



Wesleyan Ways: Exploring our Methodist Roots

Episode 6: Grace-filled & Soul-strengthened Discussion Guide

Discussion Questions

1. Bishop Carter describes grace as *unrelenting*—present before we know it, active even when we are “clueless.” How does this understanding of grace shape your image of God?
2. Wesley’s image of God was never harsh or punitive. Where have you encountered images of God that conflict with this—and how have they affected your faith?
3. The conversation highlights preventer grace as God’s loving pursuit of us before we respond. Where have you seen signs of God’s grace at work in your life before you were aware of it?
4. Communion is described as a “converting ordinance.” How have you experienced God’s grace through the sacraments at different stages of your life?
5. Bishop Carter notes that justification—the turning toward God—can be dramatic or gradual. Why do you think Wesley held space for both kinds of experiences?
6. Why is it tempting to treat grace as a “one-and-done” moment rather than a lifelong journey?
7. Wesley named the goal of the Christian life as *perfection in love*. How does this high calling challenge both complacency and perfectionism?
8. Sanctification keeps us humble by reminding us that we are always a work in progress. How does humility function as a spiritual discipline in your life?
9. The episode distinguishes between sins of commission and sins of omission. Which do you find easier to recognize—and why?
10. Sin is described as “missing the mark,” with Christ as the mark. How does this framing change the way you think about sin, repentance, and grace?



11. Bishop Carter warns against self-righteousness and the temptation to believe we are “on God’s side.” Where do you see this temptation at work in the church or society today?
12. The conversation emphasizes forgiveness, accountability, and tenderness within Christian community. What does it look like to hold one another accountable *with love*?
13. “All it takes is one person with great love.” Who has been that person for you—and how might God be calling you to be that person for someone else?

Turning Toward Grace

Invite participants to imagine the early baptismal practice described in the episode:

- First, silently name something you need to turn away from—an attitude, habit, judgment, or fear.
- Then, physically turn your body (or open your hands) as a sign of turning toward Christ.

Close with this prayer:

God of unrelenting grace,
We turn toward you again.
Where we have fallen short, meet us with mercy.
Where we have judged, teach us love.
Shape us, heal us, and draw us ever closer
to the mind and heart of Christ. Amen.

Next Steps

Choose one practice to engage intentionally:

- Extend forgiveness where resentment has taken root.
- Reflect daily on one place you may be “missing the mark”—and invite grace, not shame, into that space.
- Practice gentle accountability with someone you trust.
- Perform one act of mercy without needing recognition or certainty of impact.

At your next gathering, share where you noticed grace working quietly but persistently.



Terms to Know:

Prevenient Grace

God's grace that goes before us—awakening, inviting, and drawing us toward love before we are aware of it.

Justification

The moment (or season) when we turn toward God, receive forgiveness, and enter into right relationship with God.

Sanctification

The lifelong process of being shaped by grace into the likeness of Christ, growing toward holiness and love.

Perfection in Love

Wesley's vision of Christian maturity—not flawlessness, but complete love of God and neighbor.

Sins of Commission

Wrong actions we commit knowingly or unknowingly.

Sins of Omission

Good actions we fail to take—especially when we neglect love, justice, or mercy.

Self-Righteousness

The subtle sin of believing we have arrived spiritually or stand above others in faith or morality.

Additional Resources:

- *Unrelenting Grace: A United Methodist Way of Live*, by Bishop Ken Carter (Abingdon Press)