

**2018 Message Series: May 27 - June 17, 2018**

Message Series: "Turning 21 with Wesley: 21 Questions for becoming Mature Christians"

Book: *The Wesley Challenge: 21 Days to a More Authentic Faith*, by Chris Folmsbee, Abingdon Press in March 2017.

Background: In 1729 John Wesley, the leader of a small group at Oxford University called "Methodists," posed 21 questions to help the group pursue a more mature Christian faith.

Series Text: "God's goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ." -Ephesians 4:13b

Series Theme: Growing up and becoming mature Christians.

Series Blurb: Join us for the Wesley Challenge, built around 21 questions that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, encouraged the first Methodists to ask one another. Through weekly sermons and daily reflection questions, we're going to explore how we can develop the spiritual habits, practices and actions that can lead to a thriving Christian life.

Daily Devotions: Provide daily devotions for people for the dates May 27 - June 16. Call the devotional "21 Questions for 21 Days: Turning 21 with Wesley!" Provide a schedule of 21 daily Bible verses and Wesley questions to reflect upon. This would also serve as the Church at Home devotions for adults. The Daily Devotions will be drawn from the GPS daily guides from <https://cor.org/leawood/sermon-series/21-questions>

Series Sources: *The Wesley Challenge: 21 Days to a More Authentic Faith*, by Chris Folmsbee, Abingdon Press in March 2017.

Also Adam Hamilton's message series "21 Questions" at:

<https://cor.org/leawood/sermon-series/21-questions>

**SUNDAY, JUNE 2: Holy Communion**

Message Title: Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Character

Message Theme: Relating to Christian Character. Inside each of us there are "two Adams" - our best selves and our worst selves. We desire to be defined by our best selves. We do that by defining greatness as Jesus does, as putting yourself last! Be the good Adam. Potter and clay. Walk humbly, practice kindness, and justice for everyone.

Message Scripture: Mark 10:35-45

Text: Mark 10:43 "But that's not the way it will be with you. Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant."

Memory Verse: "He has shown you, O human, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." -Micah 6:8

Kids Activity: The Hot Seat ("Kids Say the Darndest Things") interview of the week's 7 questions

Blurb: Do you know the inner struggle between your best self and your worst self? It's a continual struggle, isn't it. And sometimes we do what we're proud of...and other times not so much! When we walk with Jesus, however, the scales slowly tip. God works on us, and over time, we do more and more what we wish we would do. This Sunday we'll talk about how that can happen in your life.

Daily Devotional: Each Sunday a daily devotional will be provided for the upcoming week that engages each day's question. This devotional is attached in the weekly email blasts, is available in the bulletin, at the Welcome Center, on the church website, and on Facebook.

**Opening Song:** *You Are Good* -Sanctify

**Welcome:** -Pastor David

**Memory Verse**

“He has shown you, O human, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” -Micah 6:8

**Worship Music Set:** - Sanctify

*Cornerstone*

*Different*

*Servant Song*

Worship Prayer - Andrew

**The Hot Seat:** Engaging the 21 Questions (David, Matthew and Glen/Diane)

Wesley's 21 questions in 1729 among Oxford Methodists

8. Am I proud?

9. Am I defeated in any part of my life?

10. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?

11. Do I grumble or complain constantly?

12. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?

13. How do I spend my spare time?

14. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?

**Message:** Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Character

**Message Bumper**

**PP#1:** Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Character

“But that’s not the way it will be with you. Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant.” -Mark 10:43

Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Character. Mark 10:43, “But that’s not the way it will be with you. Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant.”

Turning 21. In our culture, turning 21 marks our full entrance into the “age of majority.” And we’re using that idea in our message series to push us to turn 21 in our faith, to grow up spiritually, and to really pursue Christian maturity. We want to leave behind the easy, childish ways of thinking about our faith, the simple beliefs that keep us from being challenged into holiness, and the behaviors that serve ourselves.

So, for 21 days, we are asking 21 different questions of self-reflection to help us turn 21 spiritually. They are questions that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, posed to the earliest Methodists.

