



- God does not think more highly of us because we practice the means of Grace.
- But we are not to be idly sitting around waiting to experience grace – instead we are called to actively engage in the means of grace.

**“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. <sup>25</sup> What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? <sup>26</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Luke 9:23-26**

“The Means of Grace” divided into two categories of “Individual practices” and “Community practices” that help us grow in love for God and for neighbor.

### 1. Works of Piety:

- A. “Individual practices” - that help us to grow in Godliness are: Reading, meditating, studying the scriptures, prayer, fasting, regularly attending worship, healthy living, and sharing our faith with others.
- B. “Community Practices” – that help us to grow in Godliness are: Regularly share in the sacraments, small groups and Bible study.

### 2. Works of Mercy

- A. “Individual Practices” – that help us to grow in Godliness are: Doing good works, visiting the sick, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, and giving generously to the needs of others.
- B. “Community Practices” – that help us to grow in Godliness are: Seeking justice, ending oppression and discrimination (for instance Wesley challenged Methodists to end slavery), and addressing the needs of the poor

- ❖ True faith is a life long journey that we have to be actively involved in if we want to grow in love for God and for neighbor.

**I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I will remain IN YOU. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. John 15:1-6**

The reality of life is that our natural inclinations are to do the least possible and call it good enough – in our love and pursuit of God and in our love and pursuit of our neighbor.

Apathy or indifference for God and neighbor is an easier road to follow than love and passion for God and neighbor.

This is why John Wesley taught, and Methodist still teach, that our salvation is a life long journey that involves both us and God.

**... Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, we are confident of this, that God who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:5-6**

*"God is out to save us, one and all. Though we have no faith we can articulate, God is out to save us, one and all. Though our faith may grow dim and our works disorderly, God is out to save us, one and all. Though we may lose our way and do terrible things to others, God is out to save us, one and all. And though for some God's efforts to save may still leave them in spiritual death and Hell, God is out to save us, one and all".*

*Rev. Edwards*