

# Talk it Over

Discussion Guide

August 23 – 2.0

MATTHEW 6:5-15

**Welcome:** Today's conversation is really about how to have a great conversation. It is about having a conversation that will change your life. It is about having a conversation that is productive and that will bring lasting and otherwise unobtainable change. It's Jesus going, yet again, deeper in his conversation.

## **Theme: Balance is key to moving forward.**

Anyone who has had an opportunity to spin around in a circle fifteen times will know right after that when you lose your balance you fall over, walk sideways, and get discombobulated. The same is true with spiritual balance. The same is true with spiritual equilibrium. And, spiritual equilibrium is far more important than the physical..

### **Talk It Over: How do you maintain or even restore physical balance?**

*(Think about the times you've gotten dizzy. What does it seem your body has you do when you're dizzy?)*

### **Talk It Over: Discuss how you might maintain or even restore spiritual balance?**

*(Take the same ideas you've discussed about physical balance and now see if they apply to restoring spiritual balance.)*

**Background:** The early followers of Jesus knew that prayer was a fundamental tool for restoring spiritual balance. But, here's the problem: there were so many different prayer methods and models presented to them. So many people offered different examples of how to pray and the result was that they were confused and not in agreement about what healthy and functional prayer looked like. That's when Jesus, sat down on a mountain and addressed this in the middle of his Sermon on the Mount... what we are calling his 2.0 message.

## **Read: Matthew 6:5**

**Idea: Healthy, balanced prayer must never be about being seen. This kind of prayer loses all benefits.** Jesus wanted no confusion about what NOT to do with prayer. He wanted his followers to have great clarity that the show-offs who prayed were not a good model. He also wanted his followers to know that being 'wordy' and saying more and more would not improve their prayer life. Quantity of prayer was not what God was looking for.

### **Talk it over: How has 'being seen' ever impacted your prayer life?**

*(For example: Think about when people have asked you to pray in public. Remember that moment when it felt like the spotlight was turned on you.)*

**Talk it over: What is Jesus saying we need to be careful about when we pray?**

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## Read: Matthew 6:6

**Idea:** Jesus says creating space for God-focused prayer is important.

- Go to your room
- Shut the door
- Pray to God who sees you in the secret.

Jesus' instructions are so simple. He wants us to do whatever we can to put up boundaries, because the world is distracting and can easily cause us to lose our focus or take the focus off of God in our prayer.

**Talk it over:** How would your prayer life practically look different if you implemented something like Jesus' instructions on how to pray?

## Read: Matthew 6:7-8

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**Idea:** Jesus says that productive, balanced prayer has structure. And, structure enables us to focus. We all have thought patterns in our life. And, our prayer is likely to mirror our thought patterns, whether they are healthy or not. Jesus is offering these words as a structure for us to shape our prayer life.

**Talk it over:** Try and share what your private prayers typically look like. What are the thought patterns that you usually follow? Do you have structure to your prayers either intended or unintended/organically?

## Read: Matthew 6:9-15

**Idea:** In forgiveness true balance is restored. Giving forgiveness enables us to receive forgiveness. Forgiveness is the nucleus or center of our spiritual life and it is the place that Jesus has taken his listeners in the Sermon on the Mount. It is also the place Jesus wants every believer to go every day.

**Talk it over:** What do you think that a forgiveness-focused prayer does to change the way that we pray?

**Idea:** Prayer changes us so we can change the future.

Jesus doesn't want us to stay in our room, but to take our forgiveness into the world!

**Pray:** Share prayer requests & Share praise reports.

*NEXT WEEK: Matthew 6:16-24 What you invest in matters.*