

**Needy**  
**Week 1**  
February 18<sup>th</sup> 2018

Today, we begin a brand new message series for Lent.  
We're calling Needy.

Spirituality 101... is this:  
**There is a God and it is not you.**

**There is a Creator and we are the created.**

**God is completely self- sufficient in himself.**  
God does not need anything.

**Since we are the created,**  
**it means we are dependent.**  
We have needs that we must attend to  
if we are to thrive and survive.

Our whole being by its very nature is one vast need.  
Think about all the needs you have.

Just think of your physical needs.  
You have a need for food and nutrition,  
a need for water,  
a need for sleep,  
a need for shelter,  
a need for clothes,  
a need for medical treatment,  
a need for oxygen, and even a need to relieve yourself.  
On top of that you often need money  
to pay for all those physical needs.

Then there your emotion needs.  
You have a need to be understood,  
a need for acceptance,  
a need for encouragement,  
you need meaning and purpose.  
You need to laugh and you need to grieve at time.

You also have a need to work,  
a need to rest, a need for discipline,  
a need for silence and solitude.

On top of those needs you have spiritual needs.  
You have a need for God.  
You have a need for people.  
You have a need for healing.  
You have a need for prayer.  
You might not think you do, but you do.

WE are needy.

God has created us with needs.  
He passes on the responsibility to us

to recognize our needs and care for them.

Your own acknowledging and carrying  
for your needs outweighs almost every other responsibility.  
On the surface, that sounds very selfish,  
but the point is not to be selfish,  
but to have more to give to others.  
The healthier you are the more you have to give away.

Think about the instructions they give on an airplane.  
Often we tune them out  
and ignore their instructions.  
Here is what they say.

They say  
that should there be an emergency, oxygen masks  
will fall from the ceiling.  
They tell people traveling with children  
to put their own mask on first  
and then put the mask on the child.

Why do they say that?

They say that because the child won't be able  
to put the mask on you.  
So if you pass out from a lack of oxygen  
then both you and the child will be without air.

Then someone else will have to take care of you.

However if you care for yourself,  
you will be able to care for others.  
Caring for our own needs  
is preparation for caring and serving others.

Recognizing and caring for our own needs  
is also essential if you are a leader of any kind  
or manager or if anyone is looking to you as a role model.

Fifty percent of leadership is self-leadership.

If you cannot lead yourself and provide for your needs  
then really you can't lead other people and provide for them.

That means if you are a parent,  
you cannot prepare your kids for adulthood  
if you are not acting like a responsible adult  
and caring for yourself.

If you are a manager or run a small business  
or a large corporation,  
the best way to lead your people  
is to lead yourself physically,  
emotionally, relationally and spiritually.

You are the instrument that leads your kids,

that leads your employees,  
that leads your company  
and if you do not care for the instrument,  
you eventually render yourself useless.

And only you can do that.  
Only you can discipline yourself to really care for your soul, care for your heart  
and care for your emotional health.  
No one can do that for you.

Here's what Jesus said.  
**One time, a teacher of the law asked him  
what was the greatest commandment.**

He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
all your soul and all your mind.  
And, love your neighbor AS YOURSELF." (Mark 12)

Jesus teaches that our ability to love others  
rests first and foremost  
on our love and care for ourselves.

Spiritual maturity, growing as a follower of Christ  
requires us to acknowledge our needs  
and take responsibility for them  
in a healthy manner.  
Our very neediness also makes us vulnerable  
to spiritual attack.  
We are tempted over and over again  
to mishandle our needs.  
Essentially there are four temptations we face  
when it comes to our needs.

**The first** temptation we face  
is to deny a legitimate need and act like we do not have it.

This was the temptation Adam and Eve  
faced in the Garden of Eden.  
God had told Adam and Eve  
that they could eat from any tree in the garden,  
except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When Eve tells the devil they will die  
if they eat the fruit,  
the devil responds,  
"You will not die.  
For God knows that when you eat of it  
your eyes will be opened,  
and you will be like God,  
knowing good and evil."

The temptation is to be like a god  
**who does not** have to be dependent on God.

A part of us rebels at the reality  
of having needs and being dependent.

Our pride doesn't like to admit  
that we have needs.  
This is especially true for us men.  
We think that admitting a need somehow makes us **weaker**.

