

Allergies / The Ascension

Tammy: I love the spring. Look at these flowers. Just coming in today I was so amazed at all of the colors and blossoms and the lovely green on all of the trees.

Carol: Oh Tammy, I know. (Sneezing) But there are some people who are allergic, and they aren't so happy about all of those flowers and blossoms and green trees; especially in spring.

Tammy: Oh Carol, I'm sorry. Maybe that's why today we're going to talk about allergies. Can you stay with us?

Carol: Hello my friend. It's good to be together on Women of Hope. I'm Carol, and as always, I am here with my dear friend Tammy.

Tammy: Hi. And it's a good thing we have our nurse Julie here too, to talk about allergies. Welcome Julie.

Julie: Thank you.

Tammy: An *allergy* is when your body reacts to some substance that doesn't usually affect other people. It may be caused by certain foods... by dust, by spores or pollen in the air... or even by animals. Having an allergy can make you feel really bad. Julie, can you tell us - what are the symptoms of an allergy?

Julie: Well, your nose might run, or be itchy or blocked. You might sneeze. Your eyes might be watery or itchy. Your ears might pop, and the roof of your mouth also might be itchy. You might have a rash or hives on your body.

It can seem like a cold but if it lasts longer than a week, or you have trouble breathing, talk to your doctor or health care worker. You might have an allergy.

Carol: There are different types of allergies, aren't there? I know some allergies can be triggered by changes in the weather. I know I always sneeze a lot in the spring.

Julie: That's right. This allergy is often known as *hay fever* and it affects the nose, throat and eyes. A person with hay fever will usually sneeze a lot. It's caused by pollens. These are tiny particles produced by flowering plants, which are carried on the wind.

It's very hard to avoid pollen because it's in the air. So on windy mornings when there is the most pollen in the air, stay inside if you can, if you get hay fever. If you need to go outside, wear a cloth or paper face-mask to stop you from breathing in the pollen.

Mold can cause an allergy too. It's usually worse in humid or wet weather because mold grows in damp conditions. The spores from mold float in the air. When you breathe them into your lungs, you might get a runny nose, or have some difficulty breathing. So it's important to stop mold from living in your home.

Carol: I remember getting mold in our bathroom. We got rid of it by wiping the surface over with a mixture of water and chlorine bleach. If you don't have chlorine bleach, you can use vinegar, to kill the mold spores.

Tammy: And open windows and doors to let fresh air and sunshine into the house as often as you can. This will help to stop the mold from growing again.

Julie: The wind can also stir up the dust in our homes and cause another type of allergy. This one comes from tiny insects called dust mites. Dust mites are found in any dust that comes from bedding and padded furniture. These mites like warm humid conditions. They eat dead skin cells and other things that are in house dust. It is the mite's waste products that cause the allergy - like the allergy to pollen. It's the same with cockroaches - their saliva and waste products cause allergies for some people. If you're allergic to dust mites or cockroaches you might get a runny nose, sneeze, and have some difficulty breathing.

Carol: I wish I could get rid of dust altogether! But you can *reduce* the dust in your home. Try not to have things in your sleeping area that dust mites would like, such as rugs and padded chairs. Shake your bedding and pillows outside with the wind blowing away from you. Leave bedding in the sun as often as you can. This will help to get rid of the mites.

Tammy: And also, wipe all surfaces in your home regularly with a damp or oiled cloth. This will help get rid of dust and dust mites. You need to shake floor mats and rugs outside or wash them in very hot water if possible, to kill the mites.

Carol: Now let's talk about allergies that come from animals and insect bites.

Julie: Animals that live in your home can cause an allergy. It isn't actually the fur that causes the allergy; it's the proteins in the animal's saliva. The animal licks itself, putting saliva onto its fur. When this dries, the proteins float into the air and they can stay in your home for months. The urine of animals can also cause an allergy such as an itchy rash, if you get it on your skin. Cats are more likely to cause an allergy than dogs, because they lick themselves more, and they often sit on people's laps. Do you start sneezing when you play with your pets? It might not happen when you first get the animal, an allergy can develop slowly. But even if you get rid of an animal, the proteins from its saliva can stay in the air for months so it might take a while before you feel better.

