

HOW TO PRAY:

3 Simple Ideas on How to Talk with God (Part 2)

The following transcript is an excerpt from a conversation between Dr. Ed Laymance, Founder & Director of Impact Counseling & Guidance Center, and Elisabeth Lee, Content Director of Ministry to Parents. The transcript has been lightly edited for content and clarity. To listen to excerpts of the interview, [click HERE](#).

Ed Laymance:

Okay. Sure, sure. Well, there's three basic templates or models that I encourage people to think about. One is what's my template concerning preparation for the day, which is what you were alluding to a while ago. I get up in the morning. I'm going to go over here and have my quiet time or whatever you want to call it. What's my template for my preparation for the day? Then what is my template for as I go through my day? Then what is my template for what I call pray it forward, which would be praying over the family system and the generations to come. I would say think in terms of three templates. All right. Because they're going to look different. They're going to be similar, but they're going to look different. Concerning preparation for the day, there's some suggestions that I would make about that that are helpful, all right. This isn't here's how you do it. These are some ideas, all right.

Elisabeth Lee:

Yes. It's the difference between an idea and a formula.

Ed Laymance:

Yes, exactly. Here's some things that I've found helpful. Let me start off by saying, I am not a morning person, all right.

Elisabeth Lee:

Love it.

Ed Laymance:

I've never been a morning person, and so I've always been a night person. Through the years, I felt all this guilt and shame from all these people that I would hear teach and preach, and they go, "I get up at 4:00 in the morning and spend three hours with God." I'm going, "Good grief." I don't even want to go to bed till 4:00 in the morning. What are you talking about?

Elisabeth Lee:

That's just not right.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. There's something wrong with this person. This has been a huge challenge for me my whole life, all right. What I tell people is look, whenever your day starts, okay. If you're a night person, your day is probably going to start later than the morning person. Okay, I don't care, whenever that time is. That'd be the first thing I'd say.

Once your day, whatever your schedule for your day is, your prep for the day, then have a specific time. If you normally get up at 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, whatever that is, then you're going to need to back up from that time a little bit because you're not just going to jump into your day. You're going to spend some time preparing for your day, all right. I tell people that are trying to get a start with it, "Look, back it up 15 minutes." So if you're normally getting up at 7:00, okay, get up at 6:45, all right. Just an idea.

It's best that in addition to specific time that you got a specific place. You pick a spot someplace where you can be alone. Now, if you're in a dorm and you got roommates, then okay, how do I do this? Or if you're in a crazy busy household, how do I do this? It's best if you can figure out a way where you've got a place where you can be uninterrupted with your timeframe. That's best, okay.

Elisabeth Lee:

And that's where if you don't have that access, you can't do it in the beginning of the day. You might need to go okay, you know what? Later today I need to get to... I need to find that place. I can pull away to a coffee shop, get some earphones and get some alone time there because I'm not going to get that right now.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. Well, that's exactly right. You have to work with whatever your particular environment is-

Elisabeth Lee:

What you got.

Ed Laymance:

... at any given point in time. If you're a mom and you've got...

Elisabeth Lee:

Newborn.

Ed Laymance:

... newborns and that type of thing, that's going to look real different than somebody who's an empty nester. It's not going to look the same, all right.

Elisabeth Lee:

Well, and it reminds me, what you're saying is real similar to I know people who have planners and who are, okay, I'm going to get up and I'm going to look at what do I need to accomplish today? People take a few minutes to prep for their day. What do I need to get done with my work today? What do I need to get done with my home today? You're just basically saying, you do this for your heart as well and the spirit time.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. Actually, see, before you engage the calendar and your list, you do this.

Elisabeth Lee:

Got it.

Ed Laymance:

So yes, that's exactly it. In fact, see, hit the pause button on that and go to something else that again is foundational, and that is if I don't have a kingdom mindset about life, then I'm going to look at this, what I'm talking about right now, as a religious formula. The way I define a kingdom mindset is there's a statement that I heard a guy by the name of Dudley Hall make, good grief, back in the 80s probably a long time ago that I've never forgotten. It was actually his definition for the word submit, but I really love it. I've never forgotten it and I use it all the time. I use it as a definition for kingdom mindset or submitting to God. He said, "Do what God says do when God says do it whether you feel like it or understand it." I think that's really good, all right.

