

2 – On-Track; Life-Appliable Teaching

We began our sermon series “On-Track” last week by asking a question that we will go back to through this series, the question “**If you had absolute, perfect confidence in God... that**”:

- There really is a personal God who knows your name and hears your prayers.
- God will be with you forever, promising never to leave or forsake you.
- God will help you and bring you through everything in life – good and bad.

If you had perfect confidence in God – imagine how different your life would be.

Imagine how your personal confidence and security would grow
How your insecurities and fears would disappear
How temptation and loneliness and despair would be transformed!

You’d breath easy, knowing God is in control and working behind the scenes. Absolutely that God will bring good out of this! You’re not in denial, you just have an unshakable confidence in God. **Imagine how life would be better!**

If you **don’t have** this kind of faith... and meet someone who does; it’s both attractive and irritating! **Irritating because down deep, you wish you were!**
As you study the Bible, you’ll find that’s what God is trying to do in all of us!

Last week we saw how our basic problem with God didn’t start with disobedience, it started when humans decided not to trust or place our confidence in God!

Ever since, God has been trying to re-establish a confident, trust based relationship with each of us. In the New Testament, we find God working to re-establish that relationship - through Jesus - who said, “*God wants you to trust Him! God sent me and if you trust me, you’ll reestablish a relationship with Him.*” Just as everything fell apart because of a lack of trust, it’s re-established through trust in Him.

God wants to grow real, big confidence - in God – in You!
And when you do, your life will be different... better!

Last week we looked at 5 things or catalysts God uses to grow big confidence in Him. Not 5 things you do, but 5 things in an environment you place yourself in – like being here at the Community Regional Shared Ministry Church!

Here are the 5 things or catalysts:

- **Life-appliable teaching** – which we’re talking about today
- Next week we will talk about **God-given relationships**
- Then the following week we’ll talk about **Personal Practices**
- Realizing **God has a plan**
- And **Life-changing experiences**

These 5 things show up in everyone’s story as they talk about what God used to build Big Confidence in Him. The reason we’re doing this series, is if you already trust God deeply or are beginning your relationship with him, whether you doubt God or don’t believe at all, **God uses these to grow your trust in Him!**

Today we’re talking about – Life-appliable, practical Biblical teaching. When people tell me how God grew his or her confidence in Him, they say, *“I heard about God, went to Sunday School, grew up in a different religion... then somebody invited me to a bible study... or this church... and I heard things I never knew. I was invited into an environment and that person taught the bible in a way I never heard before, things I didn’t know were in the bible! Not just information – they taught the bible in a practical, life appliable way!”*

One of the things that grows our confidence in God is when we are exposed to practical, biblical teaching!

**God wants us to not only know more,
but to know what to do with what we learned**

The problem – **generally speaking** – is in the American Church, teachers and pastors are happy just covering the material and debating definitions, then say “Amen.” The reason people like **shorter** sermons is because they already know what the pastor is going to talk about, because pastors just cover the material.

If you look in the Bible, when Jesus opened the scripture to teach, it was different!

Jesus taught application, not just knowledge

An example is found in **Matthew 7**, you find one of Jesus most familiar teaching.

It's the **Sermon on the Mount** - if you have never read the Sermon on the Mount, read it! ***The basic message of the Sermon on the Mount is this:***
This is what you do if you have big confidence in God

The sermon on the Mount is about **what to do** and little about **what to believe**. The reason Jesus taught in this life-appliable way... He knew simply knowing stuff doesn't help anything. Jesus taught - this is how you live and need to practice, that's what makes the difference!

This is not about earning your way into heaven, the Sermon on the Mount is saying, "Here's what it looks like if you have perfect confidence in God! This is how you live - if you trust in God!" *That was new teaching in Jesus time!*

AT the end of the Sermon – this is Jesus conclusion

Read the scripture **Matthew 7:24-29**

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

In America, we like to compare our spirituality - to how often we go to church.

We think, if I go to church more often, then life should be better!

But you can write down God's promises or highlight scriptures. You can underline things in a Christian book or devotional, **you can know more bible trivia** – **but if you don't do it or practice the promises or principles in the Bible – it won't help your life.**

If you want to grow your confidence in God and experience a better life – it isn't learning or knowing the bible better - **it is doing something with it!** This is why... when people explain how God grew their faith, how they went to that church or this bible study and that person taught, then I to-did it and to-did it and to-done it!

People tell me, “When I started living out this stuff, I started experiencing God in my life! I believed it before - I just didn't know I was to do something with it!

We apply biblical promises and principles as an act of confidence in God and that is how we honor God and walk in faith!

When your confidence in God is practiced in your life and it intersects with the faithfulness of God... God honors your obedience and you experience God in a new and fresh and growing way!

One of the things that grows your confidence in God is when you put yourself in an environment where people teach the word of God and you learn:

- Here's what to do
- Here's how to do it
- Be inspired to do something with what you learned.

Not to knowledge, but be inspired to do something with what you learned! You might as well stay home if you don't do something with what you learned!

