

# Three Simple Rules

DAILY PLANNER 2009

**Abingdon Press**  
Nashville

**THREE SIMPLE RULES  
DAILY PLANNER 2009**

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Quotations attributed to Rueben P. Job are from *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living* (Abingdon Press, 2007).

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## *Introduction*

WELCOME TO THE THREE SIMPLE RULES DAILY PLANNER FOR 2009. It is intended as a daily help to combine exploring John Wesley's Three Simple Rules in your daily life with Scripture, prayer, and your daily planning. Each week's calendar includes excerpts from Wesley's writing or *Three Simple Rules* (Abingdon, 2007), a Scripture reading, and a place to make notes about your own work around living through the Rules. Each day also includes a format for praying the Psalms through the year. The Wesley and *Three Simple Rules* excerpts addressed here are not exhaustive but illustrative of the wisdom and insight provided by the founder of the Methodist movement.

As you use the planner, listen for and hear God's voice in the contents of daily readings and Scripture and to see their application to the everyday experiences of life. John Wesley was convinced that holiness is discovered in the practice of our faith in the practical and everyday routines of life. Therefore he fashioned for himself a way of living that included time for reading and reflecting upon Scripture and other spiritual works and methods for putting into practice what he believed and what he heard God calling him to do.

Spiritual reading is a new discovery for many Protestants. There is an increasing hunger for resources that can offer

spiritual guidance. While spiritual reading can never replace a spiritual director, spiritual friend, or spiritual community, it is a practice that can tie our separate lives to the larger community of faith and, ultimately, to God.

Through spiritual reading, we can become connected to the saints who have gone before us. They can become for us companions on our journey and we can learn from them, be guided and directed by their experience and witness. Their voices can address our lives with insight and wisdom gained by faithful living and tested by centuries of examination and practice.

Through spiritual reading we can also become connected to and companions with our contemporaries who are discovering helpful insights into our shared journey towards God. They are familiar with our contemporary world but bring wisdom gained in disciplined search, as they have listened and responded to God's gracious initiative to be our companion in life and death.

These companions from many generations can introduce us again and again to the One all Christians seek to follow. Their wisdom, gained from their own efforts to live in faithfulness, can often give us insight, encouragement, and direction. Spiritual reading can put us in touch with the great spiritual directors of all time.

Trying to travel the spiritual path alone is foolish, risky, and will ultimately end in failure. Spiritual reading makes that

lonely journey unnecessary. Many find that such reading is done best in connections with a time of prayer and reflection.

John Wesley's quotations are taken from *The Works of John Wesley* edited by Thomas Jackson in 1831. In preparing *Three Simple Rules*, I have been greatly assisted by *The Works of John Wesley* on compact disc (Providence House Publishers, 1995), which provides helpful access to the fourteen-volume Jackson edition.

My hope is that it will be a point of beginning for those who are considering a serious commitment to their life in the Spirit as well as for those who have been on this journey for a long time. In a letter to John Trembath, John Wesley said:

O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may require the taste for which you have not: What is tedious at first will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life: there is no other way.... Do justice to your own soul: give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross and be a Christian together. Then will the children of God rejoice.

Let us accept his words as a letter to us and begin today, for the first time or as a continuation of our desire, to "do justice to [our] own soul."

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Adapted from *A Wesleyan Spiritual Reader*, Rueben P. Job (Abingdon Press, 1998). Used by permission.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

# Three Simple Rules

DAILY PLANNER 2009

*Do no harm by any word or deed;  
Do good wherever there is need.  
Remain attentive to God's word.  
Stay in love with God,  
Stay in love with God.*

Adapted from John Wesley © 2007 Abingdon Press



# January 2009

**DECEMBER 2008**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**JANUARY 2009**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**FEBRUARY 2009**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Sunday 28	Monday 29	Tuesday 30	Wednesday 31	Thursday 1	Friday 2	Saturday 3
				New Year's Day		
Sunday 4	Monday 5	Tuesday 6	Wednesday 7	Thursday 8	Friday 9	Saturday 10
Epiphany						
Sunday 11	Monday 12	Tuesday 13	Wednesday 14	Thursday 15	Friday 16	Saturday 17
Sunday 18	Monday 19	Tuesday 20	Wednesday 21	Thursday 22	Friday 23	Saturday 24
Human Relations Sunday	Martin Luther King Jr. Day					
Sunday 25	Monday 26	Tuesday 27	Wednesday 28	Thursday 29	Friday 30	Saturday 31
Ecumenical Sunday						



# January 2009

DECEMBER 2008

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FEBRUARY 2009

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

**Prayer Requests**

Sunday 4      Monday 5      Tuesday 6      Wednesday 7      Thursday 8      Friday 9      Saturday 10

Epiphany

**Notes**

Psalm 8

Psalm 9:1-12

Psalm 9:13-20

Psalm 10:1-11

Psalm 10:12-18

Psalm 11

Psalm 12

*Do No Harm*

*If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. – Galatians 5:15*

# January 2009

DECEMBER 2008

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JANUARY 2009

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FEBRUARY 2009

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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Sunday 11      Monday 12      Tuesday 13      Wednesday 14      Thursday 15      Friday 16      Saturday 17

**Prayer Requests**

**Notes**

Psalm 13

Psalm 14

Psalm 15

Psalm 16

Psalm 17

Psalm 18:1-15

Psalm 18:16-34

*Do Good*

*Doing good is directed at everyone, even those who do not fit my category of "worthy" to receive any good that I or others can direct their way. – Rueben P. Job*

# January 2009

DECEMBER 2008

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FEBRUARY 2009

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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