Scripture is very clear about the whole idea of my mindset being focused on the things of God. Philippians 2:3-5, that is the setup for Jesus coming to earth where it says, "Do nothing," nothing, "from selfish ambition or conceit." Then it says, "Let each of you look not only to their own interests but the interests of others." And it says, "Have this mind among yourselves which is in Christ Jesus." The let this mind and have this mind is present active imperative. It's not a suggestion. It is do this now, actively do this.

Elisabeth Lee:

Yeah. Continuous action.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah, continuous action. Present imperative. Colossians 3:2, set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth. Again, present active imperative. It's a mindset, right. If my mindset is a kingdom mindset, then I begin my day in a way that facilitates kingdom mindset.

Elisabeth Lee:

Yep. You're basically hitting the, what's the word I'm thinking of? You're tapping in to the kingdom. You live in the kingdom world, right, in God's kingdom. God's kingdom here on earth,

so it's like you're plugging in to the home base, being like, "Okay, plugging in. What we got for today?"

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. With that mindset then, verses that we quote all the time take on a different significance. Like Isaiah 55:9 where God says, "My ways are higher than your ways. My thoughts are higher than your thoughts." He's going look, you don't see the forest, I do. Jeremiah 29:11, we quote that all the time where God says, "I know the plans I have for you." Okay. Well, either he does or he doesn't.

A lot of times we live as practical atheists. We go, "Yeah, that's true, but..." Then I get after my schedule. Psalms 31:14-15a: I trust in you, oh Lord. I say, you are my God. My times are in your hand. Well, either I choose to believe that God knows what he's doing or I don't.

Elisabeth Lee:

Well, and-

Ed Laymance:

Go ahead.

Elisabeth Lee:

Well, this is going to be for another conversation on another day, but I think a lot of times people can't believe that because of their pain, right?

Ed Laymance:

Well, that too. That's exactly it.

Elisabeth Lee:

Again, another conversation.

Ed Laymance:

Well, it is. It is. I'm choosing to believe that regardless of present look at things. And yes, that's easily said and difficult to do when I'm faced with pain and loss and difficulty and illness and suffering and I see the aggressive brutality of human evil and spiritual evil and it's a jacked up, messed up, selfish world. Yes, yes. So you're correct, that's a whole nother conversation, but what happens then is see, I don't get up and make a list and ask God to bless it.

Elisabeth Lee:

Got it.

Ed Laymance:

I'm supposed to ask him for the list.

Elisabeth Lee:

Which is that prep time.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah.

Elisabeth Lee:

Which is your suggestion for prepping for the day. I look for that specific time. I try to shoot for that. I look for a specific place.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. Because that's got us started, it's not my list that he's blessing. I'm asking for his list. I'm not asking him to join me. He's invited me to join him.

Elisabeth Lee:

That's it, yep.

Ed Laymance:

That's a totally different mindset. Therefore, the prep time has a kingdom mindset with that in my mind that my schedule isn't my schedule and my time is not my time. Therefore, I need to start with a conversation with the Lord as I'm getting rolling here. Otherwise, it's going to be me asking him to bless my schedule and we're off to the races, which is not the way it's supposed to work.

Elisabeth Lee:

Well, as he's inviting me to join him, there will be times, I've learned this about him. As I'm asking him about it, there'll be times, "Well, what do you want to do today?" That's where I'll be like, "I have no idea." He's like, "Well, let's go figure out what your heart is, what I put in you." That's the part, it's like you said, both/and. But it's not coming to him and, "Hey, I really need to do this. Will you help me get all this done today?"

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. Because we act like he has no idea that I got a 5:00 bind that my boss put on me, and he doesn't go, "Oh wow, I thought that was next week." He's not confused. He knows the kids have had the flu. He knows everything. He's already been to tomorrow, okay. But I don't act as if that's true.

Elisabeth Lee:

Right.

Ed Laymance:

The more I do that, then see, not only what first with my day, but as I'm moving through my day with the redirects on schedule, I go, "Okay, I didn't have that on the list, but okay." Anyway, back to preparation for the day.

Elisabeth Lee:

Yeah. Because we got the go through your day, we're getting there.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. Specific time and place and it's always best to have a specific plan. Because if I just get up and I don't have no plan, then my mentor in college used to say, "He that shoots at nothing hits it every time." I just get up and hit and hope. Well, that isn't a good plan. So I suggest that you have a place you're reading in the Bible and you have a devotional that you find helpful. Those two things, your plan is okay, I'm going to read through the Book of James and I'm going to use Jesus Calling, for example. I'm going to read those two pieces every morning as a starting place. Again, but have a plan.