**PP#2:** *Image of John Wesley and the Holy Club in Oxford.*

John’s younger brother followed John to Oxford, and while there, Charles and a handful of others formed a Holy Club to read the Bible together, talk and pray about following Jesus, and volunteer out in the community. When John came back as a teacher and tutor in 1729, they asked

John to lead their group, and help them become mature Christians. John agreed, and over the course of the next year, each time they met together, he posed a question to help them get real, be honest with themselves, to take their masks off, and talk about what they normally glossed over. Over the weeks, John posed 21 different questions. And these are the questions we're asking ourselves now, to help us get real and honest, and to seriously go after becoming mature Christians.

You'll find this week's questions in the bulletin insert, along with a Bible passage and some reflection questions. They're also available on the front page of our church's web site.

So, we're spiritually "turning 21" by reflecting on Wesley's 21 questions over the next 21 days. It's a way to grow in holiness, to grow in faith, and become mature.

**PP#3:** John Wesley's 21 questions for the Oxford Methodists

8. Am I proud?
9. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
10. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?
11. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
12. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
13. How do I spend my spare time?
14. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?

The questions this week have to do with your character. Am I proud? Where do I feel stuck? How is my daily routine? Do I grumble a lot? What gets my time and focus? Do I fretter away my spare time? Am I stuck on myself. These are self-awareness questions. Others usually can answer them for us. But being spiritually mature means being spiritually self-aware. And it is checking the self desire that we normally let lead us through life.

**PP#4:** *Image of book cover of Road to Character by David Brooks.*

Conservative journalist for the New York Times David Brooks wrote a great book in 2015, entitled, *Road to Character*. He goes back to the Genesis creation account of Adam, and sees two stories there. The first, in Genesis 1, describes that God created Adam and Even in God's own very character. And God called people good. Adam had God's attributes: loving, merciful, humble, sacrificing. But in the very next chapter, it tells the story of creation along with the first sin and the fall from the Garden. This story shows that although made in God's image, Adam and Eve were ambitious, greedy, seeking self-advancement, and willing to cheat and break the rules to get what they wanted. And Brooks says that this is an honest creation account, because in each of us, there are also these same two Adams. One is loving and god-like. The other is self-centered. These two Adams (or Eves) live in each one of us. One, he says, seeks to lengthen our list of "résumé virtues"—you know, what looks good and seems important in this world, and builds ourselves up. The other seeks to develop our "eulogy virtues"—those things that really last, the character strengths for which we'd like to be remembered.

When John Wesley posed these questions, he was asking the Methodists to look inside their characters, and identify which Adam was acting when. Genesis 2 Adam is motivated by advancement, achievement, self importance. He's marked by conceit, arrogance, vainglory. He's shrewd, crafty, and his motto is "it's all about me."

Genesis 1 Adam is marked by God's image. He's motivated by serving others, helping, protecting, putting others first. His motto is, "it's all about you."

Wesley had these Jesus-followers—they were already Christians—ask the tough questions, questions of character, questions pushing into holiness and spiritual maturity. You have both Adams inside you. Are you being the right Adam? Are you being your best self? Are you being the person God created you to be? Which Adam prevails in your life?

**PP#5:** *Image of James and John asking Jesus to sit at His right and left hand.*

Jesus was heading to Jerusalem. His disciples were excited, because in Jerusalem was the seat of power. The people gathered along the road to cheer and to welcome their new king. Jesus tries to tell the disciples about His upcoming betrayal and death. But they aren't listening.

They near Jericho Friday night. Saturday they'll go through Jericho, and on Sunday they'll enter Jerusalem. Ten of the disciples are off doing stuff, and the brothers James and John, come to Jesus. They say, "Hey, Jesus, we have a favor to ask." Now remember, these two joined Jesus early on. They, along with Peter, has been part of Jesus' inner circle. They are the closes to Jesus on earth. John has the claim to be Jesus' best friend. No one knew Jesus better, right?

Well, they ask their favor. "We know, Jesus, that you're heading to Jerusalem. And we believe that you will soon be king. So, we imagine right about now you're putting together your cabinet. We would like to be considered for vice president and secretary of state, if you please."

