

Hanging out w/ God... Connecting...

We are going to take a quick survey tonight. If you have a cell phone, stand up. If you know about how many minutes you have a month, stay standing. Everyone else sit down. If you know about how many minutes you use a month stay standing. If it's over 500 stay up, 1000, 1500, 2000, unlimited? Person who uses the most minutes gets a free soda.

Now if we did the math and took the total number of minutes we have in this room, how many would we have? We can see that we talk and text a lot.

Who do you talk too, friends, family, boy friend/girlfriend? Out of the list who do you talk with the most? Why? You have to, they are important to you? You like them? These are all reasons we talk to people, all reasons we connect with people.

Let me ask you, has it ever occurred to you that those are some of the same ways Jesus feels about you? Jesus likes you. I don't know if you ever thought about that before or not. But he does, he actually likes **you**. He likes your personality; he likes the way you look. He knows how you feel and he's ok with that. He knows where you're at and he still likes you. Those times you get real loud and you're like, did I just say that? He still likes you. Those times where you're like "I should have..." he still likes you. In fact there, even though there are some things that distance us from God, there is nothing that keeps God from liking you.

Ro 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ^{Ro 8:39} neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He actually loves you, but a lot of times we have all these weird ways of thinking about love. Some of us, we're like, my mom and dad they love me, but they don't really like me. Or like some of our teachers or friends. I know they love me, but it's clear that they are only tolerating me right now. They really don't want to be near me. Jesus does, he wants to be near you. He wants to hang out with you.

Because Jesus likes you, he wants to connect with you. That's one of the things Justin was talking about last week. One of the ways we hear from God is by getting a way and being quiet.

Ps 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the Earth

Mk 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Getting away from everything, just sitting and listening, it's really hard for most of us to do. We like to be busy, we have stuff to do. Going out, friends, video games, movies, music, the beach, sports, etc, etc, etc. The thing is, with our friends. The people who are important to us and like us for us, we shut up and listen to them. Despite what they have to say, even if it's not important to us we still listen. Jesus is willing to connect with us, any time and any place. It's not like it has to be quiet. But man it sure helps if the TV is off when you are trying to listen, really listen to a friend. It helps if you turn down the radio if you're trying to listen to someone talk.

I really want to challenge you to listen this week, take some time even if it's only five minutes and think about God. Get away, maybe your bathroom or in the shower. Go for a walk, a hike,

go fishing or as you're walking the beach and just think about who God is. Ask him to tell you a little about himself. Maybe you can grab a bible or just jot down a verse and hold onto it that day. Read it a couple times and ask God to show you something about himself. Just listen to what he has to say.

Suggested Small Group Activities...

Play some variation of the telephone game. *Be creative, make up some silly phrases, use things that might be important to them (sport stats, shopping, weird laws), or make some long/hard statements (tongue twisters, mad libs).* You can use google to find such things. Talk about how important it is to listen well and why.

Look at some of the attributes of God, what He is like and what they mean.

Holiness (Perfect/ Set Apart) - 1 Peter 1:16

How can we be Holy like God is Holy? *Be set apart from the things of the world*

All Powerful (strong and mighty) - Mathew 19:26, Luke 1:37

Since God can do anything why is it so hard for us to trust him? – *Many times we lack the faith to trust in something we can't see or understand. We'd rather trust in our own ability.*

All knowing (understands all things) - Psalm 139:1-6; Isaiah 40:13-14

Since God knows all things how come we don't ask him about most things? – *Many times we are easily distracted and lack the patience to listen to God. I honestly don't think it takes that much patience. More desire than anything else, do we as people really want to hear from God? Other times it is because we already know what he thinks and do not like the answer. Often it is a combination of both or just not thinking about it.*

Other attributes can be found at

<http://christianity.about.com/od/biblefactsandlists/qt/biblefactsgod.htm>

Note that students may already be set apart, trust God, and ask (or at least believe they are). If this is the case go back and relook at the verse. Talk about how none of us can do these things perfectly so we should try and draw closer to God by repeating some of these things.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think it is so difficult to "get away" and "get quiet" with God, when it's not nearly as difficult with people?
2. Do you feel like most people listen to you? Why or why not?
3. Do you feel like the people who love you actually like you? Why or why not?
4. What are some reasons you can think of that God likes you/loves you?
 - You're his creation (Gen. 1:27)
 - You're unique (Psm. 139)
 - You're valued (Rom. 5:6-8)