

TALKING POINTS

NEXT LEVEL - BARRIERS TO CONNECTION

LEANING IN

To Go to the next level in your relationship to God, it's all about *connection* - to God and to each other.

The church is not about gathering a crowd, but building a community. We don't *attend* church, we *are* the church. The challenge we face watching on line (and even gathering in person) is being separated from community. Here's the bottom line - connecting in authentic community *is the will of God for us all*.

When it comes to our spiritual walk with Jesus, there is no status quo - If we are not connecting, we are spiritually dying. Jesus refers to us believers as His "body". This means we aren't built to be separated from each other - we're built to be joined together in community. A community where we build each other up and encourage each other in our day to day walk with Jesus. It's what God wants for us, and what we are called to.

Read Hebrews 10:23-25

What kinds of things are prone to happen to us when we drift away from our community of believers?

LIVING IT OUT

Connecting in the truest biblical sense of the word is not easy for many of us - why? Because There are very real barriers to connecting. Here are three major barriers to our connection with God and each other:

Spiritual Warfare - whether we recognize it or not, we're in a spiritual battle with an enemy who would love to ruin us and separate us from God and each other. Making a conscious commitment to pursue connection and relationship allows us to draw on the strength and support of other believers when the struggles and battles come along in our lives.

Read Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 5: 8-9, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

How does the world separate us from the people who can spiritually support us?

The Flesh - this is the part of our old sinful nature which we have *not* surrendered to Christ. This is the part of us which strives *against* God. This is where things like selfishness, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these come from. Our flesh can lead us to hide from God, to disconnect and separate ourselves from Him and others who believe in Him.

Read Galatians 5:17,19-21 Romans 8:5-8

How does our sinful nature sabotage our meaningful connections?

The Culture Around Us - this is what the bible calls "the world". It is the worldview and mindset of our modern culture. Everything in our culture is set up to disconnect us from relationships. We're separated in our houses, our cars, behind screens. The answer to our isolating culture is connection. Then we can encourage each other to think and act like Jesus - to be *transformed* - to have the "*mind of Christ*".

Read 1 John 2: 15-16, Romans 12:2, 2 Peter 1:3-8

What do we need to do to maintain and grow connection in a world of isolation?