

“God is Closer than You Think” L. 1 God’s Great Desire for People (Sep. 25, 26, 27, 28(2 grps.), 29th)

1. Opening Prayer & Sharing (name, 1 thing people do not know about me etc.)
2. There is a saying, “*Bible is the story of God who has strong desire to be with His people.*” In what ways do you **KNOW** God desired a close relationship with you? When does **God seem most real** to you? What ordinary things in life have made you **aware of God’s presence**?
3. **Watch video** – Any comment on Jacob’s story or Bear story? (God shows up where you least expect Him. God is always with us.)
4. What visual images or pictures would you use to describe the ways in which we view God? When we think of God as being far away, how does that view impact our relationship with God?
5. Is the concept of **loving father looking at his children** to describe God helpful for you or not?
6. Michelangelo’s fresco of Adam and God in the Sistine Chapel represents the perspective that the Bible is about God’s desire to be with people. Does this perspective change your perception of your relationship with God? When in your life have you become **aware of the gap between yourself and God**? What was your response to God, and what was the result? What may be keeping you from **“lifting a finger” in response to God**?

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You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. (Psalm 139:1-10)

7. Read the scripture above. What does the psalmist, David say about God’s knowledge of us and his actions toward us? What does this reveal about **God’s desire for relationship with us**?

(The Lord said) I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. ²¹ My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. ²² The enemy will not get the better of him; the wicked will not oppress him. ²³ I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. ²⁴ My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. ²⁵ I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. ²⁶ He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.' ²⁷ And I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. ²⁸ I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. **(Psalm 89:20-28)**

8. Read the scripture above. What are **some of qualities of close relationship with God** in our lives today according this passage?

⁵ **(The Lord said to Joshua)**, No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. ⁷ "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

9. Read the scripture (**Joshua 1:5-9**) above. What monumental task did Joshua face? What were **God's promises** related to this task? **What impact can God's presence have on our feelings of insecurity** when God gives us seemingly overwhelming assignment?
10. Jesus came to earth as '**Immanuel**' which means "**God with us**". How does the power of Jesus' name give you confidence, peace and confidence in unknown future?
11. Repeat together – "**God is always present and active in my life**", "**Experiencing God's presence is a "learned" behavior.**", "**My task is to meet God in THIS MOMENT.**"
12. Joys & concerns
13. Closing prayer