Growing in a Relationship with God

The first Wednesday of each month I am going to address an issue related to growing in our relationships and will challenge you to set a month-long goal to work. We call this the “growth plan.” Today I am going to focus on our relationship with God.

Review

 Last week we asked the question, “Do you want to please God with your life?” Many of you responded by saying that you have the desire to be pleasing to God.

Intro

 But what pleases God? God has everything He needs. He doesn’t need anything. But what does He want?

 My daughters will ask me what I want for my birthday, and I often struggle with coming up with an answer. There isn’t anything that I really need. But one thing that I would love is to just spend time with them. One of the best gifts I can get is a dinner with my daughters.

I. What are you worth?

 How do you determine the value of something? What is something worth? What is my house worth? I can ask someone who has some expertise that question, and he might be able to come up with a number, but the reality is, my house is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

 What was God willing to pay for you so that you could enter into a relationship with Him?

 Read 1 Peter 1:18-19

**“**For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, **19**but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

It wasn’t silver or gold, although in our way of thinking they are very valuable. It was the precious blood of Jesus. What is that worth? It is priceless. There is no value you can place upon this payment.
He allowed His Son to die for you so that you could be redeemed. Redeemed means that the price was be paid so you could be set free.

 How high of a value does God place on having a relationship with you? It cost God the most precious thing that He possessed, the life of His Son.

II. The gospel- How relationship with God is possible?

 A. The gospel says that in your sin you are more wicked, depraved, and lost than you ever dare believe. Do you believe that? It doesn’t mean you are as wicked as you could be right now but that you have the mean within yourself to be like that.

 B. As a result, you are separated from a relationship with God. There is nothing you can do to have a relationship with God.

 C. Because God is holy, He cannot accept sin into His presence and no matter how much good you do you will never be able to be perfect which is His holy standard.

 Think about that for a minute. You are separated from a relationship with God- which is the most significant relationship you could ever have. It is the relationship for which you were created that defines you and fulfills every longing of your heart if you will let it. Without this relationship you are hopeless. Life will not make sense without this relationship and you will experience even greater torment in the next life.

 That is the bad news.

 D. But the good news is because Jesus took the punishment or your sin and died in your place, you can be forgiven.

 E. If you are willing to repent, acknowledging your sin desiring to turn away from it, and turn to Jesus putting your trust in Jesus’ death alone as sufficient payment for your rebellion you can be forgiven and enter into a relationship with God.

 F. Are there any here tonight who would say I have never personally placed my faith in Jesus as my rescuer from sin and tonight I am willing to repent- turn from my sin, and turn to Jesus, trusting in His death for me as payment for my sin and I am accepting Jesus tonight.

III. But why did God allow Jesus do die for you?

 A. We already said it wasn’t because God needed you.

 B. Read Deut. 7:6b-9

“The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

**7**The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. **8**But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **9**Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.”

 C. So why did God choose you?

 1. It wasn’t because you were more special than others

 2. it wasn’t because you were more numerous than the other nations.

 3. God chose you because He decided to

 4. God loves you because He loves you.

 D. Life comes down to understanding who the main character in God’s story is. Is it God or is it you?

 1. This is where dog and cat theology can help us to understand this.

 2. Cat theology says, “You feed me, you pet me, you care for me, you protect me, **I must be God**.” Which is saying life is all about YOU.

 3 Dog theology says, “You feed me, you pet me, you care for me, you protect me, **you must be God**.” Which is saying that life is all about God.

 4. God is the main character in the story of life, not you.

IV. So why did God create us?

 A. God created us to have a relationship with Him and that is why He allowed Jesus did come to earth to die for us. It is not just so that when we die, we will go to heaven. But that even now, through faith in Christ, we can grow in a personal relationship with God.

 B. Read John 17:3

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

 C. You want to please God? Then fulfill the reason for which you were created. It is not to make much of you. But to grow in a relationship with God and make much of Him.

 D. What is necessary for you to grow in your relationship with God?

 What is true to grow in any relationship?

 1. Two-way Communication

 a. You need to talk to God- prayer

 b. You need to allow God to talk to you- read the Bible

 2. Obedience

 a. What happens in your relationship with your parents if they tell you to do something and you disobey them?

 b. Your disobedience creates a barrier in your fellowship with your parents and creates interrupts the closeness you can have with your parents.

 c. The same is true in our fellowship with God. We need to obey God with our choices, our speech, our actions, our friendships, in every area of our lives.

 d. Our obedience to God is a way to show God that we love Him.

John 14:15 “If you love me, you will obey what I command.”

Conclusion

 God loves you. He created you for a relationship with Him and He allowed Jesus to die for you so that you can enter into a relationship with Him.

 But just like any relationship it takes work to grow in that relationship.

When we talk about growing in our relationships we talk about **next steps.**

 For example, if you aren’t spending any time with God through reading your Bible, your next step might be to begin to spend 10 minutes a day with God by reading the Bible three times a week.

 If you are spending 10 minutes a day in reading your bible 3 times a week, then your step might be to spend 10 minutes a day 5 days a week.

 If you aren’t praying except when you eat a meal time maybe your next step is to pray 10 minutes a day before you go to bed or if you are a morning person 10 minutes a day before you go to school.

 If you want to be pleasing to God, you have to spend time with God. He wants to spend time with you. This means so much to Him that He allowed Jesus to die to make it possible.

 If you want to be pleasing to God, you need to commit to obeying His commands.

Life is busy and it is easy to fill it with all kinds of good things. If you want to be pleasing to God you will make this a priority.

Application

 1. Will you set a next step goal (make it specific, measurable, and doable) in bible reading, prayer, and obeying?

 Read my bible for 10 minutes a day/ 3 times a week

 Pray for 10 minutes a day before I go to school.

 2. Many of you last week stood and said you wanted your life to be pleasing to God. If you are sitting here tonight and saying to your self that you don’t want to spend time with God, then I would challenge you to begin to pray that God would give you the desire for Him and spending time with Him.

 3. If you want to the Ontrack Devotional to help you sign up to get one

 4. Tell your small group what your goal is for the next month

 5. if you blow it, ask God to forgive you and start back up again.

It is possible to spend time in God’s Word and not grow in your relationship with God.

But is it impossible to grow in your relationship with God if you do not spend time with God.