

Our Vision through 2030 is to grow together, as deeply rooted followers of Jesus, who steward our gifts to serve God's kingdom.

Do You Have Personal Relationship with Jesus?

I would contend that many people who call themselves Christians do not have a personal relationship with Jesus in the way that we normally use that expression.

Brad Jersak: “when I prayed the sinner’s prayer I was told I would have a personal relationship with Jesus, but when I finally heard God speaking to me, the first thing God said was, “What’s personal about this? How is this even a relationship? We never talk, we don’t hang out. You are always doing all this church stuff for me, and about me, but never with me.”

Are we even supposed to have a personal relationship with Jesus?

In John 10:14-16 Jesus himself tells his followers that they will have a personal relationship with Jesus - that they will be able to hear his voice, and be able to follow him.

Revelation 3:20 - An invitation and an intervention - for Christians.

This is an invitation to have lunch with Jesus on a regular basis. To hang out with him, to share life together, to bring him into the regular messiness, joys, struggles, business of our daily lives.

And it’s an intervention for busy, distracted, distant followers who no longer hear or even try to hear Jesus voice. He was saying to people very much like us - ‘wake up.’

How do we have a personal relationship with a being we can’t see or touch or hear in the normal sense of that word?

John Ortberg’s book “God is Closer Than You Think.”

- the famous Michelangelo fresco in the Sistine chapel, showing God reaching out to touch Adam. All Adam has to do to touch God is literally lift a finger.

Eugene Peterson says a pastor’s main job is to help people hear what God is telling them. I don’t agree. (It’s the church’s job - all of us)

Spiritual disciplines are things like different kinds of praying, or reading scripture, or fasting, or solitude.

Be your own little ‘implementation team,’ choosing a few people to study and pray and experiment together ways to implement our vision of growing together as deeply rooted followers of Jesus.

So the last thing I want to encourage you with this morning is this,...

If you have a personal relationship with Jesus, it will be unique to you. It won't look exactly like mine or anyone else's.

Larry Osborne's book, "A Contrarian's Guide to Knowing God: Spirituality for the Rest of Us," writes that most books about knowing God - about spiritual disciplines, prayer, Bible study, devotions, etc., - are written by introverted, quiet, disciplined, highly intelligent people who like to write books.

Imagine two of kids having a conversation about how to relate best to their Dad.

Gary Thomas's book "Sacred Pathways."

Summary

Jesus wants to have a uniquely personal, meaningful, interactive, and growing relationship with each of us. It's not just for some personality types or super serious Christians. And having that deep relationship with Jesus is the only way we will experience the abundant, rich, better story life that Jesus offers and we so deeply need. It's simple, but it isn't easy. God has done and will do most of the work. But we do need to stop doing some things and start doing some different things - and we need to help each other to grow together, to become more deeply rooted followers of Jesus, who then go out in love and courage and joy to steward our gifts to serve God's kingdom.

***As you leave this sanctuary today,
may you know the hope
to which God has called you,
experience the riches of his
glorious inheritance in the saints,
and trust his incomparably great power
for us who believe.
Go now in the love and power of Christ
to grow together
as deeply rooted followers of Jesus
who steward our gifts to serve God's kingdom
Amen***