Then it's start with a question, and to me that question is what do I need to hear from you today? I got a place I can read, so what do I need to hear today? Then talk with God about what you're reading, what you're hearing. Well, we said a while ago, God's word is alive. Then okay, so now it becomes, what do I need to do with this? How do I need to apply this? Then at that juncture I think that's when you move into okay, here's some of the stuff that's on my head. Now it's about what I perceive to be my concerns right now for myself, my concerns for others, my requests for the day and the future. Then I'm saying, would you please remind me what I need to know through the day?

Elisabeth Lee:

And you think too at this point, I'd love to, just because I'm more of a feeler and sometimes also my thoughts, I can sometimes go between feeler and thinker, so my thoughts can just go rampant. This is where I can unload that if it's writing out through the pages and just nonstop, everything that's in my head.

Ed Laymance:

It's however you want to do it, however you want to do it.

Elisabeth Lee:

This is where it's like, okay, I need to unload burdens. Here's that piece where you could... however that looks for people, that that's where you unload.

Ed Laymance:

See, sometimes I need to start with that because I wake up heavy.

Elisabeth Lee:

Yeah. True.

Ed Laymance:

That's okay. I mean what I'll do sometimes is I go, "Lord, I am so burdened down and overwhelmed. I mean I woke up with 10 tons on my back, so I really need to talk with you about this. I'm going to hit the pause button because I need to hear from you first."

Elisabeth Lee:

Yep, totally.

Ed Laymance:

Do that. Yes, of course. This is relational. This isn't religion. I mean this morning I needed to say some things to the Lord that are true, but they're hard truths. What he was talking to me about is I'm kind of wishy-washy on some stuff. I'm going, "Yeah, you're right and I know I'm supposed to say, do whatever it takes, but I really don't want to say that."

Elisabeth Lee:

Yeah. You're being just honest and real.

Ed Laymance:

Yes, yes. Okay.

Elisabeth Lee:

You bring your whole self to the table.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. I tell people, "Look, in human relationships if we're surface in human relationships, you're going to have a surface relationship with somebody." The word intimacy, I don't know who came up with it first. I've heard it by a dozen people, in-to-me-see. Yeah. If I'm not letting my spouse see into me and she's not letting me see into her, we're going to have a very superficial relationship. The same thing is true with Jesus. I mean he wants to have a very personal relationship with me and a lot of times I'm scared of that. What does that mean? You going to send me to Timbuktu? Is life going to be really boring? Is it going to be scary? What's it going to be?

Elisabeth Lee:

I'm afraid to let you see me because will you still love me?

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. You still love me? You still going to like me?

Elisabeth Lee:

There's all kinds of things.

Ed Laymance:

And the truth is he already sees me. I'm just not being honest with that. That gets back to the relational component that is so, so huge period, but especially when I'm talking with him. What people will start to recognize in a hurry is if you carve out 15 minutes and you start thinking about it like this and looking at it like this, you're going, "Man, I need more time." Because you want more time, not just because-

Elisabeth Lee:

You should.

Ed Laymance:

... you're trying to get a checklist. You're drawn into it. At this juncture for me, I'm never at a place where I'm ready to quit.

Elisabeth Lee:

Sure.

Ed Laymance:

I'll get to the place where I'm going, "Oh man, I got to go get ready."

Elisabeth Lee:

And that's where it leads you to the next one, which is the template of as you go through the day.

Ed Laymance:

As you go.

Elisabeth Lee:

Got you. Yep.

Ed Laymance:

Exactly.

Elisabeth Lee:

Now we're on that one, yep.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah, okay. The way I look at as you go is in Ephesians 1, one of Paul's prayer for the church was that they would experience God's divine revelation and wisdom. I read that a number of years ago. That is an ongoing ask that I have multiple times throughout my day. I'll just say, "Your revelation and wisdom with this," with that conversation, with this meeting, with whatever's going on. That's just something I'm asking of him all the time. I don't need my own thinking. I really need his revelation. Then I need to know what to do with it. That's the wisdom piece.

Elisabeth Lee:

So revelation, I'm thinking of a basic way of saying that would be God, help me see this the way you see this, not how I see this.

Ed Laymance:

Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Elisabeth Lee:

Okay.