Carol: So, what can we do if we think an animal may be causing an allergic reaction?

Tammy: I guess the first thing to try is to keep your animals outside!

Julie: Yes. But it's also important to keep them clean. A cat will keep itself clean, but a dog needs to be bathed often.

Tammy: What can you do *to help* if you get allergy symptoms?

Julie: You can get medicines called antihistamines from your health worker or the pharmacy. These stop the symptoms, but you must take them exactly as you're told. Some antihistamines make you sleepy and it's very important not to drive or use machinery after you take them.

Carol: I know some *insects* can cause an allergic reaction if they bite or sting you.

Julie: Bees, wasps, hornets and fire ants cause most allergic reactions.

A bite or sting will become red and itchy, and maybe grow quite big and hard. If the reaction is serious it causes the person's tongue or throat to swell... or they might have trouble breathing. You must get

medical help very quickly because they might die if their throat closes up. If they faint or become pale, get help quickly too.

If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction like this, you should always carry medication supplied by a healthcare worker. Make sure your family, or teachers, or the people you work with, know about the allergy and how to help you. Medication for severe reactions to stings or bites is very important. Sometimes you can take a tablet, but often you need an injection of adrenaline or something similar.

Carol: But it's even better not to let insects bite you. You can help protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and long pants to keep off flying insects, and shoes or sandals to protect your feet from crawling insects. If you have an insect allergy, you can use a mosquito net at night, and put insect repellent on your skin if you're in an area where these insects live. But better still, keep away from areas where you know the insects are.

Tammy: That makes sense - the best way to avoid reactions is not to let them bite you in the first place!

Julie: Our time has gone and we haven't talked about food allergies yet, and they are really important.

Carol: So Julie, you'll just have to come back another time and we'll all talk about the foods that make some people really sick.

Julie: Good, I'd love to come again. Bye for now!

Carol: Thanks Julie.

Do you feel itchy after all that talk about allergies? Now our friend Fran is here with us again; welcome, Fran.

Tammy: Oh, yes!

Fran: Hello my friends!

Tammy: Lately we've been sharing stories from the Bible about what happened at the first Easter, about 2000 years ago. We often talk about the Lord Jesus Christ - that's because we believe he was truly God as well as truly a man...and he is our Savior and our Master.

Jesus often spoke about God, the creator of the universe, and he always talked about God as his Father. And many people believed him, especially after they saw him die, and then after three days they saw him alive again. We believe in him too, and we believe he's alive today. But he's not on earth. Fran's going to explain, as she tells you the next part of the story of Jesus from God's word, the Bible.

Fran: The Lord Jesus showed himself to his followers many times in the 40 days after he came back to life. They talked with him, ate with him, touched him. Sometimes he met with just one person, sometimes a group, and at least once, with 500 people at one time. They had no doubt that Jesus was truly alive. During that time Jesus explained a lot to them. He helped them understand the prophecies in their scriptures, that we call the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible. He said, 'This is what is written: the Messiah, the anointed one promised by God, had to suffer and rise from death three days later. In his name you must preach the message about repenting and being forgiven for your sins. You have seen all these things. And I myself will send upon you the Holy Spirit of God. So wait in Jerusalem until you receive God's power.' (Luke 24:45-49)

Tammy: I think it must have been wonderful for those people when Jesus explained all those things they didn't understand. They were so sad when he died, but it was all part of God's plan. It was already written about long before, in their scriptures, even that he would die and come back to life. And then they understood. Did you notice Jesus' instructions; they were to take his message into *all the world*. And he promised to give them the power to do that, even though they were still scared.

Fran: That's right. Listen carefully to the words Jesus said to his followers: 'God has given me all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all people groups everywhere in the world, and make them my disciples, my devoted followers. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And listen! I will be with you always, until the end of the age.' (Matt 28: 18-20)

Carol: Let's stop for a moment and make sure we understand this. These words of Jesus are often called the Great Commission, because Jesus was giving his followers a big job, or commission. So what did he tell them?

