

**Sermon Title:** Knowing Your Needs, May 27, 2012 (Scripture is from ESV)

**Scripture Reading:**

**Introduction**

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm blessed to be able to share the Word of the Lord with you all today. The title of today's message is, "Knowing Your Needs." I considered naming the message, "Knowing Your Needs, Especially Regarding Finding a Spouse," but it just seemed too long. It definitely would get more people to listen to it on podcast though.

Yes, I will in fact be speaking some about wisdom in finding a spouse, some wisdom that clearly needs to be shared with many of you. But believe it or not, you have more needs than just finding a spouse, and I feel the Lord wants to address a few of them today. Before we get into addressing specific needs though, I want to lay the framework of who we are as humans made in the image of God.

**Humans = Three Parts**

I think all of you know that God is three in one. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is where we get the term trinity from. And I think most of you also know that human beings are also composed of three parts: body, soul, and spirit. Our body is simply our physical body. Our soul is are mind, will, and emotions. Our spirit is what connects us to God. But because of the effects of sin from the time of Adam and Eve, our spirit man was cut off from connection with God and was dead. This is why Scripture consistently says, "We were dead in our transgressions" (Ephesians 2:1, Colossians 2:13). We obviously weren't dead physically or mentally, but spiritually we were clearly dead.

Before salvation we lived according to the needs of our body and of our soul. We were led solely by our emotional and bodily needs. But when we accepted Christ we were born again and became new creations. As we invited His presence into our lives, our own spirit man became revived and is now able to connect with Him again.

This is why we are continually instructed in Scripture to renew our mind, or our soul, and set it in line with our spirit man. 1Corinthians 2 is clear in saying that we can only receive knowledge from the Lord through our spirit. If we are allowing our soul to drive our body, we are unable to accept the things of God. But if we are renewing our soul, or our mind, then we are able to discern God's will and God's heart. Turn with me to Romans 12:1-2 and let's see this clearly in Scripture...

**Romans 12:1-2 – I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

We are instructed here to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice AND to renew our minds, or our souls. That means that God wants both our bodies and our souls to be fully in line with our spirit. We are no longer to be led by our earthly appetites or by our earthly emotions, but rather we are to set them both in line with the leading of the Holy Spirit. As we do this, we are able to understand God's true and clear plan for our lives. A renewed soul and a renewed body are beautiful things that can be fully be used for the kingdom.

## Going Overboard With the Spirit

The subject of focusing on our spirit man and growing in the Lord has been preached so much in the history of the church, that for a long time the church had a warped view of their body and their soul. The church viewed their body as weak and all of its desires as unspiritual and even evil. I shared in a message late last year about how it got to the point that the church spoke of sex as evil and began disallowing it as often as possible, finding the only purpose for sex being reproduction. And even with that, the “most holy” of the Christians would take vows of abstinence and live as monks or nuns all of their lives. Some Christians would even mutilate their bodies in order to “purge themselves from sin.” Ridiculous!

And of course it wasn't just the body that Christians viewed as unholy, it was also the soul. A mind that is not renewed is a mind overwhelmed by temptation, impurity, and sin, and Christians went to extremes to try and silence their minds. Rather than renewing their mind and caring for its needs, Christians would take vows of silence and live as monks in quiet monasteries. There they would never speak at all but would just read the Scripture and pray silently.

Sadly, these Christians were about as useful to God as the servant in the Bible with one talent of money who out of fear hid it and never used it for his master. Fear caused Christians to forsake the gift of sex “in the name of God” and to treat their bodies with contempt. Fear caused Christians to forsake the needs of their soul in terms of communication with people. Fear twisted and destroyed the church for well over a thousand years, and even today we are still recovering from centuries of teachings based on fear. **Don't get me wrong, it is wise to be aware of temptations, but if we are truly in relationship with God then we need to understand that no weapon forged against us will prosper** (Isaiah 54:17). If we are truly following His Spirit AND walking in fellowship with accountability, then we are safe. I spoke a lot about this in my message, “God Wants to Satisfy You” last November.

