

It's one thing for us to talk about how much we want to experience God, but how much do you think God wants to be with us?

Exodus 33:12-17 (NIV)

Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people." The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

Reflections

It seems we have exponentially expanded our time and effort invested to sustain connection in many relationships. We Facebook, text, email, tweet, IM, phone, and sometimes actually talk face to face. It's no surprise that we long to be in relationship — that's the way we were designed.

Suppose God sent you a request to "friend" him? Would you accept or ignore his request? Would you invite him into your inner world? Would you want him to know how you spend your time and to meet your network of relationships? Do you want him to see the snapshots that journal your life? Do you want him to hear your opinions, rants, causes, and celebrations?

Or would you prefer to hold him at a distance, not so sure that you want him to know you; not so sure you want him to influence you?

John Ortberg writes "The story of the Bible isn't primarily about the desire of people to be with God: it's the desire of God to be with people."

God's most frequent promise in scripture is "I will be with you." He is

there all along. His presence is not related to our performance. There's nothing we can do to surprise him or disappoint him. Instead, his presence is rooted in his deep, continual love for us. We are designed in his very own image and he longs for us to return the relationship.

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Moses was a man who greatly valued this relationship with God. So much that he argued with God, demanding that God be even more involved in his life. That was saying something because God was already showing his presence as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Moses longed for even more and God delighted in delivering.

While we may not have a cloud or pillar of fire to follow, God's relationship with us is expressed as the

loving parent, the creator of our world; through Jesus, our dear friend and Savior; and through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, our teacher, comforter and guide.

If you think God is far from you, the problem isn't him. Thankfully, he is ever patient and ready to draw you closer. He's always present and reaching for you.

The Christian faith is not based on a religious system. It's based in relationship. Over the next six weeks we are going to examine this relationship more fully, helping us to have greater access to God, just as Moses longed for.

If you are uncertain or unpracticed, even if you are regularly growing in faith, a message is waiting in your inbox. How will you respond to God's request to know him?

— Karen Heist

Series Resource:

God is Closer Than You Think, John Ortberg, 2005.

Readings

Sunday, October 4

Exodus 33:12-17

What kind of relationship did Moses have with God? Why did he long for more of God's presence? What is expressed through God's response?

Monday, October 5

Matthew 28:20; Revelation 21:3

In what ways do you know God desires a close relationship with you? When does God's presence seem most real to you?

Tuesday, October 6

Psalms 16:8

What ordinary things in life have made you aware of God's presence? Increase your awareness of him. Determine to look for him in new ways today. Ask him to show himself to you.

Wednesday, October 7

Joshua 1:8

When have you experienced the comfort of another person's presence? God's presence can bring us reassurance in our most difficult challenges. Ask for his presence and help in the dark places of your life.

Thursday, October 8

Psalms 16:7

Through the wisdom of Scripture, the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and discernment within a community of believers, we are guided by God in our daily lives. When have you sensed God was guiding you? Where can you look for his guidance today?

Friday, October 9

2 Kings 6:8-18

Elisha's servant found out God is indeed closer than we think. How are your eyes opened or blinded to God's presence? Where in your life might he be present that you have not looked for him yet?

Saturday, October 10

Psalms 16:11

What does this verse tell us about our relationship with God? Is this how you respond to him? If not, what might be standing in the way? (hint: it's not him.) Ask for God's help to break down those barriers.

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.