**PP#6:** Mark 10:35-45 (CEB)

35 James and John, Zebedee's sons, came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

36 "What do you want me to do for you?" He asked.

37 They said, "Allow one of us to sit on your right and the other on your left when you enter your glory."

Let's look at this. Mark 10, starting at verse 35. "James and John, Zebedee's sons, came to Jesus and said, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.' 'What do you want me to do for you?' He asked. They said, 'Allow one of us to sit on your right and the other on your left when you enter your glory.'"

What Adam was driving them at this time? Genesis 2 Adam, right? Self-advancement. It amazes me how they, who are closest to Jesus, could be thinking like this. After all Jesus taught them! Traveling with Jesus for three years! Let me tell you, church, if they can think like this, so can we! We can—and do—let the Genesis 2 Adam lead us, even when we are Christians, even when we know better, even when we are following the Jesus of self-sacrifice. We can become so immature!

**PP#7:** Mark 10:35-45 (CEB)

38 Jesus replied, "You don't know what you're asking! Can you drink the cup I drink or receive the baptism I receive?"

39 "We can," they answered.

Jesus said, "You will drink the cup I drink and receive the baptism I receive, 40 but to sit at my right or left hand isn't mine to give. It belongs to those for whom it has been prepared."

41 Now when the other ten disciples heard about this, they became angry with James and John.

Verse 38: “Jesus replied, ‘You don’t know what you’re asking! Can you drink the cup I drink or receive the baptism I receive?’ [What is the cup Jesus is talking about? It’s not the cup of glory, and power, and having things your way. It’s the cup of suffering! The cup of sacrifice.] ‘We can,’ they answered. Jesus said, ‘You will drink the cup I drink and receive the baptism I receive, but [it is not what you think, or expect] to sit at my right or left hand isn’t mine to give. It belongs to those for whom it has been prepared.’”

James and John were motivated by success, by glory, by position.

The other disciples return and learn about what just happened. How do you think they responded? Verse 41, “Now when the other ten disciples heard about this, they became angry with James and John.”

Why? Why did they become angry? It’s not just being disappointed in James’ and John’s selfish act. There’s more! They were jealous! They also wanted the best position! They were all motivated by their Genesis 2 Adams!

Church, if the disciples struggle with this, I’m guess that we should be on the lookout for it as well in our lives! It shows up in us, too! Ask yourself some questions this week. Be honest. Be real! Stop looking in your rose-colored mirrors!

**PP#8:** Mark 10:35-45 (CEB)

42 Jesus called them over and said, “You know that the ones who are considered the rulers by the Gentiles show off their authority over them and their high-ranking officials order them around. 43 But that’s not the way it will be with you. Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant. 44 Whoever wants to be first among you will be the slave of all, 45 for the Human One didn’t come to be served but rather to serve and to give His life to liberate many people.”

Well, Jesus, one more time, tries to teach them. Verse 42, “Jesus called them over and said, ‘You know that the ones who are considered the rulers by the Gentiles show off their authority over them and their high-ranking officials order them around. *But that’s not the way it will be with you.* Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant. Whoever wants to be first among you will be the slave of all, for the Human One didn’t come to be served but rather to serve and to give His life to liberate many people.’”

“But that’s not the way it will be with you.” You are operating from the selfish Adam. But I am going to the cross, where I will crucify that selfishness. I will empower your true Adam, your Adam in God’s image. That’s what you will be. That Adam will be your character. That is who you really are. That is your true identity.

**PP#9:** *Image of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet.*

But it doesn’t sink in. Six days later they are in Jerusalem in the upper room, and it’s the Last Supper. And Luke tells us that the disciples are whispering around the meal. And do you know what they are whispering about? Who is the greatest! Really? Wow! Jesus says, you just don’t get it, do you! And so, in John’s Gospel it says that Jesus gets down on the ground, and washes their feet. He says, “You call me Master and Lord, and I am. But this is what it looks like to be great. This is what is powerful. Selfless, serving others, love in action.”