In this message I feel God desires to address the needs of our body and our soul. The church has been broken for too long. Just as we need to have revelations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to fully see God, so do we need to care for the needs of our body, soul, and spirit in order to be truly whole. God is not just concerned with our spirit man. Let me show you...

Please open your Bibles to Mark 6:30-31. The two verses we are about to read come after Jesus has sent out his twelve disciples to minister in different areas and they have finished with their trips.

**Mark 6:30-31 – The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest awhile.”**

How is that for a command from God? “Come away by yourself to a quiet place and sleep.” Hallelujah, Lord, my life is in Your hands. ⇒ God was clearly not just focused on the spiritual matters here. If God was, then He would have said, “Good, you've experienced victory in the towns you've visited, now we must keep the momentum and go straight to the cities!” But He didn't. Instead He made it clear that the disciples' personal needs were important. And He instructed them to rest. And this was coming from Jesus who knew He only had three years of ministry before He would be crucified. Jesus didn't have a 10 year commitment timeframe to work everything out. His time was limited. **But He still knew the bodily and emotional needs of disciples were important.**

That was the New Testament, now let's look at the Old Testament. Please turn back to Jeremiah 31:25-26. This chapter is a beautiful prophecy of God's plans for His people. In verse 25 God is speaking...

Jeremiah 31:25-26 – “For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish.” At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

Let's look at those two verses closely. What is God promising to satisfy here? Our spirit? **No, our soul.** And looking at both of these passages you can also see that God is concerned about our bodies. From Mark we saw that Jesus commanded His disciples to rest. Here in Jeremiah 31 we see that Jeremiah's sleep was pleasant. His body was indeed rested.

So let me ask you, “How do you take care of the needs of your body, soul, and spirit?”

### Needs of the Spirit

For the spirit we take care of its needs through prayer, reading the Word, worship, and discipleship. If you want to truly connect with God, you need to be reading the Word daily and seeking Him in prayer. And the preaching you receive, the testimonies you hear, and the praise and worship you give to God will all replenish and strengthen the needs of your spirit.

My focus today is more on the body and the soul. Some of what I am about to share might seem obvious to you, but sadly for a lot of the church in our pursuit of the Spirit we have neglected some of our own basic needs.

### Needs of the Body

For taking care of the body I think it's obvious for us all: we need to eat well, sleep well, take care of our hygiene, and exercise. I don't want to understate the needs of taking care of our bodies, so look with me at 1Corinthians 6:19-20.

1Corinthians 6:19-20 – Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. It was made in the image of God. It was fearfully and wonderfully made. You, my friends, are beautiful. Your body is not meant to eat kimbap or Pizza School (cheap pizza) every day. Your body is not meant to work nonstop and get little sleep. Your body is not meant to be neglected or ignored. **In fact, if you are neglecting your body then you probably shouldn't get married (REPEAT).** If you can't take care of your body then how do you expect to take care of your spouse's?

Let me read Ephesians 5:28-30 for you...

Ephesians 5:28-30 – In the same way husbands should love their wives **as their own bodies.** He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

So many people think that although they are undisciplined with their own bodies and neglect themselves at times, that when they get married because of “their great love” for their spouse they will be able to be disciplined and care for their spouse perfectly. I'm sorry, but those thoughts are idiotic. We love because God first loved us. We can only love from the

overflow. **So if we have neglected our body or been undisciplined with it, then how can we expect our body to be healthy and disciplined in loving someone else?** The truth is that your body is crying out for health. And when you get married you will suddenly find yourself wanting to be cared for by your spouse, rather than you caring for them. Why? Because your body is starved for health and it can't find any help from you, so now it's looking to your spouse to care for it.

God calls us to love our spouse as we love our own bodies. So, what is your love for your spouse going to look like? You can look at how you care for your body for a clue.

