

## **21 Questions: Authentic Faith (Confirmation Sunday) Sunday, 9/9/18**

Confirmands, how many of you have ever heard the expression “You may be the only Bible some people read?” Although that quote is often attributed to a contemporary American preacher, John MacArthur, it was clearly on the mind of John Wesley some 400 years earlier when he asked himself and some other eager disciples of Jesus 21 questions for self-examination. One of those questions was this: “Did the Bible live in me today?”

Whether you ask it as a question, “Did the Bible live in me today?” or make it into a statement, “You may be the only Bible some people read,” the meaning is the same. As we celebrate today your decision to follow Jesus, to confirm your baptismal vows to die to your old way of living and be reborn to a new, Jesus-way of living, I challenge you to accept the truth that Confirmation is only the beginning of a lifetime commitment to be a living Bible to the world.

What do you suppose it might look like for you to be a living Bible? The Apostle Paul offers a few clues in his letter to Timothy, a young person much like yourself, a lifetime before him and so many possibilities and questions. Not surprisingly, Paul talks a lot about money. One of the things becoming a living Bible means is that your attitudes and actions regarding money should become closer and closer to the attitudes and actions you see taught and demonstrated in the Bible. John Wesley even had an extra question about money in his list of 21 questions: “Do I pray about the money I spend?” I realize that at your age you probably don’t have much money. But as you begin to earn and receive more money, the ways you talk about, pray about, and spend your money will not only begin to shape your own heart, they’ll begin to be an influence on your siblings, your classmates, and maybe even your parents!

Of course, it’s not all about money. Being a Bible that other people can read involves other things Paul mentions, like “wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy.” When you speak about seeing God in the beauty of creation, that counts as being a Bible. When you talk about and show your faith in Jesus, that’s being a Bible. When

you demonstrate your love for God and other people, that's being a Bible. When you refuse to let hard times shake your faith and your resolve to follow Jesus, that's being a Bible. And when you treat other people with the same courtesy and honor that you'd give to Jesus, that too is being a Bible.

It's entirely understandable that you might feel a bit as if you've graduated from Christianity today. There will be no more Confirmation Faith Nights, Confirmation Focus Nights, and Confirmation Retreats for you- that is, until you yourselves become Confirmation Teachers, Faith Partners, and parents! You won't have any more required worship notes to turn in or required service projects- but that doesn't mean you should stop worshipping and stop serving. When you affirm your baptismal vows today, you'll be agreeing to continue on a journey of becoming more like Jesus, with the Bible, the Word of God, increasingly changing your attitudes and actions. So this is really just another beginning for you, not the end.

Continue to seek out Jesus by reading the Bible. Continue to praise God by worshipping with us here and elsewhere. Continue to grow by participating in the Senior High Youth Group here on Wednesday nights. Continue to grow in your servanthood by serving the church and your neighbors. Being a Bible to others is a way of life, not a graduation diploma. The promises you make today as you join the church are not just rules for membership, they're promises that will help form you into the Bibles that someone in your life needs to read.



## *Buffalo United Methodist Church*

*...serving people for Jesus Christ so that we all may know joy!*

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