

Wisdom from a Doorman

It is hoped that none of us considers himself or herself “too educated” to learn from anyone, no matter that individual’s station in life.

Such a lesson was learned by John Wesley (1703 – 1791), an Anglican cleric and theologian who, with his brother Charles and fellow cleric George Whitefield, founded Methodism.

Wesley was about 21 years old when he went to Oxford University. He came from a Christian home, and he was gifted with a keen mind and good looks.

Yet in those days, he was a bit snobbish and sarcastic. One night, however, something happened that set in motion a change in Wesley’s heart.

While speaking to a porter (a chiefly British term for a person stationed at a door or gate to admit or assist those entering), Wesley discovered that the poor fellow had only one coat and lived in such impoverished conditions that he didn’t even have a bed.

But he was an unusually happy person, filled with gratitude to God.

Wesley, being immature, thoughtlessly joked about the man’s misfortunes. “And what else do you thank God for?” he said with a touch of sarcasm.

The porter smiled, and in the spirit of meekness, replied with joy. “I thank Him that He has given me my life and being, a heart to love Him, and above all, a constant desire to serve Him!”

Deeply moved, Wesley recognized that this man knew the meaning of true thankfulness.

Many years later, in 1791, John Wesley lay on his deathbed at the age of 88. Those who gathered around him realized how well he had learned the lesson from the porter of praising God in every circumstance.

Despite Wesley’s extreme weakness, he began singing the hymn, *I’ll praise My Maker While I’ve Breath*.

Its lyrics proclaim “I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath, and when my voice is lost in death, praise shall employ my nobler powers; my days of praise shall ne’er be past, while life, and thought, and being last, or immortality endures.”



(more)

The porter's example of praise is instructive for us as well. It is easy to be focusing on our needs to the extent that we fail to thank God for His many blessings.

Count and acknowledge yours before our Lord today.

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you
(1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter