

Living out the Word of God!
1st in a series of 5

Everyone has their perspective about Healthy Habits. Magazines flyers are filled with suggestions, articles and stories about the 'how' to live healthy.

Slide #1 'Prevention' tells us how to 'Blast Belly Fat' in 20 minutes and drop 3 sizes and how to do the 'Two Day A Week Diet' that really works and how to Erase Wrinkles, Ease Pain and Boost Memory. The information that comes our way on 'Healthy Habits' can easily put us on overload. Who can we trust and what must we discard?

Every Sunday morning for the next month, Ken Nafziger, our resident doctor, is going to give us one Healthy Habit that is reliable... as some would say... we can take it to the bank! So Ken... take it away!

Slide #2 Ken's Healthy Habit:

Slide #3 Welcome to the first message of 'Five Healthy Habits'. Why would we want to talk about Health and Habits?

We can have the nicest Facility in the world and the coolest Worship Band and the liveliest Youth Group and the most entertaining Jr. Highers and the best run Children's Program and the most effective Connection Groups.... and if Timberline Church has not yet developed Spiritual Maturity... it doesn't amount to a hill of beans. So I want to talk with you for the next 5 weeks about developing Healthy Habits so we can increase our Spiritual Maturity. So we can grow up!

So let me begin by sharing some things with you about Spiritual Maturity.

Slide #4 Spiritual Maturity:

- 1) Is not automatic...it takes intentionality to grow up! Our default is to stay 'infantile' and it takes a plan to grow up!
- 2) Is a process... there is no shortcut! It's not a matter of gaining a certain experience or going to the right seminar or reading the right book or listening to the right teacher or learning to keep the right rules.
- 3) Takes discipline... it takes physical fitness!

Slide #5 1 Timothy 4:7-8 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 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.

Physical training takes discipline! How many of you remember the first Rocky Movie? You just heard the theme song a minute ago.

Slide #6 Do you remember Rocky's first encounter with discipline... drinking raw eggs and running up the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Do you remember that first time up those 72 stone steps... he about died... through those heart pounding, lung burning work outs. But eventually discipline paid off... and in the end he could dance at the top and it paved his way to victory in one sequel after another.

Slide #7 In fact this scene has turned Rocky into a legend, resulting in the creation of a bronze statue that now has become one of Philadelphia's top tourist attractions.

This scene has inspired thousands of people, young and old, from all over the world, to abandon their inhibitions and trek up the Rocky Steps and mimic his triumphant celebration. This scene has become the symbol of perseverance, determination and discipline.

Physical training takes discipline! Here is...

Slide #8 The non-negotiable truth: We cannot be a disciple without being disciplined!

For the next 5 weeks we want to talk about Habits... Habits that will lead us to Spiritual Maturity and these Habits cannot be developed without discipline.

Slide #9 Habit #1, our message for this morning... is 'Living out the Word of God.'

In Partnership 101 we talk about the Bible and what we at TL believe concerning the Bible. Here is how our statement of faith reads:

Slide #10 "We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and will live in obedience to its teaching and exercise a life of daily devotion, meditation, and praise."

I have intentionally titled this message 'Living out the Word of God' because HOW we live is even more important than WHAT we believe. What we believe will impact how we live, but how we live is the proving grounds of what we believe. So this morning I want to talk about 'Living out the Word of God' and this comes by

1. Hearing
2. Reading
3. Studying
4. Memorizing
5. Applying

I just gave you my outline! Let's go to our notes.

Slide #11

1. Hearing

Why is it important to hear the Word of God?

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Because it increases our faith!

Someone once calculated that we forget 95% of what we hear after 72 hours. Now for you kids... this is a comforting statistic... it gives you an excuse when you get busted... 'I forgot!' But for all of us parents, teachers and pastors... this is depressing!

So how can we hear the Word of God and not let it get lost in our forgetter?

Here is some help.

Slide #12 How can we hear and remember?

- 1) Develop a sense of expectancy. Think about it... when you come to worship, power hour or your quiet time... what do you expect?

Do you expect God to speak to you? Do you expect anything refreshing new or helpful? What do you expect will happen during this time?

2) Confess any sin that would stand in the way. Sin blocks the Word of God. Some people will never grow up because there is sin in their lives and when they hear the Word of God, sin functions like one of those bug deflectors on the hood of a truck... that whooshes the bugs right over the top, sin keeps the Word of God from ever landing and implanting... it just goes over their heads.

3) Write it down. We write down what is important. Whether it be a name, a number or an address... we write it down. If not with pen and paper... we write it down on our cell phones. Think about all the phone numbers and addresses we have in our cell phones... that we can recall with just a touch... they are available to us because we... wrote it down or typed it in or entered the data! We will never truly hear the Word of God if we never write down what we are hearing from God!

4) Act on it. Proof of hearing is acting. If I ask my kids to do something... I never know for sure if they hear it until they do it. They may look at me or say 'huh' or even grunt... but it's not until they act on it... that I'm convinced!

Slide #13

2. Reading

Why is it important to read the Word of God?

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Because it teaches us how to live!

Maybe some of you have a reading disability... the Scriptures are available on CD and online... there are many options if you struggle with reading. So keep this in mind as we talk about the value of reading God's Word.

Slide #14 How can we read the Bible in a way that we can know how to live?

1) Read it daily. If we want to grow spiritually we need to read the Word of God daily. It's a discipline and it takes time, but it is critical that we read it on a daily basis.

2) Read it systematically. Have a plan. Read through the entire Bible or a book at a time... but read it systematically.

3) Read a variety of translations and paraphrases. I read the Msg, the LB, the KJV, and the NLT... there are all kinds of options.

4) Stick with it. Most people fail because they bail! They start with great intentions but they lack the discipline to stick with it.

The non-negotiable truth: We cannot be a disciple without being disciplined!

Most of us would say we believe the Bible from cover to cover, but how many of us have ever read the Bible from cover to cover?

How can we say we believe it from cover to cover if we have never read it from cover to cover?

If we read the Bible approximately 15 minutes a day we can read the Bible in a year. Let's do it in 2014!

Slide #15

3. Studying

Why is it important to study the Word of God?

2 Timothy 2:15 KJV Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Because we need to know what we are talking about!

Slide #16 How can we study the Bible?

- 1) Take notes, underline and highlight what stands out to us. I always have my notebook handy when I have my QT.
- 2) Ask good questions. When we read things and they don't make sense. Ask questions, research the questions, ask others and they may have some insight for us.
- 3) Use a good study Bible. For me I have found the NIV Study Bible to be helpful and reliable.
- 4) Read the introductions to the different books of the Bible and the commentary notes. These Bible resources can help us to understand the context.

If you need help with some of this, talk to these kids that have been to Bible School and YWAM... they have been taught this stuff in great detail.

Slide #17

4. Memorizing

Why is it important to memorize the Word of God?

Proverbs 7:1-3 My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.

It gives us constant counsel. It's stored up!

Memorizing the Word of God gives us constant counsel. Are you tempted, frightened, making decisions, frustrated... the Bible counsels us.

Maybe there are some of you here today that have trouble memorizing... maybe you feel like you just aren't capable... here are some tips.

Slide #18 How to memorize the Bible? Think John 3:16

- 1) Read it over and over out loud.
- 2) Write it out.
- 3) Break it down phrase by phrase.
- 4) Place it in a prominent place.

Slide #19 Three Simple keys to memorizing:

1. Review

2. Review
3. Review

Slide #20

5. Applying

Why is it important to apply the Bible?

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Because it keeps us from being deceived.

How can we apply the scriptures? Sometime we can read the scripture and we know exactly what to do. It says this... and we just do it... and that is applying it. But sometimes it's more difficult to know how to apply what the Bible says. So this morning I want to share with you a simple process called the 'Application Bridge' and I learned this from Rick Warren.

Slide #21 The Application Bridge is the process of going from 'what did it mean then', back when the Bible was written, to 'what does it mean now?' and then understanding the 'Timeless Principle' that ties these two concepts together.

So there are three questions we need to ask:

- #1 What did it mean to the original hearers?
- #2 What is the underlying timeless principle?
- #3 How can I practice that principle today?

Slide #22 Acts 15:29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

When was the last time you ate meat strangled or offered to idols? What does this mean? If we study this verse and check out the context through use of a Bible dictionary, a commentary or a Study Bible, we will learn several things... and this is why we study the Bible.

Pagan people in Bible days would take meat and offer it to idols as a religious ritual. They would give the idol the meat.

Now obviously an idol made out of stone doesn't eat the meat given to it. So after it's left there for two or three days, the priests of these pagan religions would take it back out on the street, sell it and make a profit.

For the Jews, to eat this kind of meat was a violation of Jewish laws... because by eating this meat they were in essence condoning this pagan religion.

The first Christians were all Jews... and then Paul eventually extended the Gospel to the Gentiles and these religious pagans as well and they began coming to Christ.

So eventually there arose a great debate about behavior within the Christian Church; did these new Jewish and Pagan converts need to keep all the Jewish laws in order to become a Christian? So the Elders and Church leaders got together in Jerusalem to consider this question.

