

Talking with God
2nd in a series of 5

Slide #1 Everyone has their perspective about what is healthy and what is not healthy. TV commercials saturate our minds from a very young age with products and solutions that are a must for healthy living. We are inundated with advertisements from sun screen to bottled water to vitamin supplements along with an excess of junk food commercials. Ironically junk food commercials, constitute an average of two-thirds of television advertisement shown during prime children watching hours and according to one study ... the result is... an increase in child obesity.

So who can we trust and what should we discard when it comes to our health?

Last week, Ken Nafziger, our resident doctor, gave us one reliable tip to good health... laugh a lot! He informed us that the medical term is gelotology and it is defined as the 'study of laughter'. Ken's tip was followed up by a Dan Armstrong demonstration. So I searched the internet for days trying to find out what Dan's laughter sounded like when he was a baby... and I finally found it. Take a listen!

Slide #2 Video Clip <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTOeuH-iEJ8>

So, are you ready for our 2nd Rockin' Healthy Habit... please give Ken a hand of inspiration!

Slide #3 Ken's Healthy Habit:

Slide #4 Welcome to week two of 'Five Healthy Habits'. Why would we be concerned about health and habits and what does it have to do with the spiritual aspect of our lives?

Last week we talked about the value of spiritual maturity, and when we talk about spiritual maturity we need to understand discipline, because maturity and discipline go hand in hand.

Here is what we need to know about...

Slide #5 Discipline and maturity:

- 1) Mature believers are called disciples. How do we know... because mature believers truly follow Jesus!
- 2) We cannot be a disciple without being disciplined. How do we know... because the word 'disciple' means a learner or a pupil and we can't be a learner without discipline.
- 3) The more disciplined we become the more God can use us. How do we know... because Jesus made it clear that if we are trustworthy in small things, he will give us the responsibility of bigger things!
- 4) The mark of a disciplined disciple is cross bearing. How do we know... because Jesus said so!
- 5) Cross bearing is a daily experience. How do we know... because Jesus said so!
- 6) Cross bearing is a 'whatever it takes' kind of mindset in order to place Christ above all else. How do we know... because this is the definition of crucifixion!

Slide #6 The non-negotiable truth is this: We cannot be a disciple without being disciplined!

Jesus died to make a relationship with God possible, and it took discipline to follow through on dying! In order for us to mature and develop a relationship with God... we need to talk with him... so the discipline that we are going to look at this morning...that needs to turn into a habit is...

Slide #7 Habit #2 Talking with God

Notice that it says... with God... not to God. In the same way that all of us needed to learn how to talk initially with our parents, and then we needed to learn how to talk with our teachers, and then we needed to learn how to talk with our boss and then we needed to learn how to talk with our girlfriend before she became our wife... in the same way we need to learn how to talk with God!

Talking with God is called prayer, and it starts with the right attitude. Let's look at the words of Jesus out of Matthew chapter 6.

Slide #8 The First Attitude we need to develop is: Be Genuine

If you have your Bibles turn with me to Matthew chapter 6.

Matthew 6:5 And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

We need to approach prayer in a way that is Genuine. We don't need to impress others as the Pharisees were trying to do. Have you ever noticed some people who pray in the King James Language, they use thee and thou and shouldst and didst and cometh and verily verily... sometimes I feel like stopping them and say... who are you talking to!

Don't try to impress God. God isn't held hostage to Old English. Don't pray what we think God wants to hear. Remember He already knows our heart and our thoughts and we are not able to fool Him. Just talk with Him like anyone else! It needs to come from our heart.

Slide #9 The Second Attitude we need to develop is: Be Focused

Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

There is nothing wrong with praying in a restaurant or the locker room or on TV... if that is where we are when the Spirit leads. But don't think we need to be in front of people to pray. In fact it seems as though Jesus would say... if you don't pray in private... don't pray in public.

Slide #10 The Third Attitude we need to develop is: Be Thoughtful

Matthew 6:7-8 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

When we talk with the Lord... we need to do just that... talk with the Lord! It's a meaningful two way conversation with God. We need to give thought to what we say... not just pray for the sake of praying.

I am still learning about prayer and I have been praying for as long as I remember. There are times when I pray that I feel close to God and I feel those warm fuzzys, like Jim Snyder talks about, and I sense that God is near and that he is speaking to me. And then there are times when I pray that I don't feel anything or sense anything... but I pray anyway.

It's just like any relationship... sometimes we feel close to our best friends and sometimes we don't feel anything with our best friends and sometimes they frustrate us and we feel angry at them or they disappointed us... but we stay in the relationship with them and keep the conversation going anyway... regardless of how we feel. And that's the way it is with God.