**Prayer Requests**

Sunday 18      Monday 19      Tuesday 20      Wednesday 21      Thursday 22      Friday 23      Saturday 24

Human Relations  
Sunday

Martin Luther  
King Jr. Day

**Notes**

Psalm 18:35-50

Psalm 19

Psalm 20

Psalm 21

Psalm 22:1-18

Psalm 22:19-31

Psalm 23

*Do Good*

*Whoever does good is from God. – 3 John 11b*



## *Prayerful Living*

*Yet again: His judgment concerning holiness is new. He no longer judges it to be an outward thing: To consist either in doing no harm, in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God. He sees it is the life of God in the soul; the image of God fresh stamped on the heart; an entire renewal of the mind in every temper and thought, after the likeness of Him that created it.*

– John Wesley

MOST OF US HAVE A STRONG DESIRE TO DEEPEN AND STRENGTHEN OUR SENSE OF LIVING WITH GOD IN THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF LIFE. In our better moments we want a more intimate relationship with God. We really do want to experience God's companionship in all of life because we know that life is incomplete without this central experience of God. We want to claim and to enjoy our full inheritance as children of God. And, yet, more often than not our desires are snuffed out in their infancy, and we are captured by the pressures, enticements, and false rewards of our culture.

John Wesley saw and experienced what we see and experience. It is impossible to live as a Christian if we are unattached to God. Our spiritual and even our physical lives become a shambles without the constant companionship with God that prayer alone can make possible. Consequently, Wesley determined to be a man of ardent and consistent prayer. An exact replica of his disciplined life of prayer may not be possible for us, but it can be instructive as we fashion our own way of living with God in the world.

Wesley knew that a life of prayer was not an accident or a natural consequence of just living. He was convinced that a life of prayer was the result of a determined and disciplined

effort. He knew from personal experience that without this disciplined effort, prayer would become secondary and our relationship with God left to suffocate under the cares and delights of the world. So, the disciplined life of prayer became a priority that he honored for his entire lifetime.

Even a casual acquaintance with his journal will reveal that this disciplined life of prayer did not diminish his commitment to or involvement with the world of everyday cares and affairs. As a matter of fact, it seems clear that his involvement in the affairs of life received direction and power from the priority given to prayer.

John Wesley taught and lived a life of private, public, family, and community prayer. His earliest publishing venture was to provide direction and example for the person seeking to live a life of prayer. Prayers for families, children, clergy, the poor, prisoners, the sick, governmental and ecclesiastical authority, and prayers for self are found throughout his journal and sermons. Prayer was integral to his life.

When we read Wesley's journal and reflect upon his disciplined life, we can easily be convinced that such a life of prayer is impossible in our time and in our situation. Life is more complex and is changing more rapidly now than in the eighteenth century. The pressures on our time and life are different and more varied than the pressures John Wesley experienced. On the other hand, this kind of reflection on Wesley's life makes it clear that he often lived in a time squeeze and felt himself to be in a pressure cooker just as we do. Looking

back over two centuries it is easy to see that this pressure cooker was, for the most part, self-imposed and fueled by his sense of mission. He was able to live creatively within this pressure because he continued a disciplined life of prayer.

Prayer is a natural part of our human experience. All of us pray. Sometimes we pray only when we are at the peak of our powers and simply must thank someone; and sometimes we pray when we are at the very depth of despair and we simply cry out to God in our agony. Both of these times of prayer are natural and appropriate. But they are not enough to sustain us or to nurture our relationship with God.

Therefore we, as Wesley before us, Luther before him, Augustine before him, and Jesus before them all, need to establish a disciplined life of prayer. Since each of us is a unique creation of God, our life of prayer will be unique as well. We may each pray at different times, use different resources, pray for different lengths of time, pray more in solitude or pray more in community. It is important to recognize our differences as we fashion our way of living prayerfully.

Prayer is God's greatest provision for our spiritual life. Our relationship with God is impossible without prayer. We cannot know God's mind or heart without prayer. We cannot receive God's direction, hear God's voice, or respond to God's call without prayer. Since this is true, prayer is also God's greatest provision for all of life. It is the supreme means of grace given to all humankind.

Prayer was so very important for Jesus that he left even the needy crowd to pray (Mark 6:31). It was so important to Wesley that he established a rigorous discipline of prayer, lest this lifeline to God be broken and life itself be lost.

How important is this means of grace to you?

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Adapted from *A Wesleyan Spiritual Reader*, Rueben P. Job (Abingdon Press, 1998). Used by permission.

## *How Shall I Begin?*

SET ASIDE A TIME FOR ATTENTION TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. This can be early or late, whatever suits your needs. Many find early morning hours most fruitful and helpful preparation for the day. But each of us is unique, so find the time that works best for you. If this is a new practice for you, begin modestly. Try ten or fifteen minutes and then move on until you can commit and benefit from an hour or more of time in discovering, enjoying, and nurturing your relationship with God.

**Daily Pattern.** Find a devotional guide or a spiritual reader that resonates with you. Suggestions are included at the end of this planner. Many individuals use a daily devotion that for each day includes all or some of the following: a Scripture reading, a time for silence, a spiritual reading or reflection, journal writing, prayer, reflection on a hymn portion, offering your life to God, and a closing affirmation. While you will want to adapt the liturgy to meet your own spiritual needs and the time available, it is important to establish pattern and then to follow it regularly. You will reap rich rewards from a disciplined approach to your spiritual life.

**Scripture Reading.** The Bible is unique in its capacity to convey the message of God in every age and circumstance.