Now, please don't get me wrong in thinking that someone that is perfectly fit is going to make a perfect spouse. But if a person who is perfectly fit puts the same amount of effort in loving their spouse as they do in caring for their own body, then they will indeed be a great lover. **We just need to start with ourselves.** I'm not calling for us to be selfish, but I'm calling for us to treat our bodies at the temples of the Holy Spirit that they are.

One of my friends is super spiritual and he could have used this message a while ago. He told me that when he began to be interested in someone and felt God readying his heart for marriage, that God's first instructions to him were, "Clean your home, learn to enjoy things, and get into shape." **If you really want to be good at loving people, then you need to get good at loving yourself.**

I want to release a grace in the church to eat healthy. We complain a lot about how fruit is so expensive in Korea, but we need to get over it. Yes, one orange costs about \$1 and so does one apple. But the truth is that you usually spend at least \$5 on every meal and so fruit would only be a fraction of that price. And I'm pretty sure an apple is more filling than 1/5 of your \$5 fried rice. Treat your bodies well church. Cut back on the coffee and the junk food a bit and you'll find plenty of money to eat meals that will bless your bodies more and also leave you full and not needing the coffee or junk food.

## Sex

Now before I move on to addressing the needs of the soul, I want to address one more area regarding the body, and that is sex. At the age of puberty almost all of us were awakened to the fact that we are sexual beings with an appetite for fulfilling our sexual desires.

This is a tough topic to address in a brief amount of time, but what I want to communicate to you all today is that **your sexual appetite is the same as your physical appetite. The more often you eat, the more often you will be hungry.** The truth is that your body isn't in need of food every time you're hungry, you've just trained it that it will eat at specific times.

If you fast and do not eat food and only drink water, then you will usually experience strong hunger pains for about three days. The pains aren't just because your body wants food, but it's also because the toxins in your stomach are being cleaned out at this time, which can also lead to bad breath during this time. If you're an avid coffee or tea drinker, then you will likely have some headaches during these days. The fourth and fifth day are usually the toughest days because your body will grow very weak and need extra rest. But then usually starting on the sixth day your body will start to regain strength. The toxins in your stomach will have been cleaned out for the most part and your body will now be running off of the excess reserves you've stored up. You can actually go between 21 and 40 days on only water and aside from the beginning, feel pretty decent during it. It's once you begin to feel hunger

pains again that your body has run out of excess reserves and has shifted into starvation. That is when you need to end the fast and eat.

It's all the same with sex. **The more often you feed your sexual appetite, the more often you will be hungry for more.** But if you choose to starve your sexual appetite, then just like hunger pains your urges for sex will gradually go dormant. I can share this as well from experience. I had my own struggles with purity when I was younger but as I grew with God I became more hungry for Him and frustrated by my actions. I prayed for strength, looked to the Lord, and completely stopped my senior year in high school. What had once been a struggle was no longer an issue for years.

And just like breaking a food fast, the appetite for sex returns when it's fed again. That means if you are single, you need to be disciplined and not just stop feeding your sexual appetite by acting on it, but also by avoiding places, people, and media that will cause the appetite to grow. When you are fasting food you usually want to avoid your favorite food places because the smell will awaken hunger within you. It's the same in handling your sexual appetite. It's best to avoid the places and movies and literature that may awaken hunger within you. Sex was meant for covenant from the beginning of time. Honor God with your body.

There is clear hope for all of you. James 4:7 says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Even if you've filled your mind with porn and had a past of impurity, God is still able to break every chain and clean you right up. There is truth in needing to resist, as I just read in James 4:7, and usually there is an initial fight. But God promises that as you resist, Satan will flee every time.

### **Needs of the Soul**

Now I want to move on to the needs of the soul. How do we care for the needs of our soul? Our soul is nourished through companionship, encouragement, positive attention. It's also nourished by doing the things that our minds enjoy doing.

