



## Three Simple Rules . . . by Rueben P. Job

There are three simple rules that have the power to change the world. While they are ancient, they have seldom been fully put to the test. But when and where practiced, the world of things as they were was shaken until a new formation, a new world was formed. The Wesleyan movement is a prime example of this new creation that is formed when these three simple rules are adopted as a way of living.

I believe we have reached a place where, as a people of faith, we are ready to give serious consideration to another way, a more faithful way of living as disciples of Jesus Christ. This way must be so clear that it can be taught and practiced by everyone. It must be accessible and inviting to young and old, rich and poor, powerful and weak, and those of every theological persuasion. It is a large order, but we already have in our hands the blueprint for this way of living. And with God's help and our willingness, it can change our world.

This way of living was given to John Wesley in a time much like our own. He took this blueprint, fleshed it out, taught it, and practiced it. And now it has been passed on to us. Now it is up to us to see if we will take it, teach it, and practice it until it becomes our natural way of living—a way of living that will mark our life together and our lives as individual Christians. Some already practice this way of living, and I believe many more are ready to try it. I invite you to read the following pages to see if you are ready for this radical change of direction that is marked by these three simple rules:

**Do No Harm  
Do Good  
Stay in Love with God**

### 1. Do No Harm

To do no harm means that I will be on guard so that all my actions and even my silence will not add injury to another of God's children or to any part of God's creation. As did John Wesley and those in the early Methodist movement before me, I too, will determine every day that my life will always be invested in the effort to bring healing instead of hurt; wholeness instead of division; and harmony with the ways of Jesus rather than with the ways of the world. When I commit myself to this way, I must see each person as a child of God—a recipient of love unearned, unlimited, and undeserved just like myself. And it is this vision of every other person as the object of God's love and deep awareness that I too live in that loving Presence that can hold me accountable to my commitment to do no harm.

Perhaps the greatest consequence of all is that we are formed and transformed to live more and more as Jesus lived. And this personal transformation leads to transformation of the world around us as well. As two people in a long and successful marriage begin to think, act and even look like each other, so those who practice this simple rule begin to think, act, and perhaps even look like Jesus. It is a gigantic step toward living the holy life that brings healing and goodness to all it touches. This simple step will change your life in good and wonderful ways, but there is more.

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### **2. Do Good**

The words of Jesus and Wesley suggest that doing good is a universal command. That is, doing good is not limited to those like me or those who like me. 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. This command is also universal in that no one is exempt from it.

Doing good, like doing no harm, is a proactive way of living. I do not need to wait to be asked to do some good deed or provide some needed help. I do not need to wait until circumstances cry out for aid to relieve suffering or correct some horrible injustice. I can decide that my way of living will come down on the side of doing good to all in every circumstance and in every way I can. I can decide that I will choose a way of living that nourishes goodness and strengthens community.

### **3. Stay in Love with God**

Living in the presence of and in harmony with the living God who is made known in Jesus Christ and companions us in the Holy Spirit is to live life from the inside out. It is to find our moral direction, our wisdom, our courage, our strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustains us, and sends us into the world as witnesses who daily practice the way of living with Jesus. Spiritual disciplines keep us in that healing, redeeming presence and power of God that forms and transforms each of us more and more into the image of the One we seek to follow.

This simple rule will be constructed differently for each of us because each of us is unique. But there are some common essentials for all of us, such as a daily time of prayer; reflection upon and study of Scripture; regular participation in the life of a Christian community, including weekly worship and regular participation in the Lord’s Supper. It is through these practices that we find the courage, strength, and direction to walk faithfully and with integrity in the way of Jesus.

The pages you have read promise a way of living to change your world. Three simple rules that can be easily understood and practiced by everyone every day of their lives are the focus of this way of living. It’s a way of living that can guard your life from doing evil and enable you to do good. A way of living that provides a way to stay in love with God in this world and the next.

The rules are simple, but the way is not easy. Only those with great courage will attempt it, and only those with great faith will be able to walk this exciting and demanding way.