

A Methodist Way of Life for February 2025 “Live” We live in a way that draws people to Jesus

Introduction

There are three different approaches to evangelism in a Methodist Way of Life: ‘Tell’ is about what we say (conversation with others), ‘Share’ is about what we do (our loving actions with individuals and communities) and ‘Live’ is about being the image of God (naturally radiating God’s love, to draw people to Jesus).

Key themes

- We are formed by the people and culture around us. But we are all also made in God's image, so let that shine out (Ephesians 5:1-2).
- We have great power to influence and affect other people by the way we live our life.
- Live as God made us to be. In this way we worship God in our day-to-day lives at work, at home, and out and about.
- Living this Christian way of life roots us in God and opens us to allow the love of God to shine out through us.

Relevant bible passages

Let’s explore three bible passages to understand the theological context of this theme “to live”.

- “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”
(Source: Matthew’s Gospel Chapter 5 verses 14 and 16.)
- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”
(Source: Paul’s letter to the Galatians Chapter 5 verses 22 and 23)
- “Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and “walk” in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
(Source: Paul’s letter to the Ephesians Chapter 5 verse 1.)

Reflections

We are called to live as people of light, reflecting something of the light of Christ wherever we are. So, you are to “let your light shine before others” (Matthew 5:16). The word ‘let’ here is important. It means more than ‘allow’, it’s closer in meaning to ‘ensure’. This is why “no one after lighting a lamp puts it under a basket, but on the lampstand: and it gives light to all in the house” (Matthew 5:15). This light shows others something of God – in the same way that we can see something of God in others.

While we often talk of how our actions can draw people to Jesus (Matthew 5:16 says “they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven”), This may be a heavy burden, and an impossible task. Lots of us feel we’re inadequate Christians. We’re inclined to think to ourselves “What could I possibly do that would draw anyone to Jesus?” Ultimately it all points to a suggestion that we must be ‘more holy’ than we are. This can feel like a constant requirement to ‘do better’ or ‘try harder’.

But Jesus does not ask us to be perfect, only to be a Christlike reflection, authentic to who God has made us to be in God’s image. Like the disciples, we try to imitate Jesus, but in the full knowledge that we will fall short.

We are made in God’s image, each unique and precious, and called to be “beloved children, and live in love” (Ephesians 1). Let our relationship with God shine out by living authentically as a whole self; the self who God made us to be. In this way we worship God in our day-to-day lives at work, at home, and out and about.

Our calling is the pursuit of holiness. In other words to live in a way that draws others to Jesus, that is, to live like the people of God. It is essentially Christian for all of us, and will reflect the very real and diverse nature of the Christian family. We’ll spend our lives working out how to be good Christians. Don’t expect to find a shortcut to spiritual growth. There aren’t any.

In 1874, Frances Ridley Havergal wrote a hymn describing a desire for each part of our life to be given to God:

- Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee
- Take my moments and my days; let them flow in endless praise
- Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love
- Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee
- Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King
- Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee
- Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold
- Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose
- Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine
- Take my heart it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne
- Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store
- Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

(Source: Singing the Faith “Take my Life” number 566)

“To Do” : Tell someone what you love about them.

Source: “A Methodist Way Of Life” Abridged and amended for BMC
www.methodist.org.uk/faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/ then search for “Live”.

Prepared by: John Cornish