I get disappointed with God when it seems like he's on the sidelines instead of in the game. I do! But I continue the conversation because that's what best friends do!

So how do we actually talk with God? There are many answers to this question and if you are currently having meaningful conversation with God... keep it up... don't change just because you heard this message. But if you want to continue to grow in prayer...please give this message consideration because some of the things that I will be sharing are things that have kept me on my knees over the past 50 years.

When I think about prayer, I think about Jesus, because Jesus prayed and he taught his disciples to pray and his instruction has been helpful to me as well. We can find his teaching in Matthew 6 and people often refer to this prayer as the Lord's Prayer... but it's really not the Lord's prayer. The Lord's prayer is in John 17, but this prayer in Matthew 6 is really our prayer. And the great thing about this is that many of us are already familiar with it... so we just need to learn how to use it.

Slide #11 Matthew 6:9-13 This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Slide #12 In the NIV footnotes: 'For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

Jesus said... 'This, then, is how you should pray:' That's pretty obvious... so let's go to our notes and we are going to look at this prayer, phrase by phrase, and I'm going to give us 7 words that will help us talk with God.

Slide #13

1. Praise:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name..."

It's important that we start with praise and worship. When we say, 'Our Father', it immediately places us in God's family and connects us to God. We need to remember that the only reason we can call him Father is because of the blood of Jesus. As we begin our talk with God... picture Calvary... The sponge! It is only through Jesus that we get in on things! We don't need to be disconnected or independent or out on our own. We have a place to call home. Not only do we have a Father, but we have a Father that is in heaven, which verifies who he really is!

'Hallowed be your name' clarifies that God's name is holy and set apart. There is no one like him, no one compares to him, no one is even in the race for our affections. Praise him for who he is and what he has done.

Psalm 100 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;

Slide #14 We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

We can praise our Father in a variety of ways as we talk with him. We can sing songs or read Psalms or begin to reminisce about how special God is to us. We can work on our '1000 gifts list' because thanksgiving is all a part of recognizing that God's name is set apart.

Slide #15

2. Petition:

'Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

This part of the prayer, our petition, gives us the opportunity to pray for God's will to be done... in our family... in our Church... at our jobs...in our ministry... in our future... at our schools... in our nation... in the world. Jesus said...

Matthew 7:7-8 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

But Jesus also says... your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. As we petition God... we need to learn what God's will is! So we need to ask according to his will!

This is a whole different way to pray than 'gimme this, I want that, Bless me Lord I pray'. How many of you have heard that phrase before? In 1985 Larry Bryant and his wife Lesa released a song entitled 'Shopping List' and it went like this.

Slide #16

Lord, I need to talk to you.
There's so much on my heart
So many burdens makes it hard
To know just where to start
Thank you for your family
Your mercy and your love
Now on to more important things
I'll give my magic lamp a rub.

Slide #17 Chorus:

Gimme this, I want that, bless me Lord I pray
Grant me what I think I need
to make it through the day
Make me wealthy keep me healthy
Fill in what I miss
On my never-ending shopping list

Slide #18

Lord, you've been so good to me
How could I ask for more
But since you said to ask, I will
Cause what else is prayer for
The cattle on a thousand hills
They all belong to you
I don't need any cows right now But something else might do

Slide #19 Chorus:

Gimme this, I want that, bless me Lord I pray
Grant me what I think I need
to make it through the day
Make me wealthy keep me healthy

Fill in what I miss
On my never-ending shopping list.

Slide #20

I made my list and I checked it twice
if I got it all it would sure be nice
I want a nice white smile on a perfect face
And perfect hair that will stay in place
I want a smaller nose
And a single chin

Slide #21

And a figure like a perfect ten
And a mom that never yells or screams
And hips that fit in designer jeans
And a tennis court and a heated pool
I could use them, Lord, as a witnessing tool
And a color TV and a VCR
And Jesus plates on a brand new car

Slide #22 Chorus:

Gimme this, I want that, bless me Lord I pray
Grant me what I think I need
to make it through the day
Make me wealthy keep me healthy
Fill in what I miss
On my never-ending shopping list
Lord please bless my shopping list

This song is painfully true! Sometimes I sound like this song... how about you! Sometimes I have people come to me with their shopping list and they want God to give them something and they think that if the pastor prays... it will have more weight with God. We want the big buck with the big rack, we want the better job, we want the sun to shine, we want more money, and we want to get into the right school...

