

TOTAL REVOLUTION of IDENTITY

Session #2 - Intimacy with God

Session Objective: God desires to have an intimate relationship with each of us. In turn, each of us is designed to have an intimate relationship with God.

This session will:

- Illustrates God's desire to break down the barriers that separate us from Him
- Provide practical approaches to deepen intimacy with God.

Extended Prep: ("**Sacred Pathways Quiz**" exercise is recommended).

- Prepare copies of the attached "**Sacred Pathways Quiz**" to help illustrate our most natural way to connect with one the true God. The concept behind the **Sacred Pathways** book is that each person has a preferred or most natural pathway to intimacy with God. For example, the 'naturalist' connects with God best while in His creation whereas the "intellectualist" connects best during intense cognitive learning. The application points are:
 1. Understanding that our unique way of connecting with God is one we need to freely incorporate into our intimacy with God.
 2. Respecting the unique pathways of others and growing in these ways ourselves.
 3. Not worshipping our method or pathway, but only worshipping God.

For more detailed info see: **Sacred Pathways**, Gary Thomas, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) ISBN – 0-310-23092-6

This exercise would best fit after question #7.

- Add dimensions of 'sacred pathways' (sight, sound, smell, taste, etc.) to your group meeting – i.e. candles, artwork, stained glass, pictures of the majesty of nature, music, fountain, communion elements – or do this session in a unique outdoor location or in a majestic church building, etc.
- Since people often struggle in Bible study and prayer, have a night to share how to have a devotional time with God (study, prayer, worship). **See attached "Creative Ways To Build Your Prayer Life" and "Creative Ideas for Bible Study".**
- Have students bring baby pictures of themselves. Have a "who is this?" contest leading into the Scripture section on approaching Jesus as a child of God.

Session Outline

Small Group Questions:

1. Opening Question: Have you ever met a 'famous' person and asked for their autograph? What was it like? What happened?

Leader's option: start things off with a quick recap of your own autograph hunting experience.

Leader Preamble:

Try to put yourself into this situation: It's almost 2000 years ago. You are a young child living in what is now Israel. At the playground and at home you've heard rumours and unbelievable stories about a man named Jesus. Some say he can heal any disease. Some say he fed 5000 people without any food. Some say he walked on water. Imagine that!?! You're not sure what's true and what's not, but one thing is for sure: these days, this Jesus is the most famous man around.

One day, to your amazement, your parents hurriedly pick you up. You ask where you are doing. They answer, "Jesus is here. We are taking you to meet him."

2. If you were this child, what thoughts and feelings would you have going to meet this man named Jesus?

Possibilities: excitement, fear, nervousness, suspicion, etc.

Read: Mark 10:13

3. With all the excitement, how would you feel being told to leave by Jesus' 'handlers'?

Read: Mark 10:14-16

4. How do you think Jesus' response impacted his 'handlers'?

Possibilities: surprised, confused, humbled, embarrassed, etc.

5. How would Jesus' response make you feel?

Possibilities: important, accepted, loved, valued, etc.

Leader Say: *The picture of these little children in Jesus' arms is a picture of intimacy where Jesus values, accepts, and loves through his presence, time and communication. God's desire is for the intimacy in this picture to be true for all of*

us because those who have received him and believed in his name are his children. Option: Read John 1:12

6. Is approaching God, knowing you are his child, an easy or difficult practice in your life? Why or why not?

Possibilities: Difficult: God is too busy or uninterested or won't accept me, God is like my parents, etc.

7. How can we nurture your intimacy with God as his child?

See Action Steps for suggestions

Prayer Options: Thank God for His desire for intimacy with us. Pray for barriers to be broken down, that we would see ourselves as God's children, that we would grow in intimacy with God, etc.

Action Steps

- Try the attached "**Sacred Pathways Quiz**" to help illustrate how we may most easily connect with God. See Application Points in the Extended Preparation section above.
- Set time aside each day to devote to spending time with God
- Begin to focus your relationship with God through journaling
- Commit to a regular weekly time of Sabbath – time set apart with God for planned worship and reflection
- Try a personal Sabbath retreat – an afternoon, day or weekend
- See attachments on "**Creative Ways to Build Your Prayer Life**" and "**Creative Ideas for Bible Study**"

Comments and Feedback

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.