

## Introduction:

### Jesus on “Authentic Spirituality”

- *...you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. – Jesus*  
Luke 11:39 (NIV)
- *...thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that. – Jesus*  
Mark 7:13 (NIV)
- *...you are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight. – Jesus*  
Luke 16:15 (NASB)
- *And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. – Jesus*  
Matthew 6:5 (NASB)
- *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. – Jesus*  
Matthew 6:7 (NIV)

## The Pathway of Communion with God:

1. **After observing Jesus' deep communion with the Father the disciples make a request -**

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."*

Luke 11:1 (NIV)

2. **Jesus condescends to their request and provides an approved pattern: The Lord's Prayer**

*He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."*

Luke 11: 2-4 (NIV)

3. **Jesus now teaches that "the secret" to communion with the Father transcends any pattern or form by teaching them: An Astounding Parable**

*Then He said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.'"*

Luke 11: 5-8 (NASB)

**4. Jesus summarizes the message of the parable: “God is not like that” by His command –**

*So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

Luke 11: 9-10 (NASB)

**5. Jesus reveals the Pathway of Communion with God through one enduring principle –**

*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*

Luke 11:11-13 (NIV)

**The Abiding Principle** – The God of the **“How Much More!”**

## First Steps on the Pathway of Communion with God:

1. **Prayers of affirmation** – Pray Psalm 84:11 and Zephaniah 3:17 back to God in a slow, unhurried manner; pause and reflect on this truth as it relates to you.
2. **Prayers of adoration** – Pray Psalm 103:1-5.  
Read each verse and quietly thank God for specific ways these have been true in your life and relationships. Ponder over people, times of blessing and deliverance that God brings to your mind, and focus on enjoying God's presence and blessing His name.
3. **Prayers of renewal and cleansing** – Pray Psalm 103:8-14 slowly and deliberately back to God. Pause and sit quietly to dwell on the completeness of His forgiveness, the depth of His understanding and patience, and His commitment to you despite your failure. Ask Him to forgive any attitudes or actions that the Holy Spirit brings to your mind where you've sinned against Him or another. Accept and rejoice that verses 12-13 are now true of you.
4. **Prayers of asking** – Slowly read Luke 11:1-13 twice. Tell the good and generous God of "The How Much More" what you deeply long for.

## **Introduction:**

**As Jesus spoke to the early disciples – so now the Spirit speaks to us through the Scriptures.**

*<sup>9</sup>However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him”— <sup>10</sup>but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.*

*The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*

*<sup>11</sup>For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*

*<sup>12</sup>We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*

*<sup>13</sup>This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*

*<sup>14</sup>The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

*<sup>15</sup>The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment:*

*<sup>16</sup>“For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 (NIV)

## Following the Pathway of the Holy Writings:

### 1. God's Word is living and reveals Jesus to us

*<sup>12</sup>For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

*<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.*

John 1:1-2 (NIV)

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:14 (NIV)

### 2. We must come in earnest, if we are to hear His voice

*<sup>1</sup>My son, if you accept my words and store up My commands within you, <sup>2</sup>turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, <sup>3</sup>and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, <sup>4</sup>and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, <sup>5</sup>then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*

Proverbs 2:1-5 (NIV)

## **BUT HOW?**

➤ **Three ways to come to God's Word:**

- **As a love letter – “To Cherish”... Focus on Who**

*<sup>16</sup>When Your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear Your name, O LORD God Almighty.*

Jeremiah 15:16 (NIV)

- **As an instruction manual – “To Master” ... Focus on What**

*<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

- **As the wisdom of the ages – “To Ponder” ... Focus on Success**

*<sup>8</sup>Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; 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.*

Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

## **Conclusion: Three “Time-Honored” Ways to Hear God’s Voice**

1. **Read God’s Word relationally – like with a friend.**
2. **Read God’s Word systematically – on a plan.**
3. **Read God’s Word selectively – topic for needs.**

### **A promise for the ages:**

*“Draw near to Me and I will draw near to You.”*

– God of the Universe

## Our Problem: Wandering Hearts

We all struggle with sustaining the intensity and intimacy required for relationships to grow.

<sup>1</sup> *"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lamp-stands. <sup>2</sup> I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup> You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. <sup>4</sup> Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup> Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp-stand from its place.*

Revelation 2:1-5 (NIV)

## God's Solution: Focused Remembrance

The pathway of "breaking bread" together restores our spiritual passion by forcing us to do certain things.

