



Men's Golf Fellowship

Speaker Discussion Questions

Bill Kramer

LEADER'S GUIDE

Spiritual Topics: Choices and Decisions, Accounting for your Life, God's Will for your Life, Influence

About the Talk

Naples High School football coach Bill Kramer spoke of how God challenged him to begin living his life intentionally for God in all that he did. His life challenges us to begin living as a missionary wherever we are, seeking God's will in all that we do and living as though we were going to give an account for our lives.

Discussion Questions

- Bill talked extensively about the struggle he went through in making the decision to come to Naples to coach the high school football team. He did not want to come, but said he felt that God clearly wanted him there. He said that, left to his own devices, he will not make good choices. What do you think he meant by that? Do you agree with that? In your life have you made mostly good choices? What is a bad choice you have made? How did you come to the conclusion that it was bad? (*Leader Note: You want to guide the conversation as best you can in helping men to see that most of the time we make decisions and choices for selfish reasons.*) What are some of your guiding principles in making decisions for your life? **Related Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6 – Choices**
 - *Where we're going:* Living life as a missionary. The purpose of this discussion is to get men thinking of their lives less as self-fulfillment and more in a missionary context; that their life is not their own. And that the choices they make should include asking the question, "What would God want me to do?"
 - *Going Deeper:* Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Bill's journey in changing coaching jobs all started when a good friend of his, Wes Yeary, asked him point blank what he was doing for the Lord. This led to Bill taking the Naples coaching job, a step down in his career, as well as a hefty pay cut.

This was possible because Bill began thinking of himself as a missionary. As a group, discuss what you think it means to live your life as a missionary. One way to get men thinking is to ask what the world holds as important and think of the opposite, (i.e. to be known vs. to be anonymous, to be served vs. to serve, to be personally fulfilled vs. God's glory, to have comfort vs. comforting others, etc.) Also read the Deeper Yet definition. Once you have a working definition, apply it to your lives. Have each person think of one aspect of their life that would change rather significantly if they lived as a "missionary."

- *Deeper Yet:* In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden family dairy fortune, he was already wealthy. For his high school graduation present, his parents gave 16-year-old William a trip around the world. As the young man traveled through Asia, the Middle East and Europe, he felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, William wrote home about his "desire to be a missionary". One friend expressed disbelief that Bill was "throwing himself away as a missionary". During his college years, William Borden made an entry in his personal journal that defined what his classmates were seeing in him. That entry said simply: "Say no to self and yes to Jesus every time". What do you think of that definition of what it is to live a missionary lifestyle?
- Bill spoke of his desire to build a coaching staff that would not only build a great team, but would build great people. As he described it, he wanted to build a coaching staff that believed that when they died they would give an account to the creator of the universe as to how they treated those boys. What influences how you treat people? As a group, develop a list of what factors influence how you treat people, such as the person's power, prestige, socio-economic position, etc. Have you ever treated someone well that you don't know, just because of one of these factors? How about the reverse? Have you ever treated someone poorly, because they lacked these qualities? Can you think of a specific time when you treated someone well or poorly? How would it change the way you treat people if you knew with absolute certainty that your interactions would be reviewed at the end of your life? **Related Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:10 – Accountability**
- *Where we're going:* **Eternity's influence on how we live our lives.** The purpose of this session is to begin to draw men into a discussion about eternal accountability to God and how that truth should impact their lives and relationships right now.

- *Going Deeper:* Read Romans 12:10 & Philippians 2:3. Ask the group to imagine someone who could be viewed as of lower position, stature, or importance (yes use these words...it's what we really think) than themselves (i.e. doorman, golf caddy, property manager, etc.). Then ask: What are 2-3 ways that you would treat this person differently if everything you did and said to that person were filmed and shown here? Would there be any embarrassment? What if the person did not treat you or respect you the way you think you should be treated? (People will always treat others who they think are "below" them well if they feel respected. Most people need to be pushed in this area to expose their true feelings.)

- Bill talked about how one of his players (Rusty) suffered an apparent head injury while playing football and was in a coma for 2 weeks. Bill had always taught his children that the safest and most blessed place to be was in the center of God's will. Thinking that was where he was as the Naples football coach, he began a time of struggle and questioned that type of thinking because of Rusty's injury. Have you ever thought of your life as being either being in or out of God's will? What does it mean to be in God's will? What do you think some of Bill's struggles and questions were? (*Leader Note: Things like: Am I actually in God's will? Is it really safe in God's will? Can really bad things actually happen when you are doing God's will? Is God really a good God? I thought God was supposed to protect me, etc.*) React to this statement: If you live a good and clean life, your life will basically be an easy one. (*Leader Note: Just know that no matter what people say, most believe this deep down, so challenge men here a little in getting them to admit that they believe this if even a little*) **Related Scripture: Luke 9:23 – Being in God's Will**
 - *Where we're going: The challenge of God's will.* The purpose of this discussion is to introduce men to the biblical idea of God actually having a will/plan for their lives and that following God does NOT guarantee a life that is pleasant, easy and devoid of major difficulties.

 - *Going Deeper:* Read to the group the conclusion to William Borden's story. Upon graduation from Yale, William turned down some high-paying job offers. He went on to do graduate work at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. When he finished his studies at Princeton, he sailed for China in order to begin missions work there. On an extended stop in Egypt to study, he contracted spinal meningitis. Within a month, 25-year-old William Borden was dead. Then ask: if William was in God's will (which it certainly looks like he was), how could such a tragic event happen? In your opinion, was this a wasted life?

 - *Deeper Yet:* Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3. One mention of God's revealed will in the Bible is that you should be "sanctified". What do you think that

means? (Sanctified is to become mature as a believer and to become more like Christ.) Have you ever considered this? How does this make sense of Luke 9:23's denying self and picking up your cross?

- Bill went on to talk about the first time they won the state championship in 2001. As they were driving home they picked up a police escort and cars were pulled off the road in order to honor the team. At that point he stood up on the bus and challenged his team with another question, "Now that we have won a championship, you have some influence. What are you going to do with your influence?" What type of influence does or did you have in your life? (*Leader Note: Get men thinking about influence they have in different areas such as work, family, friendships, church, etc.*) Do you think you use your influence now and do you think you use it well or not? How did you come to that conclusion? What indicators did you use? Describe one time that you did not use your influence well. **Related Scripture: John 15:26**

- *Where we're going: Using your influence.* Building on the previous missionary lifestyle question, we want to help men see that the best use of their influence is not just to guide people to do good things, but to point people to God.
- *Going Deeper "A":* If your group is predominantly believers and churchgoers then read John 6:38. It seems like from Jesus' life that he used his influence to point people to God. How have you used your influence to do the same? What types of ways can we guide people toward God? (Things such as inviting co-workers to church, guiding our conversations toward spiritual matters, asking people if you can pray for them, etc.) How do you feel after you have done something like that?
- *Going Deeper "B":* If your group is predominantly non-church-goers and unbelievers then ask: Bill said that each year he has a theme for his football team. The year after Rusty died it was "where are you?" based on the first question that God asked Adam in Eden (Genesis 3:9). Each day he and his team were going to ask themselves the same introspective question, "Where are you emotionally & spiritually? Individually, how are you doing?" Well, how about you? Where are you spiritually? How is your relationship with God right now? Do you have one? What questions do you have about a relationship with God?

Closing Prayer

God, I confess that I have not always lived my life and made choices with you in mind. Please forgive me for that and help me to be more aware of you during those decision times in my life. Help me to say no to myself and yes to you on a more consistent basis. Amen.