We live in a society whose souls are starving. Adults are working nonstop and kids are studying nonstop. And what happens with such starved souls? Depression, suicide, sexual addiction, computer game addiction, and anxiety attacks are just some of the symptoms. Often a person with a neglected soul will focus their attention on their other appetites that they can fill, such as with overeating, drugs, or sex. Many people struggle with masturbation not just because of lust, but because their soul is crying for attention. Church, we must be aware of the needs of our soul and not allow such symptoms to happen in our lives.

For me, I am very much an introverted person. Talking with people, particularly groups of people, takes a lot of energy. My most difficult settings are parties or banquets where everyone is wandering around talking in groups. And yes, preaching takes a lot out of me as well. I enjoy teaching and preaching and leading prayer and counseling people, but I've learned my limits. Usually on days like today, when I have a counseling session in the morning, a prayer meeting to lead in the afternoon, and a sermon to preach during the service, all I will want to do is go home and lay down on the couch and turn on a movie and let my mind recover. I've learned I need that recovery time. I need to tend to the needs of my soul.

When I first arrived at the orphanage at the end of 2005 and lived there, I thought that I needed to focus solely on the kids and only tend to the needs of my spirit man. I didn't eat well and I didn't do things that I enjoy doing. And my body became weak and my demeanor



became down and somewhat depressed. I lost a lot of my joy, but continued to serve out of duty. But God was looking out for me.

I had stopped playing video games in college, but hanging out with the kids so much made me miss the days of playing video games with my friends when we were young. So I mentioned that longing to God. And then a friend called me and told me he had an Xbox with four controllers and wanted to give it to me to play with the kids. He didn't know of my desires, but God did.

Later I found myself longing to play basketball, one of my favorite sports. My kids were only into soccer, which is not a sport I get excited about, so I didn't think I'd get to play basketball much again. But wouldn't you know, I was asked by the home to develop and coach a small basketball team. I've been teaching basketball to my kids every Tuesday night for about five years now and now we play a little almost every day I visit the home. How about that?

Those are just two examples of many ways God has cared for the needs of my soul as I've served at the children's home. God has given us gifting and desires that He wants us to enjoy. When we neglect these areas too much, we are no longer caring for ourselves in the way God desires for us. We shouldn't only be talking about ministry or about work when we meet with people. Our souls need more than that.

So many of you here at Itaewon have creative giftings that need to be active. If you aren't being who God made you to be, then often frustration, depression, lack of direction in life, and other negative things can come in. Pastor Marcus and I have been waiting for the Sabbath months to organize a creative group to help foster you all. We both see the need. And the need is not to create things that will change the world, rather the need is to simply enable you all to be who God made you to be. When that happens, when we are serving the Lord with joy securely in His rest, then amazing things come out that can truly affect many. **God is far more interested in caring for our needs before using us to care for the needs of others.**

### **Positive Attention**

Along with doing things that our minds enjoy doing, our souls are always in need of personal attention and encouragement. When we are in healthy relationships, our souls are full and secure and we are able to pour out to others. Once again, we love because God first loved us. Without receiving some positive attention, we have little to give to others. And while we can receive a lot from just our personal relationship with God, no matter how introverted a person you are there will always still be a need for positive attention from a fellow human being.

Small groups and community groups are crucial for feeding the soul. While the Bible study and prayer time and testimony sharing definitely strengthen our spirits, it's the interaction and genuine love that really feed our souls. If the small group is just a time of methodical Bible study and prayer and the end, then while the spirit may be fed the soul will still be lacking. This is one of the reasons why Sky's small group goes so late. => I think most of those girls are always willing to sacrifice some of their sleep at night in order to be able to talk with each other a little more and connect.

I want to encourage you church to not neglect the needs of your soul. Some of you are very good at getting peoples' attention and nurturing your soul, **but some of you spend so much time giving other people attention that you aren't getting the attention that you need.** I

don't want that. I want to encourage the active leaders that you have access to Pastor Marcus and to me. You have access with us that we will not give to just anybody. If we did, we would be spread way too thin. You guys are our top priorities, so take advantage and talk to us. We care about you guys.