Ed Laymance:

Because I do counseling all day long, that's my ask before every counseling session and oftentimes throughout the counseling session. I'll say, "Lord, would you reveal what I need to know and understand here?"

Because they don't need my best thinking, they need to hear from you and I need to hear from you. Then we need to know what to do with that.

Elisabeth Lee:

And that's the wisdom piece is what to do with what he revealed.

Ed Laymance:

Yes. Then I either choose to live accordingly or I don't, okay.

Elisabeth Lee:

I would say that you using counseling, but this is something everyone could use with any relational piece and any personal cause.

Ed Laymance:

Well, that's what I'm saying. Even if I'm going into a meeting, I ask this. If I'm about to have a conversation with my spouse, I ask this. If I'm about to sit down and do the bills, I ask this. It doesn't matter what the venue is. I'm constantly asking for his revelation and wisdom all the time all day long. Again, that's the template and then I've found that it's helpful to have triggers that help me pay attention and listen better.

Those triggers can be lots of things. You do something that's a screensaver for your phone or your iPad or your computer so that when you see it, it reminds you to listen or it reminds you to ask. You could have the word ask as a screensaver, doesn't matter. You can wear stuff like wristbands and that every time you see it, it reminds you. You can carry stuff in your purse or in your pocket, or it can be a note or a card that you put on your desk, your refrigerator, your mirror or your visor in your car.

Elisabeth Lee:

Or song or maybe a piece of art or whatever.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. There's a bunch of different ways. We just need lots of triggers. See, on my desk I've got a card that just sits on my desk. It's a handwritten card. It says: Eyes on Jesus, not the storm. Trust his word, not what you think. I'll see that through my day and I go, "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay." Because I'll get distracted by the craziness of what's going on, or I'll get really upset or frustrated or angry or scared or whatever. And I'm going, "Oh, don't look at the storm, okay. Eyes on you. What's going on? What do I need? Reveal to me, help me understand. Help me pay attention to you." I need those triggers through the day because it's just a noisy, hot mess of a world. I need some things to help me, so I say, look, come up with about a dozen different triggers and that'll help.

The other thing is you go through the day no special words required. Again, it's not like I got to go through some kind of mantra or model. Yeah, no. Sometimes best I can come up with is I ain't got a clue what to do here, help. Please help.

Elisabeth Lee:

Help. Help, I say that a lot.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. 911, you know. That's appropriate. That's fine. That's the way I approach the day.

Elisabeth Lee:

Okay. Then the third one you said was the pray it forward. When you mentioned the 60, you said 60 things you pray throughout the month, was that what you're referring to here?

Ed Laymance:

Yes. That's exactly what I'm saying. I call it praying generationally. I like to call it pray it forward. The scripture makes abundantly clear that God desires... In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy, where it says, "The sins of the fathers being visited upon third and fourth generations." In that same passage it says that God desires to bless a thousand generations, those who love him and honor him and serve him. He desires to bless a thousand generations.

Jesus said, "You have not because you ask not." Oftentimes in scripture Jesus is asking a question of somebody, what do you want me to do for you? I used to look at that and go, why would he ask that question? I mean he says to Blind Bartimaeus, "What can I do for you?" And I'm going, he knows he's blind. I mean why is he even asking that question?

Elisabeth Lee:

Or do you want to be healed? He'll say, "Do you want to be healed?"

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. Because he wants us to participate with him in what's going on. He's inviting us to participate with him. When he says, "Ed, what do you want me to do for the generations?" Oh, okay. Well, here's some things I'd love to see you do, all right. Initially, for me personally back when I was a teenager I heard someone say, "Probably if you're going to be married, if you're supposed to be married, probably your spouse is alive on the planet at this point in time." I thought, yeah, that's probably true within a five to 10 year range or something like that. They said, "So what are you asking God to do for them right now even before you've met them?" I thought wow, I can do that? Well, yeah, I can do that.

I started praying for LaRue even before I met her. Then once we got married, now it occurred to me that unless we're not supposed to have kids, we probably ought to be praying for the kids that we don't have yet and so started doing that. Now, we went through seven and a half years of infertility, which was an incredibly challenging time on a lot of levels, but kept praying. Then found out we were supposed to adopt and so both our kids are adopted.

