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**Gospel Rhythm #4
A Theology for Eating**

Question: Do you usually pray before meals?

Another Question: Would you say you usually only pray when eating with other people?

And still another Question: Do you do most of your praying when you're preparing to eat?

So why do we pray before meals?

The Gospel Rhythm: We regularly eat meals with others to invite them into community around the gospel.

In every part of the world hunger is a daily reality - whether people have plenty or lack - we all get hungry more than once a day.

Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread

Meals are a daily reminder of our common need for God and His faithfulness to provide both physically and spiritually. Jesus called us to remember Him and His sacrifice for us through a meal.

When we eat together, we commune around this truth. We regularly eat meals with those not in our immediate family or circle of friends, discipling them toward a life of dependence on God.

We don't just need Jesus and His gospel message for the big things in life; we also need Him for the smallest, most mundane aspects of living

Like continuing to breathe

Like sleep, so our brains can continue to function

Like having food and water in order to be fueled for yet another day

Matthew 26:26-29 now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.

God gave Adam and Eve the opportunity to demonstrate their faith through the eating of food. They chose to eat unto themselves out of unbelief and rebellion. God has likewise given every person in every part of the world a regular reminder of their need and an opportunity to eat unto themselves in unbelief and rebellion or unto God in faith and with thanksgiving.

Genesis 3:6-7 so when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she gave also some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

What does living in the gospel through eating produce?

The realization that everything, big things, even the smallest, most mundane things are saturated by the gospel, that everything, even every breath we take is under the sovereignty of God - therefore, we are totally dependent upon God.

Believing the gospel means we acknowledge our complete dependence on God for our salvation and our new lives lived out for His glory.

Leviticus 23:1-2 the Lord spoke to Moses, saying Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the Lord that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts.

The Sabbath, the Passover, the Feast of First Fruits, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Booths

...unto God

Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we do it unto God. Every meal is really a demonstration of the gospel we come hungry (a real need) and our need is graciously met. Whatever we have is from God. Since we are hungry and then eat several times each day, we get a gospel reminder over and over again IF we eat unto God.

How does each meal we enjoy indicate our level of thankfulness?

In what ways do we struggle with contentment?

Is the gospel only important for the big things in life, or is it also central to the little, mundane, everyday aspects of our lives?

How would we eat differently if our eating was informed by the gospel and unto God in faith?

Acts 2:46-47 and day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

...with each other

When we eat together we commune over our common need and God's provision. In doing this we proclaim the gospel to each other over and over again. That is why it's important we eat together regularly - a loving community of believers communing together around the work of Christ is the best apologetic of the gospel AND eating together is one of the ways we are commanded to do this.

How does the Lord's Supper teach us the gospel?

Romans 12:13 contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality

...with unbelievers

The table of the Jews, also in our day, is very symbolic and communicative. Who we eat with demonstrates who we love. This is why Jesus was called "a friend of sinners." He ate with people who were dirty, unreligious and visibly or sociably unacceptable. The table is one of the most powerful displays of God's love and acceptance of sinners.

How often do we eat with people who do not believe what we believe?

What would change in us if we approached meals with unbelievers with a new, gospel-centered intentionality?

How could our Gospel Communities reshape our life as a GC around eating with unbelievers?