

**In All Things Love**

*READ through the Bible passage. WRITE your thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life experience. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.*

**Monday, 7/7/08 – Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: We don't always agree with each other in the church. And our disagreements can lead to divisions and factions. Is there a better way? ... John Wesley, the founder of Methodism in the 1700's, borrowed a principle that he recommended to the Methodists: **"In Essentials, UNITY; in Non-Essentials, LIBERTY; in all things, CHARITY (that is, LOVE)."** ... This week let's explore Wesley's principle in the light of the Bible.

We'll start and end with love. What do you think love is? A feeling? An action? A choice? What is love? Today's Bible reading is perhaps the best-known description of love in the Bible. Read it through again carefully. What does it say love is? Do you agree?

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**Tuesday, 7/8/08 – Read 2 Corinthians 15:1-11**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: John Wesley insisted that the Methodists strive for unity in the "essentials" of the Christian faith. But he did not in one place leave for us a list of "the essentials" -- though the most important themes of his teaching are clear. In today's reading the apostle Paul also lays out what he considers "of first importance." Does this passage seem to you to indicate some of the essentials of Christian faith? Why -- or why not? ... What do you think is "essential" to Christian faith? In other words, what do you think are the core ideas, teachings, beliefs that are necessary for faith to be Christian? How would you phrase it?

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**Wednesday, 7/9/08 – Read Ephesians 2:4-10**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: Today's reading is another statement that many have considered essential to Christian faith: specifically, that God saves us (brings us into right relationship with God) as a gift, not as something we earn by good behavior. All we have to do is trust God's generous gift. Is that for you essential to Christian faith? Why or why not? Is there something else you would want to include?

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**Thursday, 7/10/08 – Read Matthew 23:23-24**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: So often our disagreements, our quarrels with others, are not about the really important things. We fight about things that are not essential. ... John Wesley suggested that in non-essential matters, we grant liberty -- we recognize people's freedom to think their own thoughts; we "cut them some slack." ... Jesus was most ferocious with those who put too much emphasis on things that were really insignificant. We say "making a mountain out of a molehill" to suggest the same thing. Can you think of some examples where making trivial or unimportant things too important has been destructive?

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**Friday, 7/11/08 – Read Proverbs 3:30**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

A Question to Answer: Do you ever find yourself in conflict with others even when there has been no harm done -- even when there is likely not to be any harm? ... What does it say to people outside the church when (within the church) people are fighting over things that just don't matter very much? ... Think of a time when you got really upset with someone over

something insignificant. How might you have done that differently? How might you have given the other person “liberty” over something that was not “essential”?

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**Saturday, 7/12/08 – Read Colossians 3:12-17**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: John Wesley’s principle recommends that, whether we agree or not, we always relate to one another out of love. In the words of Wesley, “In all things charity.” ... That’s a tall order, isn’t it? ... Try this: picture in your mind someone you have a disagreement with. And then, still holding that person in mind, read again Colossians 3:12-17. How does it feel to think of that person while you’re reading this passage? Does the passage suggest to you some different way you might approach that person?

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**Sunday, 7/13/08 – Read Mark 9:38-41**

My Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

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A Question to Answer: “In Essentials, UNITY; in Non-Essentials, LIBERTY; in all things, CHARITY (that is, LOVE).” ... Jesus himself was clear about all this. What he said was “Whoever is not against us is for us.” ... Try to be very personal now. Is there a person or group of people that you need to reassess -- that you need to reconsider the way you relate to them? Maybe your disagreement is over something non-essential, and you need to give them some liberty. Maybe they are not really “against you,” and you need not to be against them. Come up with one person or group and then decide on one thing you can do to live more gracefully and more harmoniously with them.

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*My Faith Journal, July 6, 2008*

The New Humanity #8  
***In All Things Love***

Main Points of Today’s Message

**Agreement**

We don’t always agree – even on important things.  
John Wesley’s principle.

**Bible Interpretation**

Interpreting the Bible ... honestly.

**In the Meantime**

How shall we relate to one another while we’re waiting for a new consensus to emerge? ... Making sure the “meantime” is not “MEANtime.”