

Draw Near

1: Living On Purpose

1. **Introduction:** Little is New Big. We want to begin our study of drawing near to God with a focus on how God can do big things with our little things. So let's begin with a story.
 1. Share story of Joe Cannon from pages 2-3 of the book.
 1. This is an example of how God over and over again takes something small and insignificant and creates much more out of it.
 2. Can you think of scriptural examples of this?
 3. Read Matthew 13:31-32 - Parable of the Mustard Seed
 4. Read Matthew 13:33 - Parable of the Leaven
 5. Refer to Acts 1-4 - The Church grows from chapter 1 of 120 to chapter 5 of over 5000 plus.
 2. What are other examples from scripture - either Jesus' life or from other parts of scripture? (have class share their ideas from the Bible)
 1. Gideon
 2. David and Goliath
 3. Daniel and the Lion's Den
 3. Examples of how God takes something small on a daily basis and makes it large:
 1. If you take three 10 minute walks a day, or 30 minutes all in one shot per day, this is enough to stay healthy. So a short amount of time per day makes a big difference. (from the Mayo Clinic website)
 2. If you read your Bible for 15 minutes every day, you will read through it in a year. (from Mark Abshier)
 3. Most of us spend about 10 minutes on average per day focused on spiritual things. Could we focus those minutes and gain more? Let's think about that. God can do massive things with small things; could He do something massive with just 10 minutes per day? What if every person at MacArthur Park Church focused on God for 10 minutes every day - how would that impact San Antonio?
 4. We are not saying that God only wants you to spend 10 minutes each day focused on Him - oh, No! He wants you every minute of every day. And I'm not saying 10 minutes is all you will ever need to join Him in changing yourself and your world. In the end it takes every second on the clock and every cell in your body. But, 10 minutes is a great way to start and let God begin to work in your life. And God will do amazing things!
2. The Challenge: So here is what we want to do:
 1. We will share 12 spiritual activities or practices that can be practiced in 10 minute segments. Though they are brief, they can have an impact.
 2. These 12 activities have also been chosen because they run along a specific theme given to us in scripture and by Jesus - found in the Sermon on the Mount.

3. We are learning not just the WHAT to do but the HOW to do it. We have the examples that we have learned from how Jesus lived as a Jew, and what he and his disciples did, what early Christians did, as well as the things that believers have done over the past 2000 years to become closer to God.
3. Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) - Jesus describes a different way of living in the Sermon. A way that is very different than the world around him and the world around us. Jesus says a lot of different things about how to live life, how to think, how to act as believers in God. They can be summarized into three relationships: relationship with God, relationship with people, and relationship with possessions.
 1. Piety - our relationship with God. Notice what Jesus says in the Sermon...
 1. Live the kind of life God can use as salt and light (5:13-16)
 2. Pray for God's kingdom to come instead of praying for your will to be done (6:7-15)
 3. Let your path not be the crowded one, but rather the little-traveled one (7:13-14)
 2. People - our relationships with other people. Notice what Jesus says in the Sermon...
 1. Demonstrate mercy (5:7)
 2. Don't be angry, but seek reconciliation (5:21-26)
 3. Don't deceive, but rather let your "yes" mean "yes". (5:33-37)
 3. Possessions - our approach toward and use of money and goods. Notice what Jesus says in the Sermon...
 1. Do not be miserly and serve money, but rather be generous and serve God (6:19-24)
 2. Do not worry, but rather trust in the caring provision and kingdom of God (6:25-34)
4. Would there be a way to change ourselves to be disciples of Jesus by focusing on the Sermon on the Mount?
5. Philippians 3:7-17 - This is where Paul shares some of the details behind how he was personally transformed. From this passage we notice four ideas that we need to remember as we work through the 12 practices over the next several weeks
 1. End Over Errors. In baseball, whenever a player makes a mistake, it is counted as an "error". Well, sometimes, we can be guilty of focusing too much on the errors we make and not the end goal we have in mind. In Philippians 3 Paul has an end goal in mind - gaining Christ Jesus (v. 8-9, 10, 14). But he points out he has not made it (v. 13) and so he knows he is still in the errors, but he is pointing toward the end.
 2. Effort Over Earning. Some of us may have bought so much into grace, that anything that sounds like effort we shy away from. But notice Paul's words in verse 9, "not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God that depends on faith." Paul knew there was no earning God's favor - it is already ours. So God is not opposed to effort, but he is opposed to earning. He does not want us to work to earn something. But he does want us to work to come close to Him.
 3. Compass Over Clock. One of the dangers of our present culture is the need to show progress within each week, month, and quarter. If you don't, then you will be

replaced. So we constantly watch the clock. But in this passage Paul points out that he did not. He was watching the compass -what direction was he pointing? As long as he was pointing the right direction, that is the main thing, even when things are slow and the progress seems to be non-existent. Notice 3:12-14. Paul has been following Jesus for 3 decades when he writes this, yet he is still concerned to "strain forward". He is very concerned with direction!

4. Training Over Trying. This point brings to mind the training for a marathon. When one is about to run a marathon, one has to run for months ahead of time the shorter distances to prepare, otherwise on the day of the marathon, there is no amount of trying that will help you finish the 26 miles. The same is true for the spiritual life. It cannot be done in a moment, it takes small amounts of time, 10 minutes a day, every day, over a lifetime. John Ortberg says, "Respecting the distinction between training and merely trying is the key to transformation in every aspect of life." (The Life You Always Wanted, Page 48, John Ortberg).

6. Practices:

1. Notice Philippians 2:12-13. Paul writes of working out our salvation. Not working for our salvation, but working it out with God.
2. I cannot emphasize enough that these practices are not to be done for God's approval - God already loves you as much as He will ever love you. These practices are for you! They will help you come to love God more, love life more, love others more, and love your possessions less.
3. This week you have four devotionals on the Practices Sheet. Each will take about 10 minutes. You can do them Monday through Thursday, or Wednesday through Saturday, or every other day. However you want to do them. They are offered to you for help in your walk. Next week, as we come to class let's talk about what we experienced this week with God.