Tammy: First he told them why he had the right to give orders. It wasn't just that he was their friend, or their leader. No, *God the Father* had given him the right to give orders, not just on earth but in heaven. Jesus truly is the Lord and Master of the universe. They needed to know this, because things were going to get very dangerous for them before long. But Jesus, the Master, gave them a job, so they could be confident. Do you remember, he promised to send the Holy Spirit to live in them and make them strong?

Carol: And Jesus also told them what to do. They had to go out and tell the people they needed to be really sorry for their sins, and to ask God to forgive them. Jesus said to teach people of all nations, teach them all the things that he said, and help them to become devoted followers of Jesus.

Tammy: Then Jesus said that these new followers should be baptized to show their new life in Jesus... and they needed to learn all the things Jesus had taught, about how to live... and they should do what Jesus said, because Jesus was *their* Master too.

Fran: Did you notice that Jesus told them to baptize those who believed in *the name* of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Just *one* name, not three names; because there is only *one God*, but we know God in *three ways*, as the eternal Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit of God who comes and lives in us. That's hard to understand, isn't it, but it's the way Jesus spoke and the Bible describes it, and we accept that.

Carol: That Great Commission wasn't just for those first followers. It was for all those who became devoted followers of Jesus then, and for all the hundreds of years since then. It's a big job that isn't finished yet. Here on Women of Hope, we try to do that job in some way. If you're a follower of Jesus, it's your job too, to share what you know about Jesus with others. The Holy Spirit will make you brave and help you to do it.

Tammy: Think about those words of Jesus. Have *you* said you're sorry and asked God to forgive you? Have you become a fully devoted follower of Jesus? And if so, are you obeying the things that Jesus told us? Are you telling other people about Jesus? It's a wonderful privilege to be his follower.

Carol: Here on Women of Hope, we've been talking about how the Lord Jesus Christ gave all his followers a job to do, and the power of God's Holy Spirit to help us to do it.

Tammy: That special job was to tell people of every country that Jesus came to save them from their sins, and that God wants to forgive them. And it was to teach people what Jesus commanded us to do, so they could follow him with all their hearts and all their lives.

Fran: So I want to tell you what happened next. Jesus and his close group of followers were talking, and they asked him, 'Lord, are you going to set up your kingdom for Israel now?'

Jesus told them, 'My Father is the one who has the authority to decide when things will happen. You don't need to know when they will be. But when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

Then he was lifted up towards heaven, and a cloud hid him from sight.

They were still looking up, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood there. They said, 'Why are you standing there gazing up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back the same way as you saw him go into heaven.' (Acts 1:6-11, based on GNB)

And that's the last part of the story about Jesus' life on earth.

Tammy: It sounds like the followers still thought Jesus might set up a kingdom in their land, but God had bigger ideas. His kingdom is different - it doesn't have a government, borders, an army and taxes. God's kingdom is wherever people love and obey him...and follow Jesus. He rules through *love*, and his *people* are his kingdom.

Carol: I noticed that Jesus said that God the Father knows when things will happen...especially the time when Jesus will come back to earth. We don't need to know when, we just need to love and obey him, right here and now.

Fran: It must have been so strange for them to see Jesus lifted upwards, and be covered by a low cloud. I think it showed them two things. The first was that Jesus was still alive - he didn't grow old and die again. The second was that Jesus was not on this earth any more. They didn't have to go and

look for him, or wonder when they might meet him again. His physical body had gone. He wasn't carried away in a spaceship, to another planet: he had simply moved into a whole different way of living. We can't understand what it's like, but we call it 'being in heaven'.

Tammy: The men in white were messengers from God - we would call them angels. And their message was that Jesus would come back again! They didn't say when - only God the Father knows that - but it was a wonderful promise. It gives me so much hope when I remember that Jesus *will* come back to earth.

Carol: But while we wait, we have a job to do, remember! And if you have asked Jesus to be your Master and Savior, he has given you his Holy Spirit, just as he gave it to those first believers. So you have this special job...and the power to do it.

Tammy: Maybe you have some questions about what you've just heard. If so you can write to us in care of this station or at Women of Hope. The email address is TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. If you have missed a program or would even like to hear one again you can do that on our website twrwomenofhope.org. or you can visit us our Facebook page.

We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week filled with God's blessings.

© Copyright Trans World Radio 2014