



JOURNEY – May 5 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 heart ache and death
- But what does God's design look like...for us right now?

LAST WEEK – Spiritual Habits Intro:

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

What do I mean by “spiritual habits”?

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

- Brushing your teeth, going to school, doing homework
- Sports practice, band, drama, etc...

If we want to learn something NEW or difficult...we make it a habit

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

If something is IMPORTANT in our life...we make it a habit

- What is most important in your life? Where are you investing your habits?

What do you gain from your habits now? Looking good...having fun?

- We work hard and form habits for a lot of things with no eternal value

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?

What are spiritual habits I can form in my life?

HABITS:

Hanging out with God (*tonight's focus*)

Accountability

Bible memorization

Involved at church serving others

Tithing/Giving to God

Studying the Bible

If you want God's TRUE version of life, it takes hard work and good habits...

- It takes work and discipline...that's called making spiritual habits
- It feels awkward at first, but you press forward anyway

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

Spiritual habits ALLOW GOD TO SHAPE US:

- Play dough illustration...adding more each day...letting God shape us
- 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
- Always invite and welcome God's instruction and correction in our lives

(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.

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.

- We are to be like a mirror, reflecting God's glory to those around us
- What are you reflecting? It's hard to reflect God if we have no idea who He is

Spiritual habits HELP US KNOW GOD:

- Like any other friendship...it takes time to get to know God
- 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

Spiritual habits should flow from a desire to know and love God

- Spiritual disciplines should be an ***expression of our love*** for God

Knowing God, allowing Him to shape us...THIS IS CALLED GROWING

- You have been designed and made to **grow**

What's one of the biggest insults someone can call you? A BABY. A CHILD.

- Who likes to be called a baby?
- Who likes to admit or realize they are immature?

Now I happen to know a thing or two about babies...

(Kai & Riley pictures)

- As adorable as they are...babies are really quite pathetic
- They barely move on their own, can't feed themselves, get stuck behind doors...

Here's the harsh reality...most of us are still spiritual, helpless babies

- And it's just as pathetic as real babies
- We need to admit that we are spiritually immature
- **Is this who we want to be...spiritual babies?**
- **You have been called to GROW UP.**

1 Corinthians 3:1-2

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as...mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

Do you realize how much more we have to learn...how much more we can grow?

- The depths of knowing God and surrendering our life to Him are endless
- We fall pathetically short of our spiritual potential

Hebrews 5:11-12

You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Is church, or Journey, the only place you are growing in your faith?

- If you only eat twice a week, you're not growing, you're sickly malnourished
- We have got to learn how to grow on our own
- Or you will stay an infant the rest of your life

Do you want God's life?

- Do you want to keep your commitment to sexual purity?
- Do you want know who God really is?
- Do you want to know how to recognized God's will for your life? And on and on...

Stop being spiritually LAZY and starting growing by forming spiritual habits

- Spiritual laziness keeps us infants
- Eventually, spiritual laziness brings the death of your heart
- If you don't eat often enough, you die.

This call to grow...it is an invitation into a RELATIONSHIP with God.

Spiritual habits are an investment in our relationship with God.

- All relationships take work and investment...and that's a good, enjoyable thing
- Spiritual habits flow from a relationship with God
- **Spiritual habits help make our relationship possible**

God's way of life is personal. He wants to be with us and wants us to know Him.

- What a **PRIVILEGE** our God wants to know us personally!

Having a friendship with God can seem so hard.

- We believe this lie that God is distant, cold, and not personal.
- **"It seems impossible to know God personally," well...are you even trying?**
- The Bible clearly describes a God who loves us and knows us
- Since the Garden of Eden, we were created to know and be with God personally

What if we realized that God DELIGHTS in us...

- God enjoys you! He laughs with you, He cheers for you, He hurts with you
- Just like I delight in my boys, Kai & Riley

God wants to be with us – like any other friendship:

- You've got to get to know each other, **SPEND TIME TOGETHER, invest time**
- Talking to God, thinking about Him, reading the Bible, music, walks, etc.

I think we've forgotten the beauty and majesty of being with God.

(All Around Me Video)

Is it easy to know God? No. Is there more to come someday? Yes.

- Someday we will be back in the touchable presence of God in heaven.
- But in the here and now, we press forward through the struggle

As I mentioned before, tonight we're focusing on the "H" in **HABITS...**
"H" stands for "Hanging out with God" and here's a little taste of HOW:

HOW TO READ YOUR BIBLE:

What do I read?

- Daily Bible Reading Plan
- Start with Mathew and read through the new testament
- Read one Psalm or Proverb each day
- Try a devotional book (Utmost for His Highest, Experiencing God, etc.)

Where and when do I read?

- In the morning, during breakfast maybe, before bed, after school...
- Anywhere you can be quiet and focus

How do I get something from it?

- Observation: look for something interesting that sticks out
- Application: think about how it could apply to your life today

HOW TO PRAY:

It's a conversation, talk to God, but here's a guide to keep you focused:

PRAY:

Praise Repent Ask Yield

Don't forget to learn to LISTEN

- Conversations go both ways right? Ever been in a one sided conversation? Ugh.

How? Be still. Be quiet. Let God open your mind...

- A thought comes to mind...if scripture agrees with that thought, it's probably God
- A verse in the Bible comes to mind (won't happen if you're not reading the Bible)
- Something someone else said or taught (might hear my voice in your head!)
- A song suddenly speaks to you (got much Christian music on your iPod?)
- What is around you, like water or trees, becomes a metaphor suddenly
 - o Watching waves, again and again, like God's never ending grace

Audience questions: (Who tries to read their Bible each day? I have a few questions...)

- When do you read the bible? What do you read?
- Do you read everyday? Is it hard to be consistent? What stops you?
- How is your day different when you do start it by reading the Bible?
- Where do you go to connect with God and talk to Him?
- How do you connect with God personally?
- When do you pray, what do you pray about?

Knowing God is not as impossible or hard as it seems. Get started. Don't give up.

You have a life time to learn about God, the Bible, prayer, etc...

PARENTS:

You are the role model

- Why would your teen do anything I've said tonight if you're not doing it?
- Lead the way, be the example

Try some of these habits together

- Both of you could read the same book or Bible Reading Plan
- Talk about it once a week over ice cream...
- **"What is God teaching you this week?"**

I want to close with one last metaphor...

Spiritual habits are all about letting God shape us as we know Him more.

Earlier I talked about how God wants us to be a mirror to reflect God's glory.

- Guess how mirrors are made? By firing sand at over 2500 degrees to make glass
- Sometimes the shaping process isn't easy and it can hurt

But don't you want to grow and mature? Don't you want to be more like Christ?

- Don't be content as a spiritual baby

Are you letting God shape you? Let him chisel you through spiritual habits.

(Hammer and chisel)