



PREVIEW

When we talk, sometimes it seems like we're on autopilot. We speak without thinking about what we're saying. This same behavior carries into our prayer lives. We talk to God without thinking about what we're saying. But its important to mean what you say when you pray.

PRAISE

Words have tremendous value. You can probably think of a time in your childhood years when a complement was given to you. Sometimes that compliment is a source of encouragement when you're older because you knew it came from someone who meant what they were saying. The words you speak in prayer mean something to God. So be intentional when you speak.

PARABLE

At some time or other most of us have probably been asked to pray over a family meal. If you're introverted, you probably rushed through the low volumed prayer just to get the attention off of you. If you're extroverted you probably prayed and threw in a hilarious quip just to make your family laugh. If you pray over your meal regularly, you might find that you say the same prayer each time. Many times the words come out automatically. You might have a plate with a donut, cake, and cookie on it and say, "Thank you Jesus for this food, bless it to the nourishment of my body, in Jesus name amen."

Mean What You Say

PARABLE *(continued)*

But would you really ask God to use cake, cookies, and donuts to help make you healthy? For him to turn water into wine and feed 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish wasn't a problem. However, you likely wouldn't intentionally ask him to make unhealthy food healthy. But according to your prayer, you did. What happens is out of habit we say words in prayer without considering what we say. But just as we want people to mean what they say, God likes us to mean what we say.

PRESENT

Jesus was surrounded by crowds of people when he taught what some have labeled the "Sermon on the Mount". These words were to help people live in a way that please God and to be in right relationship with others and God. He came to a part in his message where he talked about how people should approach God when they pray. In one area of approaching God he said:

"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Matthew 6:7-8 ESV

Jesus' instruction was meant to get his hearers to be in the moment, and intentional when they prayed. God doesn't want someone to come to him, while their minds are elsewhere. When you're in a conversation, you can tell when the other person has checked out. Usually what they say has totally disconnected from the conversation. This lets you know, they're not with you. Rather what God wants is that when people pray, they remain connected to him mentally and by what they say.

Mean What You Say

PRACTICE

Praying in autopilot mode, can be a habit. How about the next time you pray, you begin forming a new habit of meaning what you say when you pray.

The Bible tells us,What you say flows from what is in your heart. Luke 6:45 NLT. What words are flowing from your heart to God when you pray? Are they words of mindlessness used to fill 5 minutes of time, so you can feel good that you prayed for the day? Or are they words that flowed from your heart to God, as you sincerely expressed your love and thanks to him. The next time you pray try it out! You'll notice the difference when you sincerely talk to God.

PRAY

Jesus thank you for the privilege you give us to talk with you. It's amazing that you want to spend time talking with me. Today I ask that you help me consider what I say when I'm talking to you. Lord, I don't just want to mindlessly tell you "I love you". But I want to tell you "I love you" and mean it. Lord help me to become aware of what I say when I'm talking to you. Jesus, I love you, and I thank you. In Jesus name.

PLUS

Before you wrap up this weeks meeting, ask your members to take time this week to practice meaning what they say when they pray. Ask them to take notice of what happens when their words to God are meaningful. At your next meeting have them share what happened.