We don't deny all our needs all the time,  
but we have a tendency to deny some of our needs.  
Haven't you had times where you knew  
in your heart of hearts  
you needed rest or you needed help from someone else,  
or you needed to go to the doctor,  
but out of stubbornness,  
you just didn't meet that need.  
And it wasn't until the pain or the problem  
got so great that you finally took care of yourself.

So the first temptation we face is to deny  
that a legitimate need exists.

The next three basic temptations come from  
the life of Jesus.

Mark tells us very little about the temptations Jesus faces  
but he does tell us:

*<sup>12</sup> And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> He was in the wilderness forty days,  
tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.*

Mark 1:12,

Matthew's Gospel, which gives another account  
about the life of Jesus  
gives greater detail about Jesus' temptations  
... and he goes on to say:

*<sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves  
of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written,*

*'One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*

Matthew 4: 3-4

Jesus had a legitimate need for hunger.  
The temptation of the devil was to meet that need  
in an illegitimate way.

**The second** temptation we face  
with our legitimate needs is to meet them  
in an illegitimate way.

We will be tempted from time to time  
to do something we know is wrong  
in order to meet a real need.

For example, we have a legitimate need to work and earn a living.  
So you lie about your capabilities so you get hired.  
That's meeting a legitimate need in an illegitimate way.  
It is taking moral shortcuts to get something we know we need.

**The third** temptation we face is what I would call, is shadow needs.  
Matthew tells us,

*<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city*

*and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,*

*<sup>6</sup> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,*

*'He will command his angels concerning you,'  
and 'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"*

Matthew 4: 5

This was a temptation for Jesus because it was a shadow of his real mission.

Jesus had been given the mission to bring people into a relationship with his heavenly Father.

As part of his mission, to prove his authority, he performed miracles. The miracles showed people he had really been sent from God. They showed that he really did speak with authority.

The devil tempted Jesus to jump off the parapet so he could show off his power apart from his mission.

Jesus had come so that people would follow him and put their faith in him. He deeply felt that need to accomplish that mission. The temptation of the devil was to chase a shadow of simply getting people to follow him because of a fabulous sign rather than because they really loved him and had freely decided to follow him. Jesus was tempted to manipulate people rather than really lead them.

So the temptation from the devil was for him to win over the people of Jerusalem in one magnificent sign.

To go to Jerusalem and have everyone see him perform  
this miraculous feat  
would have won people's attention,  
**but it wouldn't have won their hearts.**

With our needs we are often tempted  
to settle for what is a shadow  
of the real and legitimate need.

We have a need for rest,  
but so often people use their vacation times  
and go do things that really don't bring rest to their souls.

Often though people take their vacation times  
and go to places they know won't find rest for their souls, but really just get over stimulated.

They say afterwards they need a vacation  
from their vacation.

**Finally**, we are tempted to turn our needs into gods,  
to make them the whole of our life.  
This was the final temptation Jesus faced. Matthew writes,

*<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their  
splendor; <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."*

Matthew 4: 8-9

Jesus had come to have authority  
over all the kingdoms of the world.

The devil tells Jesus he can have all that  
he came to accomplish  
if he will bow down for one moment,  
if he will treat the devil as if he is God.

Our needs scream to us in the same way.  
They invite us to make them into our gods,  
to pursue them at all costs.

We turn to one person and expect him or her  
to meet all of our needs in a relationship  
and so we make that person a god.

Some people make money into their god.  
We do need money in this world,  
but some people make that the center of their existence.  
We have needs.

Ultimately our neediness will either work for us  
or against us in our relationship with God.  
Our heavenly Father intends that our neediness  
will drive us to him and strengthen our bond with him.

So over the next few weeks

we are going to look at some of our needs.  
So I encourage to commit to this series  
so you can better meet your needs.

[If you can't join us here at Advance Blvd, join us online. We now have our messages posted on our website.](#)

Between now and next week,  
let me give you a few questions to ponder.

Examine your life,  
your pace of life and how you are caring for yourself.

Ask yourself if I saw someone I loved,  
meeting his or her needs  
or not meeting their needs in the same way I am,  
would I be concerned?

Do you want the people who follow you,  
whether it is your kids,  
your employees at work  
or students in your class  
to meet their needs in the same way you are?

Knowing your needs and taking the time to meet them  
is not selfish.

It is living in the reality that we are creatures.  
It is absolutely vital to our spiritual health  
and if we are to be the men and women  
God has created us to be.