

RULE 1: DO NO HARM

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation by **doing no harm**, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

- The taking of the name of God in vain.
- The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.
- Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.
- Slaveholding: buying or selling slaves.
- Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.
- The buying or selling of goods that have not paid the duty.
- The giving or taking things on usury—i.e., unlawful interest.
- Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.
- Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.
- Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:
 - The putting on of gold and costly apparel.
 - The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.
 - Softness and needless self-indulgence.
 - Laying up treasure upon earth.
 - Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

“Spirituous liquors” is another way of saying “alcoholic beverages.”

Wesley is saying that Christians shouldn’t take one another to court. See Matthew 5:23-26.

Railing is an eighteenth-century word for verbal abuse.

The more words one uses in buying and selling, the more likely one is to cheat another out of money or merchandise.

See Exodus 22:25.

“Magistrates” and “ministers” are local and national political leaders.

You may recognize this as a version of the Golden Rule, from Matthew 7:12.

A “duty” is a tax placed on certain goods. “Goods that have not paid the duty” are items being sold on the black market.

“Laying up treasure upon earth” refers to Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 6:19-21 and Luke 12:13-21.



RULE 2: DO GOOD

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation by **doing good**, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all [people]:

- To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.
- To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that “we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.”
- By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning soon to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.
- By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.
- By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them *falsely*, for the Lord’s sake.

The instruction to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and imprisoned is similar to Jesus’ teaching about the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:34-40.

Wesley rejected the idea that “we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it” because he believed that all people could choose to do good in all situations. In other words, he believed that God had given people free will.

For more on our responsibilities to those in the “household of faith” (other Christians), see 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2.

Wesley tells Methodists to be diligent and frugal because laziness and greed would reflect poorly on God and the church.

Offscouring means “that which is disposed of.”

“Running with patience the race which is set before them” comes from Hebrews 12:1.

In other words, faithful Christians shouldn’t be surprised if they’re the subject of nasty lies.



RULE 3: STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation by **attending upon all the ordinances of God**; such are:

- The public worship of God.
- The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.
- The Supper of the Lord.
- Family and private prayer.
- Searching the Scriptures.
- Fasting or abstinence.

This, in other words, means “go to church.”

The word *expounded* includes listening to sermons

This is also known as Holy Communion or the Eucharist.

“Fasting” and “abstinence” are not limited to refraining from food and sexual activity. One could also fast from television or the Internet; one could abstain from insulting others or complaining.

