

Hanging Out With the Lord

I have recently been teaching through a book by Skye Jethani called With. In general, it asks the reader to reimage the way we all relate to God. Using a list of prepositions (Do you remember memorizing them in the 4th grade?), Skye's basic premise is that even well meaning Christians get "side tracked" and miss the opportunity to be WITH our heavenly Father.

He says in part:

“And so we should not be surprised to discover that when God desired to restore His broken relationship with people, He sent His son to dwell WITH us. His plan to restore his creation was not to send a list of rules and rituals to follow (Life UNDER God); nor was it the implementation of useful principles (Life OVER God). He did not send a genie to grant us our desires (Life FROM God), nor did He give us a task to accomplish (Life FOR God).

Instead God Himself came to be WITH us-to walk with us again as He had done in Eden in the beginning. Jesus entered into our dark existence to share our broken world and to illuminate a different way forward.”

You will have to read the book in order to digest his complete thought, but Skye's bottom line is that God started His act of creation by hanging out with His creature. Gen. 3:8 tells us that God enjoyed wandering the garden in the cool of the evening with Adam and Eve. He loved to just hang out with them.

Fast forward to the end of our Bible and see in Rev. 21:3 where God again declares His plan to dwell among His people. "... They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

From the beginning to the "end," it is clearly God's intention to hang out with His people.

God wanting to be with us... why does it seem like such a foreign thought? For some of us, the struggle to embrace that concept is a reflection of the pace of our lives. For others it is a lack of spiritual focus. For some it is an issue of missed place humility (Oh, He wouldn't want to be with me.)

Regardless of why we reject the thought of God hanging out with us, this week we need to stop it!

As John Piper has said, "The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God." Too many of us have mistakenly distilled our relationship with God down to a few spiritual disciplines. I pray (talk to God). I read the Bible (God talks to me.) That is communication, but it is not necessarily communion.

Bottom line: God wants to hang out with us. Let's let Him! And read this book for some practical tips on how to do it!