Then as the kids were growing, now I'm starting to think in again a bigger... This whole concept of praying over my wife, my children. I started praying for those that my children will one day marry, their family systems, my kids' close friends because they're going to be such an influence, and then expanded it out to okay, the odds are high that my kids will have kids and their kids will have kids and so forth and so on. I'm going okay, I need to think way bigger. I used to just pray to the third and fourth generation, and then I'm going, wait a minute, you desire to bless a

thousand generations. So now my list of things that I ask regularly, I'm asking in perpetuity until he returns. That's the way that I look at it now and that's the way I think about it now.

In terms of a template on how to do that, initially I had a verse that I prayed. It was Luke 2:52: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. That's a body, soul, spirit piece. I was just praying that regularly. Then that grew and I started expanding on that and going, I need to think about this a little bit different. I mean there's a lot of model prayers. There was a time I used Ephesians 3:14-21, praying that regularly.

Prayer of Jabez, I've prayed that and then I've rewrote it for myself. Pulled out one of those versions and I'll just give a template here. My version of that for a season was: Most high God, bless me and increase my influence for you far beyond anything I could ever imagine. Guide and direct every choice and decision that we make, not I make, all day long. May we listen to you and trust you no matter what, especially in the dark night of the soul. May we live up to your name and not down to our pain. Amen.

Then about probably 20 or so years ago I ran across Stormie Omartian's book, The Power of a Praying Parent. There were 30 chapters in that book. I read through it and I looked at it, and I go, "You know what? The table of contents, the 30 items here, that needs to be my template." So I started praying those things regularly and then I started modifying those things and adding to those things and adjusting those things. Then I went away from that. I mean it got where I started creating my own and so now I'm at the place where yeah, I've got about 60 items or things that I pray regularly. Okay. But again, a template's a template. It's a way to think about it and it's a kind of, here's my ask.

Elisabeth Lee:

What I'm understanding is, because I'm thinking just basic, you're picking a verse because it keeps you asking God's promise for you and your family. That is a template is the scripture verses like hey, would you... It's so vague, but God, would you bless my children? Would you protect my children?

Ed Laymance:

Correct.

Elisabeth Lee:

Be with them while they're at school. It's real basic, right, but you're saying find some scripture and spend... It's like you said, you do it on a treadmill. I like to run around the community and our neighborhood and around my sons' schools. If I could say, okay, for this month, I pick a few verses that maybe the Spirit told me in my prep day or at my prep time, hey, these are the verses, pray these over your kids. Then this is a verse I could pray over down to the thousandth generation and then that would be for the month those things you could pray. Is that right?

Ed Laymance:

Yes, yes.

Elisabeth Lee:

Okay.

Ed Laymance:

It's just a way for you to think about and approach it. Yes.

Elisabeth Lee:

Okay. Well, this is so much. Thank you. This has been incredible, and I can't thank you enough. There's so many more topics that I hope we get to cover.

Ed Laymance:

Sure, absolutely.

Elisabeth Lee:

We get to do this again.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah.

Elisabeth Lee:

If people wanted contact information, like if there's a website if they wanted to reach out, do you have a website that they could...

Ed Laymance:

Yeah. They could contact, I'm director of our counseling ministry here at the church, so it's impactcounseling.com. If they want to send an email to me, it's just ed.laymance@impactcounseling.com.

But the website there, there's some information. I've actually got a talk I did on prayer that is there. They can go under Client Resources and then there's Dr. Ed Talks. There's a number of times that I've spoken that are videoed. The audio links are right now messed up. We're trying to get them fixed, but there's a talk I did a couple years ago called Let's Talk - God. Much of what we talked about today is actually in that message.

Elisabeth Lee:

Okay, great. Well, then people who want more can go there.

Ed Laymance:

Yeah.

Elisabeth Lee:

Okay. Well, thank you, Ed. This has been an honor. I always love talking with you.

Ed Laymance:

Well, I appreciate the privilege.

Elisabeth Lee:

It's been great. All right, thanks so much.

Ed Laymance:

All righty.

Elisabeth Lee:

Okay, bye-bye.

Ed Laymance:

Bye.

To view Part 1 of HOW TO PRAY: One Way to Talk with God Instead of at God, [click HERE](#).

Dr. Ed Laymance is the founder and director of [Impact Counseling & Guidance Center](#) and the Counseling Pastor at [Lake Church](#) in Arlington, Texas. He holds a Ph.D. in Education, is a licensed professional counselor, a licensed marriage and family therapist, and a board-certified professional Christian counselor. With more than 40 years of ministry, education and counseling experience, Dr. Laymance leads a team of qualified counselors to help you in “finding the way.”