 - In what ways does the celebration of communion re-enact or re-member the love of God expressed in Christ?
 - How can a deeper appreciation for this sacrament help us stay in love with God?

4. **Read Romans 8:24-27** Share the following statement and discuss the questions: Someone who really loves us understands us and accepts us even when we ourselves do not. In this passage, how does the Holy Spirit express this sort of love for us?
 - What might be some of the ways we could respond to this loving acceptance?

5. **Read Isaiah 43:1-7** There are times when we all feel separated or forgotten by God.
 - How does this good news from Isaiah answer those fears and doubts?
 - Given that Egypt was the most powerful, Ethiopia and Seba the richest nations of the time, what does v. 3 tell us?
 - As a Christian, how does this prophecy link to the story of Jesus?

6. **Share and discuss these points from last Sunday's sermon and discuss the questions that follow.**
 - A. **God calls us into a reciprocal relationship.**
Why is it important that our connection with God be a 'two-way street?'

 - B. **We can stay in love with God by:**
 - **Worshipping regularly and actively.**
Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
 - **Staying in communication through prayer and study.**
Discuss ways your prayer and study life have been effective and ways they have not. Can you offer to one another suggestions and encouragement to improve this aspect of discipleship?
 - **Seeking to love those God loves.**
How does our relationship with God help us to avoid harm and do good? Why is that important?