

# WHISPERS

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

## Part 1 - The Quest to Connect

### INTRODUCTION— Cave drawing to psychic fairs

Acts 17:22-27

### Pick your religion: six “isms” to try to connect

1. Religion of Legalism (Behavioural)
  - a. Example: Pharisees (Luke 11:53-54; Matthew 23:15, 23-24)
  - b. Hook: Speak and Act – lifestyle
2. Religion of Ritualism (Symbolic)
  - a. Example: Sadducees (Acts 5:17)
  - b. Hook: Create
3. Religion of Mysticism (Magical)
  - a. Example: Sorcerers (Acts 8:9-24)
  - b. Hook: Experience
4. Religion of Intellectualism (Philosophical)
  - a. Example: Philosophers (Acts 17:16-21)
  - b. Hook: Think
5. Religion of Nationalism (Communal)
  - a. Example: Zealots (Matthew 10:4)
  - b. Hook: Relate
6. Religion of Idealism (Individual)
  - a. Example: Essenes
  - b. Hook: Dream

### Religious vs. Relational, Programmed vs. personal

#### Religious and programmatic

1. Appeals to some part of us that is made in God's image
2. Creates a program or structure that taps into that part of us
3. Builds exclusive community around the notion that “this is the REAL way to connect with God”
4. Ultimately becomes a dead end and unhealthy

#### Relational and personal (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13)

1. How we most easily connect with God is a natural starting point but just that...a starting point.
2. The diversity of community helps us to become more well rounded in our experience of God.
3. The goal is to know the person of God rather than have the “high” experience.
4. A relational approach ultimately challenges us out of self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness and serving others.

### CONCLUSION – What is your starting point to connect with God?

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#### HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

##### WARMING UP...

1. In the message we outlined six religious approaches that were common in Jesus' day. Do you see any parallels in these six basic categories to seeking God with world religions or Christian denominations and movements?
2. Is there a personal story from your own life where you witnessed a person or a group of people passionately seeking to connect with God? How did it impact you?

##### LOOK TO THE BOOK...

3. Read Acts 17:24-28. This passage describes God as our parent (“we are his offspring”), our life giver, the one who is close to us, and the one who hopes we seek him. Isn't this a paradox that God is close to all of us and yet we need to seek him? What purpose could God have in making it tough for us to find him even though he is so close to us all the time? Why would God want to be pursued?
4. Read Jeremiah 29:11-12. How does the belief that God is for us (loves us and has good plans for us) and not against us (angry, disappointed, wanting to make our life difficult), influence our desire to connect with God? What does it practically look like for a person to seek God with all their heart?

##### SO WHAT?...

5. What is your starting point or most natural way to connect with God spiritually? Do you have a top one or two ways that you most easily feel a sense of connection to God?
6. Which of the six approaches to God do you most naturally judge or reject?
7. How many of the starting points are represented in your group and are any missing?
8. Pray for God to help each in your group to discover their best way to connect with God as well as how to learn from others who connect differently.

**Tim Day @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, June 7, 2009**