

**Intro:**

*Write your Answers to the following questions:*

*- What is something you've been dying to talk about with someone who will just simply listen wholeheartedly, with no initial judgment or advice?*

*- What sort of person would listen to you in this way? Please describe.*

*- How many people do you experience this with?*

Break into groups and share your thoughts...

We all desire intimacy. That relationship where someone knows you fully, accepts you fully, challenges you fully- you and I in all our contradictions, joys, victories, failures, fun.

We've all found it hard to have, of course. But it is something we long for, something we, at certain points in our lives, are desperate for. We're in a series called "Passion: what drives you?" It's series on some of the core desires and longings we have as people, desires that are important for our growth in general and our growth in this particular time and place. I want us to reflect on intimacy today, looking at some general truths in the Bible, and then from there moving on to some practical and specific applications for our point in the journey.

We've been taking things from Genesis and its picture of how God originally created humanity, and from there asking how we've gone awry and what God has done and is doing to change things up. Let's go there are read a few texts for today.

**Intimacy: the Big Picture**

*1. God designed us with this great desire and capacity for intimacy. It is a reflection of his own triune being. Genesis 2:18-25*

*2. Our sin- disobedience of God- drastically affects the ability for intimacy. Genesis 3:1-7*

Intimacy gets distorted in a million ways:

- Distrust.
- Selfishness.
- Control and manipulation.

*3. God has everything to do with our ability to be intimate again. Restoration with God is desperately needed to move forward.*

Many of us know that the Bible tells us that this begins with Jesus- when give our lives over to him to control and have Him begin to guide us with His Word and presence. If you haven't done that yet, then I encourage you to do it today.

But I'd like to spend our time focusing on some practical ideas...

**Practical Ideas for Intimacy**

Because God restored us and our intimacy through Jesus, it might be worthwhile to look at Jesus and think about how God did this. As we take a look, we can get some practical insight into how we can begin to move toward intimacy. Three practical thoughts, a discussion on some current challenges, and then Q and A.

*1. Jesus is the expression of God's faithfulness. Matthew 1:1-17. Intimacy involves faithfulness.*

Note the opening passage in the first Gospel we have. It's a genealogy. Why? To show us that God was faithful to humanity. You see, the story of the humanity according to the Bible has been one where we are in constant flux with God- we like him, receive wonderful things from him, and yet keep turning away, time and time again. The genealogy reflects this, in particular with the events in the summary- Abraham and David

were a few people who received wonderful things from God, and yet the people they represented continued to turn away from God. This constant turning away from God resulted in God allowing for His people to get conquered by another country. And yet God continued to be faithful to them. Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's faithfulness to us.

And so it is if we are to experience relationship and intimacy with each other. Faithfulness is key. Faithfulness to work through hurt and conflict. Faithfulness to keep seeing the other person differently, to not write people off, to keep a soft heart when the other's reaction is beckoning an opposite response.

2. Jesus became one of us and lived with us. John 1:14, Mark 3:14. Intimacy involves sharing life at its most fundamental level- life being lived in space and time.

We need to share space together- be in each other's company. We need to spend time together.

*3. Jesus disclosed personal information. John 15:15 Intimacy beckons us to disclose the personal information we have.*

The challenge lies on two ends of this exchange: listening, sharing.

*Our Current Challenges: 4 C's*

a) Conflict- enough said.

b) Change- the transitory nature of our community is seen in our church. People come and go at a pretty fast pace. This year is no different. Let's be honest- it is hard to deal with this. God help us persevere.

c) Culture- differences caused by ethnicity, age, etc. I realize this is not an issue for some, but for some others it is.

d) Community Groups – need to grow here more.

### **Questions and Comments?**

#### **Challenge:**

How is God speaking to you about your relationship with others?  
Pray with a neighbor...