



Encounter God through the Bible
A Lenten message from
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Peace and grace this Lenten season in the name of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. I am Roy Caudill, Glacial Lakes District Superintendent. As you know, the cabinet has engaged Steve Harper's book "Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition." Why this book since it was first published in 1995? Well, like an athlete or a sports team, sometimes you just need to go back to the basics if you want to make progress in the spiritual life. Lent is the time of year when we are called to do just that as Bishop Ough addressed us on Ash Wednesday from the words of Jesus and the call of the church to observe a holy Lent. In his book Harper speculates as to what John Wesley might say to contemporary Christians about the spiritual life. He writes, "God does not call you to have a devotional time; God calls you to live a devotional life."

Growing up in Pennsylvania I can remember how my mother would have devotional materials and her Bible sitting on the table next to the oversized ragged stuffed chair in the living room. As a child, and a teen, I would sometimes pick up those materials and read. It was probably the earliest practice I can recall of entering into a life with God besides Sunday school and Church.

Richard Foster says that to engage the Bible is to enter into a life with God. Let me ask you; is that a life you want, a life with God? The Bible is a great place to begin that life. John Wesley knew that an objective standard was necessary for genuine spirituality. For him that standard was the Bible. You might recall that he was quoted as saying he was a man of one book. We know he was widely read, but the Bible

was always the place from which everything was measured and then applied practically to life. The Bible is the authority for our faith and the practice of it. Every time we are in worship and scripture is read we hear the words, "The Word of God for the people of God." And the people respond, "Thanks be to God."

So, are you engaging this book? How does one begin? Well, as the southern evangelist said, "First you have to open it." But I like what my friend Joseph was told when after coming to Christ he asked a priest, "How do you read the Bible?" The priest answered, "Begin with Matthew, read through Revelation, and as you read allow the Holy Spirit to take you into the Old Testament." Of course you can just start at the beginning and read straight through, or pick up one of many Bible reading plans. Remember, you are reading for quality, not quantity; for transformation, not just information. And while you read, it is always best to have a community of others to discuss and discern the spiritual nuggets gleaned from scripture, and of course apply it to life.

Question, how long have you been in the church? Do you know the book of your faith? If not, isn't it about time? It's never too late to start.

Enter the Bible and encounter a life with God. Wesley read to meet God, hear God, and respond to God. We can do the same. It is the call of Lent.

