

Hanging out w/ God... *Commitment*

Over the last two weeks we've talked about connecting and communicating. We talked about how important it is to listen and that in order to listen affectively we really need to be quiet. We also said last week that we are supposed to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. When we do talk it's essential to think about whom we are talking to and the actual words we use. There are certain roles that God has given to people in your life, and some of those people God have authority. So for the most part we are not going to talk with our mom like we are our friends and more than likely you would talk with your principle differently than you would talk with your sibling. The reason for this is because God designed it that way and you have different relationships with different people. With that, the words we actual use have the ability to chart the course of our life and the power to tear people down or raise them up.

Lastly, if there was one key element I wanted you to take out of the last two weeks is this, the way we listen and talk with others carries over to the way we listen and talk with God. Most of the principles that we talked about, the importance of listening, understanding who we talk to, and thinking about the words we say. They are very beneficial in everyday life as you connect, communicate and hang out with people. But the full affects of them are clearly seen when we apply these principles to our relationship with God. How do we connect with God, we spend time together, we listen, we speak. How do we connect with others? We spend time together, we listen, we speak, etc.

There's one more element I want to talk with you tonight, that applies to both your relationship with others and your relationship with God. No matter how long you have been friends, no matter how long you have knows someone, there's a constant question that we often wrestle with (usually subconsciously). The question is this "Is this worth it?" It may sound a little harsh, but when you think about it. Anytime any significant event happens in a relationship, you always answer that question. Your boyfriend or girlfriend cheats on you? Is it worth it? Your friend back stabs you, is it worth it? Your friend goes through a tough experience, someone dies, someone gets hurt, parents get divorced, graduation, you just go a while without talking with them. Is the relationship still worth it; is the person still worth your investment? Maybe the persons just being a jerk or woke up on the wrong side of the bed. Are they still worth talking to that day? All sorts of things happen in life and in our relationships. I think though if we are real honest with ourselves at some point there are people who we've hung out with some, we've listened to some, we've talked to some and we've sort of decided that, they are ok, but we're not going out of our way to build a relationship with them. I know it may seem like strong verbiage, but the reality is that you don't click, you don't get a long, or something has happened that's so difficult that, well it's just not worth it.

There is an example of this is scripture. Two guys were doing ministry together, one is all about the mission and the other is all about the person. Neither one is wrong they're just different and they've been working together like this for years. At one point they brought along this young guy to work with them and he bailed out on them half way through the mission. To the guy who is all about the mission, this is huge. You don't bail half way through, to stick it through. You are either in or out, but you don't play this half way game. The guy who is all about the person, he's probably thinking, well he's young, we all make mistakes, and the mission was accomplished anyways. What's the big deal? You can imagine the heated discussion that may have taken place. So this is what happens...

Ac 15:36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Ac 15:37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, Ac 15:38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. Ac 15:39 They had

*such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,^{Ac}
15:40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.*

These two guys who had done life together, for over a year went their separate ways over this issue. Was it a big deal, it was to them. But the conclusion they came to was that the relationship wasn't worth the issue and that happens in our lives from time to time.

Connecting and communicating will only take us so far. At some point we need to decide on a commitment, commitment to the person, the issues, the sport, the relationship, the job, etc. In many cases our commitment to something or someone is based off of their commitment to us. This is where God comes into mix, God is committed to you. When you commit yourself to another person, at some point they are probably going to let you down. When you commit yourself to a sport, at some point you might be cheated, we you commit yourself to a job, you might get laid off. Because none of these things or people can commit to you as perfectly and completely as God does. Let me show you a few things in scripture about how committed God is to those who are committed to Him...

Ro 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. Ro 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us

Jn 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. Jn 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

Jer 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

*2Co 1:21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,
2Co 1:22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

God has committed his son's life for yours, God's committed his love to you, God's committed his passion to you, and God's committed to you. Remember we said that he likes you, he wants' to hear from you and he wants to talk with you. But beyond that, he's decided to commit to you and a relationship with you. So now the ball is in your court. Are you committed to him? Will you commit to him? At some point, just hanging out and talking without a commitment gets old, with both people and God. That means eventually you'll have to choose whether or not you want to commit to this person, this relationship. It starts with connecting and communicating, but at some point it has to move to a commitment or it ends.

Where are you at with your commitment to God tonight, maybe you never have and you want to know what that looks like. Come talk with me or a leader afterwards, maybe you know what's involved and you know you've backed out of that commitment. You need to start new, you can do that tonight. Maybe your commitment is where it needs to be tonight, that's great. I just want to challenge to stick with it.

Suggested Discussion Concepts:

(Sports Related) talk about a "Balk" in baseball or an "Up and Down" in basketball. You could even do these in a game in the gym. Explain how those moves are illegal because it gives the perception that the player is committing when they are only portraying that. Use that as a tie in to our portrayal at times of how we act like we are committed to a person, issue, etc, or God when we are not. Examples: playing church, living a double life, not practicing a sport on your own, cheating on a boyfriend or girlfriend, not doing your homework, etc.

Do you agree or disagree that at some point(s) a person needs to; (a) decide whether they are going to commit or (b) to what extent they are going to commit? Why or why not?

What are some things in your life that you have committed some time, energy, or effort into?
How much investment do you have in that thing or person?
What (if anything) could break your commitment to that?

How is committing to God different than committing to a person, sport, job, issue, school etc?

Can we make a partial commitment to God? (Not biblically, see below for more details)

Do we try? Why or why not?

Paul addresses this issue in 2 Cor. 11, there were new leaders in the church in Corinth (Super Apostles) that were attempting to lead the church to commit themselves to a different gospel than what Paul preached. From the context of the passage it is more than likely that they were adding rules onto the gospel and therefore attempting to void Christ sacrifice. Chances are you may not go "there" with your students, but I wanted to give you something to go off of if needed.