<sup>42</sup> *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Acts 2:42 (NIV)

## Remember who Jesus is and what He's done for us -

<sup>23</sup> *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way, He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*

I Corinthians 11:23-26 (NASB)

**My Response:** sincere appreciation

## Following the Pathway of “Breaking Bread” Together:

### Remember who we are and our present need of repentance -

*<sup>27</sup> Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.*

*<sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.*

*<sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. <sup>32</sup> When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.*

I Corinthians 11:27-32 (NIV)

**The Warning:**

I Corinthians 11:27

**The Instruction:**

I Corinthians 11:28

**The Reason:**

I Corinthians 11:29 - 30

**The Application:**

I Corinthians 11:31 - 32

**My Response = [self evaluation](#)**

**Remember who we are as fellow members of His family -**

*17 But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. 20 Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, 21 for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.*

I Corinthians 11:17-22 (NASB)

*33 So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.  
34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.*

I Corinthians 11:33,34 (NASB)

**The Rebuke:**

I Corinthians 11:17-22

**The Application:**

I Corinthians 11:33-34

**My Response = brotherly appreciation**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Human nature causes all of us to “drift” away from the most important relationships in our lives (even God). Share a time when this has happened to some degree in your life.
2. What is it about looking at old pictures, or hearing an old song that’s “special” to you and someone close to you, that begins to warm your heart?
3. What new insight did you gain about the Lord’s supper from this message?
4. Is there any personal relationship in the body of Christ that needs to be repaired...“As far as it depends on you?”
5. Are there any specific steps you need to take to “restore your first love” with Jesus? If so, what does that look like this week?

*They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

1. As Jesus **touch**ed the **lives** of the early disciples in His physical body – so now the Spirit **touch**es our **lives** through His spiritual body.

*<sup>13</sup>For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup>Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.*

I Corinthians 12:13-14 (NIV)

2. The Spirit has united all believers into one interdependent body (team) under (in) Christ.

*<sup>4</sup>Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

Romans 12:4-5 (NIV)

## Following the Pathway of “Koinonia”

3. “The Fellowship” (koinonia) is the vehicle through which God’s people express and receive Christ’s love.

*<sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts...*

Acts 2:43-46(NIV)

- Meaning of koinonia (biblical fellowship)
- Characteristics of koinonia (biblical fellowship)

1. It was for all believers Acts 2:44
2. It held believers together Acts 2:44
3. It met the needs of believers Acts 2:46

#### 4. The impact of koinonia cannot be underestimated.

- Positively = Barnabas

*<sup>32</sup>All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup>and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. <sup>36</sup>Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), <sup>37</sup>sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.*

Acts 4:32-37(NIV)

- Negatively = Ananias and Sapphira

*<sup>1</sup>Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup>With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. <sup>3</sup>Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? <sup>4</sup>Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."*

*<sup>5</sup>When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. <sup>6</sup>Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.*

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*<sup>7</sup>About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup>Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." <sup>9</sup>Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." <sup>10</sup>At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. <sup>11</sup>Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.*

Acts 5:1-11(NIV)

5. The extent of our impact is directly proportional to the **unity** and the **authenticity** of our fellowship.

*<sup>34</sup>A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.*

John 13:34-35(NIV)

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What does it mean to be continuously devoted to the fellowships?
2. How does Jesus “touch lives today?”
3. In what ways has Jesus touched your life through a member of His body in recent weeks?
4. In what ways could God use you to touch others’ lives?
5. Why is authenticity and unity so important to Jesus’ body? Is there anything in your life that is inhibiting the authenticity or unity God desires?

## **Introduction: An Invitation to Intimacy with God...Rejected**

*<sup>17</sup>As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to **inherit eternal life?**"*

*<sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.*

*<sup>19</sup>You know the commandments, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, DO NOT DEFRAUD, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER."*

*<sup>20</sup>And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."*

*<sup>21</sup>Looking at him, **Jesus felt a love for him** and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and **you will have treasure in heaven;** and come, follow Me."*

*<sup>22</sup>But at these words **he was saddened**, and he went away grieving, for he was one **who owned much property.***

Mark 10:17-22 (NASB)

## Following Christ on the Pathway of Paradox:

### 1. Barriers to intimacy with God:

- The World's system

*<sup>15</sup>Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

I John 2:15-17 (NASB)

- The World's deception

*<sup>18</sup>And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, <sup>19</sup>but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

Mark 4:18-19 (NASB)

- The World's distraction

*<sup>14</sup>Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. <sup>15</sup>And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."*

Luke 16:14-15(NASB)

## 2. Overcoming the world's barriers to intimacy with God...

- Begins with a new **attitude**

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:  
<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Philippians 2:5-9 (NASB)

- Requires a **radical renunciation**

<sup>23</sup>And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wishes to **save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.** <sup>25</sup>For what is a man profited if he **gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?**"

Luke 9:23-25 (NASB)

- Embraces a new **economy**

1. The way to "life" is **death**

<sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

2. The way "up" is **down**

... Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.

Luke 9:48 (NASB)

3. The way to "gain" is to **give**

<sup>38</sup>Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

Luke 6:38 (NASB)

- A prayer of paradox for seven days:

*Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi*

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying  
that we are born to eternal life. ~ Amen*

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What kept the rich young ruler from experiencing intimacy with God?
2. What is the “world’s system?” How does it keep us from experiencing intimacy God?
3. What is a paradox? How does understanding the meaning of this word help us in our spiritual journey?
4. What specific steps do you need to take to overcome the world’s barriers to your intimacy with God?
5. What would your first step to overcoming the world’s barriers look like this week?