

# Why Do You Believe What You Believe?

by David Tillman – October 2022

We did an exercise at a recent church confirmation class that I found insightful. The question was, “**What are the sources of your and others’ beliefs?**” We shared our ideas in a group discussion. Our minister then introduced John Wesley’s (Methodist Church Founder) Wesleyan Quadrilateral\* where the four sources of a person’s beliefs include scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Tradition</b>
<b>Reason</b>	<b>Experience</b>

Write down in the order of importance which is the most important source as to **why you believe what you believe**. Then write down your second most important source, then your third and fourth choice.

\_\_\_\_\_ First Source of Belief                      \_\_\_\_\_ Third Source of Belief  
\_\_\_\_\_ Second Source of Belief                      \_\_\_\_\_ Fourth Source of Belief

## Journal or share with a trusted friend or circle of trusted friends.

1. Share how this experience of ranking your sources of beliefs was for you. (Was it easy, difficult, or somewhere in between?)
2. As you ranked your sources of beliefs, share your feelings, insights, or overall mood which came to you as you were deciding which source to put first, second, third, and fourth.
3. Share how the ranking of your sources of beliefs has changed, or not changed, since your childhood. (What changed and why? Were there any insights or surprises in what you shared?)
4. Share your thoughts about how different the ranking might be for parents, siblings, your partner, other family, friends, or co-workers. (Were there any insights or surprises in what you shared?)

\*Wesleyan Quadrilateral four sources include “**Scripture** is considered the primary source and standard for Christian doctrine. Wesley would always interpret the bible as the written word of God in all matters of faith and conduct... **Tradition** is the experience and the witness of the development and growth of faith over the century’s and throughout many countries and nations... **Reason** is a gift that is naturally received in the image of God. Reason is very important to Wesley and he refers to it as ‘this precious gift of God...’ **Experience** is most valuable to Wesley and his theological understanding... Methodism, without altogether realizing what it was doing, shifted the ultimate authority in religion to the last place and the right place—to religious experience”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [The Theology Of John Wesley - Free Essay Example - Edubirdie](#) , (accessed October 11, 2022).