

# The life of john wesley

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John Benjamin Wesley was born June 17, 1703 to the small town of Epworth, in Lincolnshire. The son of Minister Rev. Samuel Wesley, who was the son of Minister Rev. John Wesley, John Benjamin was the third generation of powerful influential preachers. His mother Susanna Wesley was also a powerful woman of faith and was said to be ten times more caring towards people than her own husband.[1] Who could have known that out of this small town and lineage would come one of the most anointed, powerful, well-known preachers in all of Christendom? Even starting the Methodist movement, which has strayed from his doctrine but still remains today?

Wesley was rarely referred to as John by his family; rather it was "Jack," or "Jacky," or "son John." He had a rather comfortable life, enjoying the typical country parsonage of the time. His home was based on the strict regiment of education, religious activity, and prayer. Education was taken so seriously that a banquet was prepared in the household at the fifth birthday of every child's ushering into pupilhood. Susanna would literally review a teaching twenty times. When asked why? She would reply, "Because nineteen times were not sufficient. If I had stopped after telling him nineteen times, all my labor would have been lost." [2] With such a methodistic upbringing, one can only assume why John Wesley would have been the founder of the "Methodists."

Though there are many things worth noting in the early years of Wesley's life, his miraculous salvation from a fire, which consumed his entire home, could easily be said to be the most exciting. Young Jack woke up to find that his bed and his caretaker's bed were completely empty. As he ran to the door, flinging it open, he found that the floor was on fire. He ran back to the

window to see everyone gathered around outside. One of the onlookers noticed Jack in the window and called for a ladder. After realizing that the wait would be too long, some of the men risked their lives stacking on each other to reach the window and pull the boy out just as the roof collapsed. Little did they know they had risked their lives saving one who, himself, would pull many from the fire.

Though his childhood shaped much of his ethical standard and moral judgment, his fifteen years of study at Oxford would develop much of the ethics which he preached and wrote. Oxford did not have the greatest reputation at the time John Wesley was an attendee, but it would become the place of his self-examination. For the fifteen years of his attendance Wesley would devote himself to the study of Sally Kirkman, Thomas a Kempis, and Jeremy Taylor, and write vigorously in his journals.[3]

It was at Oxford that Wesley met Charles and William Morgan, the founders of the Holy Club. Though self-explanatory through the title, the Holy Club consisted of pious individuals who devoted themselves to a life of social service and strict religious morality. The idea of the Methodist was birthed from this group and its ethics along with it. It was the attempt to convert Native Americans to these ethics that brought John and his brother Charles to the mentorship of the Moravians. It was during this time with the Moravians that John's personal life with the Lord was strengthened, deepened, and grown. During this part of his life Wesley started an evangelical-preaching vocation, founded many societies, and even published a hymnody.

Though they had a great influence on him, Wesley began to separate himself from the Moravian society because of their lack of social ethics and public issues. He still had the great desire to reform the church, and because of his time with the Moravians he received an understanding that the ethics he clung so dear to were not his method of salvation, but it was by faith he was saved. With the conviction of ethics and the conviction of his faith, John Wesley would now begin his travels of reformation.

It is said that " he traveled about four thousand five hundred miles every year, one year with another; which gave two hundred and twenty- five thousand miles... For fifty-two years or upwards, he generally delivered two, frequently three or four sermons in a day: but calculating at two sermons a day, and allowing... fifty for extraordinary occasions, the whole number during this period will be forty thousand five hundred and sixty." [4] The incredible feats of his fifty two years of travel are phenomenal. It is hard to write and give justice too.

Though summing up his preaching and travel is an impossible feat, this story can give a glimpse into just what his passion would have been like. The account is given by Peter, his carriage driver. They were at a small dinner and Peter was cleaning the inside of the carriage when he noticed, through the window, a servant whisper something in Wesley's ear. He was reminding Wesley that he had promised to preach at a small parsonage that they were going to be late for. Wesley rushed out to the cart and instructed the carriage driver to drive through the small bay they were on to the other side. Peter drove the carriage through the water, pounding waves, and deep

water; all the while Wesley promised Peter they would make it through and they did.[5]

His passion drove Wesley into a life of disciplined time management revolved around preaching and teaching of the word of God. As stated before, Wesley preached over forty thousand times in fifty two years of ministry. He regularly woke at four in the morning and expected to preach at five o'clock. In those years he seemed to never have a problem finding somewhere to preach as well as having the robust voice to preach to large crowds without a microphone.

Wesley's aim as a preacher of the gospel was to "to promote, as far as I am able, vital practical religion; and by the grace for God to beget, preserve and increase the life of God in the souls of men," and "to revive the obsolete doctrines and extinguished Spirit of the Church of England." [6] The parish clergy of England were idle, ignorant and outright opposed to the gospel. Wesley's sermons were centralized on the gospel and so motivating that they brought reform individual by individual.

Wesley actually appointed lay preachers within the system as a future system of pastors. These lay people were trained in the Gospel, if not by Wesley, then by his disciples, and they would preach the word of God. His sermons were incredibly convicting and convincing at the same time. But much like the Bible says will happen, Wesley was persecuted for his preaching's. He was poisoned by the women who cooked food for him, his carriage was the target for food on the streets, he was banned from churches, and scorned for his beliefs.

Overall Wesley was a man of his convictions and he lived according to his ethics and faith combined. His preaching, lengthy or not, held the attention of many and still does today. Wesley was so convincing, as stated before; he became the founder of a whole religious movement. When looking back on his life one could say he was a man of God, a reformer, lover of souls, and a man who lived by high conviction and moral value.