

SESSION 4



EXPLORE: SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY

Review the Ancient Text: Ephesians 5:22-24, CEB

²² For example, wives should submit to their husbands as if to the Lord. ²³ A husband is the head of his wife like Christ is head of the church, that is, the savior of the body. ²⁴ So wives submit to their husbands in everything like the church submits to Christ.

- How does this text make you feel?
- What seems important to the author of this text?
- From this text, who has the power?

Wesleyan Quadrilateral

Scripture	Reason
Tradition	Experience

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a methodology attributed to the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. This methodology teaches us to look at four primary sources to understand theological principles.

Scripture Wesley viewed scripture as the primary source through which we understand the Divine. Scripture can be a beautiful mystery filled with stories of God's love and brilliance, of God interacting with humanity, inspiring her to do marvelous works of justice and mercy. Scripture can also be a dangerous weapon, wielded by gatekeepers who decide who is in and who is out. When we read scripture through our modern lenses, it is important for us to ask some questions about what we find in the ancient text:

- Who was this text written to/for, or who was the original audience?
- What was the motivation for writing this text?
- How does the cultural situation of the original audience differ from our modern cultural situation?
- In what literary genre is this text written?
- Is this text written for a particular audience, in a particular situation, or is it meant to give us a guiding principle for all time?

Reason We have an amazing ability to employ the tool of reason to make sense of the world around us. We can use science and technology to explore our origins and the universe in all her glorious vastness. Reason enhances our ability to connect with the Divine, and is a useful way for us to examine theological principles.

Tradition When examining our theological beliefs, it is helpful to investigate the ways in which the Early Church interpreted a specific theological view, and the way concepts have evolved through the Christian Tradition.

Experience Understanding our story--the story of our family, and the story of our denomination--tells us a great deal about the way we experience God. Perhaps we have already uncovered this in our timeline exercises.

Let’s take a look at our opening scripture using the Wesleyan Quadrilateral:

Scripture	Reason
Tradition	Experience

Weekly Engagement

- Is there an area in the Quadrilateral you find yourself more comfortable inhabiting?
- Is there an area you find yourself struggling?
- Pick a significant event in your timeline and walk through the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, then journal about what you discover.