What to do with Matthew 7:24-29

1. *“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”* Matthew 7:25

- **The reason the house didn't fall is because they did the right thing, they built on the rock**

That's what it means to listen and practice what you learned. Just showing up and gaining information is useless. If you want your personal and financial life, your personal and spiritual life to be like the person who built their house on the rock...

Jesus explained, “You gotta do this stuff! Not to earn favor with God or earn your way into heaven, but to powerfully experience God. When you do, this happens:

- **When your confidence meets God's faithfulness – you experience God**

2. *“But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.”* Matthew 7:26

Everyone who hears... those who go to church, bible studies, Sunday School classes, or small groups... those who hear God's words in the Bible, and does not put them into **practice** is like “A foolish man who built his house on the sand.”

This may sound offensive, but read it for yourself, this is what Jesus is saying:

- **Wisdom is knowledge applied**
- **You can have 100% attendance at church and still be a fool**

You can have 100% attendance at church and build a house, a relational, financial, or moral life... make all kinds of good decisions... and be an absolute disaster!

When you cry out to God asking, *“How can you allow this to happen to me, I never miss church!”* **God will say,** *“I know, but attendance is not the issue, it's what you do with what you heard! Obedience makes the difference, not attendance or knowledge! It is obedience to what you heard – that's what you need to be wise!”*

3. *“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were **amazed** at his teaching”* Matthew 7:27-28

The people were amazed because Jesus taught with authority... not like those in the synagogue – the teachers of the Law. These teachers taught in a way that presented information and what to believe... but not how to live and experience God!

Jesus taught, *“Here are some things to believe **and then** – this is what that looks like if you believe. Now forgive and walk the second mile, don't look in that direction - - give generously!* **THIS is what it looks like in the real world if you have real confidence in Me and in God the Father!**

When our confidence and trust in God intersects with God's faithfulness, you experience God in real ways! Before I entered ministry - I learned in this church, the importance to trust and obey, AND how important it is to apply what I learned! I was taught that it is not about just attending church or about **knowing more bible trivia**, it is not about attending more bible studies. You see:

- **This is more than knowing, it is practicing what you know**

I learned, “When you consistently do this stuff the bible teaches, it is like building your house on a rock! I am thankful I was taught this practical faith!

When I evaluate my teaching or sermons, I always check... did I present people with something to take home and practice, did I teach a life-applicable bible promise or Biblical principle today and did people know what to do with what they heard?

What you need to grow your confidence or your kids confidence in God, is to consistently be exposed to this application oriented teaching. Remember, this is not about doing to earn your way into heaven, because you can't do that, Jesus did all the work to get into heaven, all you have to do is receive that gift.

One last thing... when you gather people together and teach for life application, it is disturbing! You mess with people's world view:

People learn that they need to repent of so the Lord can start changing their lives
When people start trusting God, it pushes people out of their comfort zone.

- **You need to be in an environment where it gets a little disturbing when the bible is opened and taught.**

When Jesus taught, it wasn't a peaceful easy feeling for everyone!

At the end of John 8, after Jesus finished teaching, the people wanted to stone him! Church was not boring and people were furious when they heard Jesus' teaching:

“All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff.” Luke 4:28-29

If you get to the end of a sermon and you are mad at what the Bible says and what I am teaching because it is challenging your comfortable world view – good! That kind of a challenging sermon means we are being a New Testament church!

But if you walk out of here and wonder, what was that about!
I don't know, **but** Jesus knows I was at church and I endured a boring sermon to the end! If a sermon is more boring and ill-relevant – does God give us more credit?

Now I know there's value in a worship service with quite kneeling and reflective chanting of literature. But in your week, you need to be exposed to someone who opens the Bible and ticks you off, where you're convicted and uncomfortable!

Remember- **you need to be in an environment where it gets a little disturbing when the bible is opened and taught.**

Think about this from Mark Williams, the former chair of the Church of God :

Unapplied truth is as good as unapplied paint.
It doesn't do any good.
The value of paint is in the application
Mark L. Williams

Remember, God wants to grow your faith - if you allow God to do so! The greater the confidence in God, the greater the intimacy with God... that's what God wants!
Faith that grows when you place yourself in an environment where you receive life applicable teaching!

One way to respond when we hear a message like this is to choose to pay attention to this faith growing catalyst! That would mean to take the step of faith and walk into the opportunities Jesus offers you practical ways to be transformed/sanctified into a person of grace, filled with the power of heaven!

- Most especially remembering what Jesus taught – as His Father in Heaven sent him, He is sending us.
- Maybe taking one of the Sunday School Classes or Bible Studies available. There's a catalog available. Maybe coming to the Head to Heart Service at the Waterford Church where you can be in an environment where Holy Spirit can move freely and you can receive a blessing from God!
- Helping serve at church with by being a vocalist or an instrumentalist, working the overheads or sound board. Participating in the Hospitality Ministry as a Greeter or usher or **Prayer Ministry**, or helping with the Pancake Breakfast.

Prayer: