



JOURNEY – April 28 Teaching Outline (Mark Howard)

MEANT 2 LIVE INTRO:

This year we're learning how God has an intended design for life, and it's best.

- We know there is something so much more than what we see around us
- Life lived outside God's version of life leads to so much pain and heart ache
- But what does God's design look like...for us right now?

LAST WEEK – Sex Series Conclusion:

Sex is one of the biggest distortions of God's intended design for life.

- Where do we get this idea? The culture all around us has lied to us about sex
- Sex is a BIG deal...strongest most sacred bond intended for marriage
- Sex is worth waiting for; that's how you can love your BF / GF now
- **God's design is for sex to be enjoyed in marriage**

Last week we talked about how to make a commitment to sexual purity:

- Decide NOW...Last week's chain links and commitment cards
- Date wisely (& boundaries), avoid tempting situations, a pure mind, **put God 1st**

THIS WEEK – Spiritual Habits Intro:

So how do we put God first...make Christ our most important relationship?

- How does that relationship with God help us keep this commitment to purity?

That answer is the final chapter of our series to understand God's design for life:

*To experience God's intended design for life, you need to form **spiritual habits**.*

What do I mean by "spiritual habits"? First, let's talk about *habits* in general...

What habits do you already have? (Audience response)

- Brushing your teeth
- Mowing the lawn
- Going to school
- Showering? Hopefully.

What does it take to learn something new or difficult? (Audience response)

- Hard work, consistently
- Discipline / continuing your habit even when you don't want to or it's hard

(Shawn White training video)

Discipline, or habits, is not a dirty word, it's a normal part of your life already.

Living God's version of life also takes hard work and good habits...

- Like understanding the Bible, or learning to talk to God, getting to know Him...
- It takes work and discipline...that's called making spiritual habits

Snowboarding example:

Living God's version of life, like staying pure, is like trying to learn to ride switch

- It feels so awkward at first
- Like the game we played...learning to throw with your other hand
- But it is possible, like in 5th grade - broke my collar bone and threw left handed
- It takes a lot of practice
- And it's **so easy to just revert back** to what feels normal

Why are spiritual habits so important and worth the time and effort?

Spiritual HABITS help us know God & allow Him to shape us

HELP US KNOW GOD:

- It takes time to get to know God, like any other friendship...
- It takes time to form trust and reliance on God's strength
- It takes time to fall in love with God...yes, we can fall in love with God
- Like my boys, it wasn't instant, it took time and a lot of work
- We'll talk all about this next week at Journey...

But know this: **Spiritual habits must flow from a desire to know and love God**

John 14:21

He who has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.

Love = obedience...it's how life works.

- If it becomes a thing we must do, a checklist to feel like a good Christian, little will change in our life.
- Learning the balance between consistent habits and a motivation of love is a life-long learning process. It still has to be a habit you choose to fight for.
- Spiritual disciplines should be an expression of our love for God

Donald Miller says in *Blue Like Jazz*, "Our 'behavior' will not be changed long with self-discipline, but fall in love and a human will accomplish what he never thought possible."

ALLOW GOD TO SHAPE US:

- Play dough illustration...adding more each day...letting God shape us
- Andy Goldsworthy pictures – a pile of sticks shaped into something so beautiful

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

- We come to God, begin to know Him, begin to study His word, begin to pray, memorize scripture...and through this God takes the ordinary and shapes us
- Give God the opportunity to make us rich, fertile ground to work with
- We must always invite and welcome God's instruction and correction in our lives

The goal is to become like Christ

- It's like declaring to God, "Do what needs to be done to make me more like you."

2 Corinthians 3:18

So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord...makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

What are spiritual habits I can form in my life?

HABITS:

Hanging out with God

Accountability

Bible memorization

Involved at church serving others

Tithing/Giving to God

Studying the Bible

Here's the reality:

The things we are willing to make a habit that really don't mean much:

- Sports (I love sports, but seriously, it's throwing a ball into a net...)
- Working out (It's not about being healthy it's about looking good)
- Memorizing songs, athlete stats (is memorizing something really so weird?)
- Story of girls doing 1000 crunches everynight (other girl saying she'll do that too)

1 Timothy 4:8

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Why are spiritual habits so much more valuable?

- Do you want to live the life of purity we just committed to?
- Do you want to know God personally and not feel so distant from Him?
- Do you want to allow God to grow you and shape you into His masterpiece?

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Do you want God's version of life? It takes work, but it's so worth it...

1 Corinthians 9:24

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

Are you ready to start running the race?