Gimme this, I want that, bless me Lord I pray... Grant me what I think I need to make it through the day. But we need to set this prayer in the context of what Jesus said, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done!'

Slide #23

3. Provision:

'Give us today our daily bread.'

This phrase, 'Daily bread' means 'enough for the day'. This is a new concept for us because generally we don't shop for food for the day... we shop for food for the week or the month. We don't think 'enough'... we think good, excessive, delicious, Lancaster County Buffet! God is concerned about our welfare, but daily bread refers to our daily needs. It's not referring to our daily cake or daily steak or daily sugar fix or daily super caramel latte!

Providing for tomorrow or next week can cause us all kinds of worry. This is why Jesus said...

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Think about the Israelites when they were in the wilderness and God provided Manna for them to eat. And they were instructed to collect only enough for that day... they were instructed to eat it that day!

Folks we need to learn to pray for our daily bread. I pray that every day for my family and for TL Church.

Slide #24 Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

The word 'need' comes from a Greek word that means 'requirement'. What is required!

Slide #25

4. Plead Guilty:

"Forgive us our debts ..."

Every day we need to have a clearing house of what we have done wrong and allow the Spirit of God to convict us.

Proverbs 28:13 GN You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you.

So how do we do this? Just ask the Holy Spirit of God any way that we might have offended others or hurt others or distorted the truth or acted selfishly. This is where God talks to us... and when he shows us... we need to plead guilty and ask for forgiveness... he will forgive... this is what the Gospel is all about!

Slide #26

5. Pardon:

"... as we also have forgiven our debtors."

In the same way that we ask God to forgive us for our sin... we need to forgive others. At the end of this prayer we find one of the most sobering verses in the Bible...

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Forgiveness is not an option for healthy living. If you want to be miserable, get sick, become angry, lose your friends and your job... refuse to forgive those who hurt you!

So here is what I have learned to do when I pray this prayer. I make a choice each day, in my QT, in the morning, to forgive in advance those people that will wrong me, get in my way, or cause me pain... because someone usually does! But when I choose in advance to forgive them... I'm ready for them.

Slide #27

6. Protection:

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

I think that one of the most fascinating conversations in the Bible, is the conversation between God and the Satan in Job chapter 1.

God is saying to Satan... have you notice my man Job... he's my man! And Satan replies with...

Job 1:10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.

Satan is saying... I can't touch him! And God said... I'll lift the hedge a little and he did and Satan came on with a vengeance... but Job stayed true. And Satan said, lift the hedge a little more... and God did and Satan came on again... but Job stayed true... and in the end... God delivered Job from the evil one!

We can pray for that hedge and God will place it around us... and sometimes God will allow that hedge to be lifted a little and we are tempted... but if we pray... he will eventually deliver us from the evil one!

Here is the really cool thing...we can be protected by that hedge and we can become part of that hedge!

Slide #28 Ezekiel 22:30 KJV And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

See, God talks to us, he is seeking us out, he is willing to place a hedge around us... and he may want to use us to be that hedge around others. Men, listen up. You may be that hedge that God wants to use for your wife, your children and your coworkers! Women, listen up. You may be that hedge that God wants to use through Moms in Touch, through home schooling and through your job. Students, listen up. You may be that hedge that God want to use through Young Life, Youth Group and as you text your friends. We face spiritual battles every day. Satan wants to defeat us every day through temptation and fear. But we can pray for protection... and we can have the confidence that God will deliver us from the evil one!

Slide #29

7. Proclamation:

'For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

As I told you, you need to go to the footnotes in some versions to get to this last part of the prayer... but it is there.

One of the most powerful ways to talk with God and live in victory is through proclamation!

Revelation 5:12 In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

And so as we wrap up our talk with God we can end in proclamation!

I want to close this morning by encouraging you to remember that prayer is the only way we can talk to God. God has many ways of communicating to us... through His Word, through creation, through other people, through thoughts that come into our mind... but the only way that you and I have to communicate with God is through prayer.

I would like to invite Laura to come up at this time and sing a song entitled, 'Sacred Ground' as we take time to reflect and talk with God.

Prayer and Reflection: Sacred Ground - Laura

Slide #30 Practical Application: Let's all talk to God every day this week. Every Day! Even if we have never done it before, let's do it this week.

Invite Prayer Team up:

- 9:00 Janelle and Mel 10:30 Michele and BJ

Benediction:

In prayer

I can go to places only God knows

I can understand His heart

I can find solace and give praise

Prayer counts

It is always there,

it is ever real,

it is essential and deep.

So pray, you who wish to know God.