As for everyone else, we care about you too, but you need to be finding your companionship through small group, community group, ministry teams and fellowship. **And I also want to warn you that if you put the needs of your soul on just one person, then unless that person is your spouse you are going to be sorely disappointed and you are going to drive that person nuts.** For urgent matters or for clear guidance or encouragement, talk with your leaders. But for companionship there are plenty of different people around you to connect with.

### **Marriage Advice**

Last, I promised that there would be wisdom here in finding a spouse. I need all of you single people to receive this, and even if you are young and not ready for marriage, listen and file this away for future use.

**Too many people these days are focusing on their wants rather than their needs.** This message was titled, "Knowing Your Needs," not, "Knowing Your Wants." If it was "Knowing Your Wants," then I would have spoken about eating fried chicken and sleeping all the time for the wants of your body. But we know if we lived solely by our wants, we would eventually not be happy and our lives would be pretty jacked up.

Sadly though, I've discovered many people in the church focusing on their wants in seeking a spouse rather than focusing on their needs. For example, I have a Christian friend, not from our church, who is friends with a number of Christian girls who are his age or a bit older. What is common among these girls is that they are all nurturers and look out for him. It's clear he is blessed by them and feels secure around them. But what type of girl does he want? He wants a much younger, cute, girly-girl (feminine and somewhat ditzzy). And what will happen if he actually gets what he wants and marries some much younger, cute, girly-girl? He will get a lot of frustration and disappointment. Because rather than receiving some of the motherly care that he actually needs, he will need to be caring for this young girl. Rather than having someone he respects and can confide in, he has this young girl who is looking up to him for everything and putting most of the burdens solely on his shoulders.

When I encourage people to make a list about what they would like in their spouse, I need to make it clear that at the top should be their needs, not their wants. I've shared with you all before that at the top of my wife Sky's list for her future spouse she wanted, "A Christian who is Korean and musically talented and creative or artsy." She got the Christian, a need, but definitely didn't get the musically and artistically talented Korean guy that she wanted. Is she disappointed being married to me? No. She learned while dating me that I was meeting things within her she didn't even know she needed.

**You need to know your needs.** When a guy approaches me about an interest in a girl I will always ask him why he likes her. And whenever he responds with simply, "She's cute," I always think to myself, "Good luck with that in 20 years."

Wants are overrated. They are fun for a short time, but unless needs are being met they get old quick.

My wife Sky is one of the most beautiful women in the world. But believe it or not, her looks had very little part in my heart opening to her. Instead, I had learned over the years the needs of my heart. I needed someone who understood my strange and goofy humor, that I don't share with most people. I needed someone who I could completely be myself around. I needed someone who had the physical touch love language. I needed someone who wasn't extroverted and wouldn't wear me out. I needed someone with discernment; sensitive to the spiritual realm. These were not just desires, I learned over the years they were actual things that I learned needed. **These parts of her attract me to her far more than her outer beauty. And that is why I will be just as attracted to her when we are old and gray.** That's what you want in a relationship.

If you approach me desiring to date someone at the church and your only reasons are things like, "He or she is cute and is a Christian," I will tell you to "N-O" right away. If you really want me to bless you in pursuing a romantic interest, then I'll need you to give me some reasons why you are attracted to the person beyond surface level. If you are in touch with your needs than you will be able to know much more clearly what person you should be with.

### **In Closing**

In conclusion, I want to encourage you, church, to eat healthy and eat well. I want to encourage you to take care of your bodies and to learn to enjoy yourselves. I want to encourage you to take time for a hobby or for some things that you enjoy. I want to encourage you to find fellowship and people who you can talk to about matters beyond just church and work. Continue to run hard after the Lord, but don't neglect your body or your soul. My prayer for you is the Apostle John's from 3John 1:2...

3John 1:2 – Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

**\*Pray\***