The next day Jesus is hanging on the cross. What Adam do we see there?

And on the cross, that noble Adam was vanquished in all of us! When we take this selfless Jesus as our Savior, He gives us the Holy Spirit. And by the Holy Spirit in us, our old Adam is put to death with Jesus on the cross, and his power broken in us. So, we have the ability to live by the holy Adam. We can pursue holiness. It's time to go on to maturity, and to put aside the selfishness of our old Adams.

**PP#10:** Romans 5:12-21

12 Just as through one Adam sin came into the world, and death came through sin, so death has come to everyone, since everyone has sinned. ... 15 But the free gift of Christ isn't like Adam's failure. If many people died through what one person did wrong, God's grace is multiplied even more for many people with the gift—of the one person Jesus Christ—that comes through grace.

Paul talks about these two Adams in each of us. We begin by following the one person, the selfish Adam, and we inherit sin and death. But there is another person, the selfless Jesus, who pours God's grace into us, restoring us in forgiveness, and to new life, to the intention of the first Adam, restoring God's image in us.

So, Jesus-followers, we are called to live into the first Adam, the restored Adam within. Immature Christians have Jesus, but the selfish Adam is still powerful. Mature Christians have crucified their selfish Adams, and live from the restored Adams. We live more into our best selves.

**PP#11:** John Wesley's 21 questions for us!

8. Am I proud?
9. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
10. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?
11. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
12. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
13. How do I spend my spare time?
14. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?

Wesley's questions, I think, focus on two very important applications of maturity. Our character is expressed through how we spend our time and words. Time: do I use a routine that leads to productivity, or laziness? Early to bed, and early to rise, sets the whole day. Do I spend my time focused on how I look, being popular, become a slave to work, or habits that eat up my hours? Spare time? Yes, we need down time, unwinding time. Yes we must network and even can justify a lazy day or evening now and again. But what is your routine? What is your normal spending of time? "Down time" or "me time" can become an excuse to feed the Adam of selfishness. You don't have time to be helpful to others, useful for God. Start small. Force yourself to spend 15 minutes away from your phone to go talk to your neighbors. The weather is beautiful. Take a walk around the block and talk to someone. And guard your words. Don't talk about yourself, or your troubles, or opinions. Listen. Really listen to others. Hear them, and get to know them.

Time and words. Grumbling and complaining. We all do this. It is our tendency. Here is a challenge. On the day after you do the devotional on complaining, make a goal to not complain about anything...for a whole day! It's harder than you imagine. But, each time you want to gripe about someone at work, choose in stead to say something positive about them. Watch the news, and then say a complement about someone in government, or in your community. Post and re-post something wonderful in our world, or someone who is doing something right.

Character, mature character. It comes out in time and words. Shift your focus off of the things the selfish Adam keeps pushing on you, and instead choose to listen to the Holy Spirit, and reinforce the godly Adam in you.

**PP#12:** *Image for feeding the good wolf on the inside.*

You know the old Cherokee story of the boy complaining to his father about the other kids who were teasing him. He said he felt such anger inside. But his wise father explained how inside each of us are two wolves, one that is selfish and violent, and one who is gracious and loving. “Which one wins?” asked the boy. And the father said, “The one you feed.”

Church, which Adam are you feeding, listening to, allowing to come out? The selfish Adam is broken, but wants to have your attention. You have a more powerful noble Adam, but you must feed it, practice it, strengthen it.

A mature Christian still has two Adams, but the selfless one is given more experience.

**Prayers:** Prayers of confession...selfish Adam.

### **Holy Communion & Prayers**

Words of Institution - ask for noble Adam

Lord's Prayer

Holy Spirit Prayer

Receiving the Elements

Offering: *I Need Thee Every Hour* -Sanctify

**Closing Song:** *Forever Reign* - Sanctify

### **Memory Verse**

“He has shown you, O human, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” -Micah 6:8

**Announcements:** Memorial Service for Bob Bullard, Fri., June 8 at 11 a.m.

**Benediction:** -Pastor David