And the final summary of this Jerusalem Conference in a nutshell was, No, we don't need to keep all the Jewish laws. But since there is such confusion about this... let's make some decisions about what laws we do need to keep... and then put the word out to the churches. And this is what they decided.

Acts 15:29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Slide #23 So they concluded two basic things:

- 1) Don't commit immorality
- 2) Don't eat meat offered to Idols

So how do we apply this verse today? Well the first one... don't commit immorality... is clear for us today and in one sense we don't need an application bridge... don't have premarital sex, extramarital sex or same sex. Don't be involved in incest, prostitution or adultery or any kind of sexual involvement that perverts what God has created!

But what about this idol, blood, meat strangled animal talk... how can we apply this today? Paul writes this.

Slide #24 Romans 14:19-21 Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It's better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

Paul understands that meat offered to idols is no different than the meat down at McDonalds. His concern was... that if these new Jewish converts saw others in the Church eating this meat offered to idols, it would cause them to stumble and maybe derail them in their Christian walk. Even though the idols weren't real and the meat was good... because it might offend these new Jewish Christians... he would not eat this kind of meat.

Remember this slide?

Slide #25 The Application Bridge

So #1, what did it mean to the original hearers... don't eat meat offered to idols.

So #2, what is the underlying timeless principal? Don't do anything that will cause your brother to stumble or fall. Even if it isn't wrong... don't do it! This is timeless... it fits any culture of any century. It crosses over gender barriers and socio economic barriers. It never needs to be updated!

So how can I practice this principal? There are many ways... but I want to give you just one... to teach you how to apply this principal. Paul writes...

Slide #26 Romans 14:21 It's better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

I could make a good case in Scripture for moderation in drinking alcohol. Personally, I don't think the Bible teaches total abstinence from alcoholic beverages. However, the Bible does clearly instruct that getting drunk is wrong, but it doesn't say that drinking alcohol is wrong. I think it's very clear that Jesus drank wine. In fact in the Gospels we are told he turned water into wine and it was the best wine at the party!

I don't drink alcohol at all. It has never been a part of my life and never will be a part of my life. Why? Because the principle says it's better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

This is not a message about alcohol, but rather it is a message about Living out the Word of God and how to apply it, because sometimes we can't understand the Word of God until we understand the context... so don't get lost in the alcohol part... get the principal.

Let me explain and try to make this clear. I just read yesterday that in the US, 1 in every 13 adults-- abuse alcohol or are alcoholic. So, what if an alcoholic who has been hammered most of his life... meets some TL people who love Jesus and he starts hanging out with them and eventually he becomes a follower of Christ. And Jesus changes his life and dry's him up and for the first time ever... he can think clearly and make good decisions and his judgment is no longer cloudy and he is hanging out with TL people and enjoying himself.

And then one fateful day he is invited to a cookout and there he meets Timberliners who drinks and he thinks, this must be OK... this is a rocking church... these are cool people and they drink alcohol... I'm a Christian now, so maybe I can handle it... and in one drink he falls fall off the wagon and he is once again back in the downward spiral of alcoholism.

So, one practical application for today may be... don't drink because we may never know who we may cause to stumble. After studying the Scriptures you may come to another conclusion and I won't argue with you, be we need to understand the context and use discernment when we live out the Bible in our lives.

Some of you may think that this is a naïve' belief, unique to the hicks of conservative Lancaster County, yet this is Rick Warren's position as he travels internationally and pastors a suburban Los Angeles church of 30,000.

I believe I have the right to drink. Knowing my DNA and personal discipline... I think I could drink and not get drunk...

but I have chosen to limit my rights because I don't want to cause others to stumble and because I want TL to be a safe place for those on the wagon.

This is all about relationships and when we focus on applying the Bible in our lives we need to think... relationships!

Slide #27 Let's wrap it up this morning with a practical application of the entire message:

What can we do! Let's all Live out the Word of God this week and let's get started by reading the Word of God... every day this next week. Even if you have never done it before, even if you don't believe... let's do it this week!

You can start wherever, but if you don't know where to start... I would suggest the Gospel of John or the book of Philippians. Get out your notes and look at what it means to hear, read, study, memorize and apply the Word of God. Let's pray!

Benediction:

Walking down life's road today

I spied a glimmering, shimmering thing

God's Spirit moved, and I, with uncommon eyes

Beheld wonder, touched eternity through tears.

His Word is precious and wonderful.

Transcendent, yet it knows the common way.

Ask me, and I will take you there.

Ask me, and I will pass it on to you.