Divine Connections: Embracing A Lifestyle of Experiencing God
“The Purpose of Divine Connections”
(Part 1)

Intro:

- So what is the purpose for connecting with the Divine…connecting with God? Let me share with you 4 reasons why connecting with God is so significant.

I. Connecting With God Is Our Primary Design
   A. We are designed to relate to the spiritual
      
      Gen. 1:27 “So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (NLT)
      
      Ecc. 3:11 “...He has planted eternity in the human heart,...” (NLT)
      
      1. Everything created has a primary design that fulfills a primary purpose. Even my Gerber multi-pliers has a primary purpose. (Show tool) It’s not designed to be a knife / screwdriver / bottle opener / its primary design-function is a set of pliers.
      
      2. Human beings are like this multi-pliers. Oh, sure we can do a lot of various functions in this life. (Have careers / make money / raise families / own possessions ) BUT, our primary design was to relate to the spiritual.
      
      3. Eternity was hard-wired into our very being. We are spiritual beings first! This is part of what it means to be made in the image of God. Not a physical image, but like God as a spiritual being.

      - Isn’t it interesting to note that every culture that has ever been discovered by archeologists / explorers / or even missionaries / has never been a culture of atheists. Every culture acknowledges the spiritual. WHY? Human Design! Part of our DNA.

      - Even today, people are fascinated by the spiritual. People may not be religious but they admit to being spiritual.

      4. Our dilemma comes when we think our primary design is to relate to the physical. When we live in a way that is contrary to this design. (live for pleasure / careers / success / accumulation of wealth / etc…) Then we wonder why we’re so empty inside / so unfulfilled / unhappy?

      5. This is why physical things can never satisfy spiritual beings. We must connect with the spiritual.
B. Experiencing our spiritual design leads to fulfillment

Ps. 16:11You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

1. Notice three results of connecting with God: know the path of life / fullness of joy / pleasures forever. Most people associate those experiences with physical things in this life, certainly not with God. This is why most people are so unfulfilled!
2. Spiritual people can only find true fulfillment in a spiritual way…connecting with the God who made them. Have you been knocking yourself out trying to find happiness in the things this world offers you? It’s not working very well…is it?
3. This is why Jesus came. Jesus came to show us how to reconnect with God. He came to show us what real life was supposed to look like.

John 10:10 “…I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (NLT)

4. What does life to the full look like? It is not a life that intellectualize God / not one that gives mental agreement to God / not one that even just believes in Jesus. It is a life that is experiencing a Divine connection with God every day.
5. It is a life where spiritual beings experience their design by learning to live in a spiritual way with their Creator. Where experiencing God is the normal way we live.

II. Connecting With God We Display Our Devotion

A. Connecting with God is how we love Him

Mark 12:30 “ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and all your mind and with all your strength.” (NLT)

1. Have you ever wondered just how does one do this? How does one love God with everything they have? How do we love God completely? (heart / soul / mind / strength?) How do I love someone I can’t even see?
2. Answer: Learn to connect with Him.
3. Think about connecting with God like relationally connecting with your spouse. My wife feels loved when she sees me learning and attempting to relationally connect with her.
4. Notice I said “learning” because it has required some work on my part to understand how to relationally connect with my wife. I discovered that my wife feels loved when I talk to her. Imagine that! (When I share my day / thoughts / fears / dreams / struggles / ) I discovered the deeper I share with her the deeper our connection. The more she feels loved.

• When Lisa tells me, “I don’t feel connected”. I know what I need to do. Spend time talking and sharing heart to heart.
5. If we want to demonstrate our love for God, we have to connect with Him. How do we connect with God? Talk with Him! Talk with Him about your day / struggles / fears / failures / insecurities / your successes / your dreams

6. My wife wouldn’t feel very loved if I didn’t talk with her. I wonder how loved God feels by how much and at what depth we talk with Him? I think we make this “love God thing” way too difficult and complicated. How about we just commit to loving Him by talking with Him every day? (We focus on our performance – God is longing for a connection!)

7. Can you start by making a commitment to practicing this daily? (In the morning / during your commute / before bedtime / Make spiritual conversation a normal part of your day. If you’ll do this, you will discover…

B. Connecting with God grows our love for Him

I John 4:17 “And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect…” (NLT)
Eph. 3:17 “Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.” (NLT)

1. If we want our love for God to grow, we must be spending time with Him. “As we live in God” our love grows more perfect. “As we keep trusting Him” our roots grow down into God’s love.

2. Notice: It’s all about the connection / all about the relationship / Staying connected to God will only intensify and grow our love for Him. It works this way in my marriage. It works this way with God!

3. Loving God more, is not about effort it’s all about connection. It’s less about religion and all about relationship. Has nothing to do with tradition and everything to do with time spent together.
   • I’ve heard people over the years say, “I want to love God more.” Then you must spend more time together.

4. Does your connection with God evidence your love for Him? If not, then why not change this in 2009? Why not let 2009 be the year your love for God exploded into something you’ve never dreamed because you choose to spend the time?

III. Connecting With God We Receive Direction

A. Connecting with God enables us to hear His voice

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice...” (NASB)
Rev. 3:20 “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” (NLT)

1. Hearing God’s voice is the normal experience of spiritual people. We are designed for the spiritual, therefore, everyone has a spiritual receiver inside of them. Connecting with God is not some one way religious activity where we speak to God out of duty or obligation. It’s a two-way conversation.

2. It is a Biblical fact that God is talking. The issue isn’t that God is silent…
the issue is we don’t listen well. We are so distracted / busy / and tuned in to the physical that we don’t even listen to the spiritual.

3. It’s like when my family tries to talk to me while I’m watching Football. (especially now that the playoffs are here!) I am so tuned in to the game that I don’t even hear them. They think this is great fun by the way. (explain) To get my attention, they usually have to do something drastic (hit with pillow / stand in front /)

4. Unfortunately we’re often like this with God. He can’t get our attention either until something drastic happens. (something painful / shocking / alarming) Now we’re all ears! Do we really have to be this hard of hearing?

5. One of the greatest blessings I have experienced in my relationship with God over the years is God communicating with me. It has been truly amazing! Your thinking how? Did you hear an audible voice?

6. God has spoken to me in a variety of ways…through His word / other people / inner promptings / circumstances / spiritual encounters / explain…God is not limited in His abilities to communicate with us.

7. The things is, when you are spiritually connected, you hear and see God in all these things. When you’re not connected, you don’t. You may be thinking God is not talking to you. Not true…He is. Maybe it’s time to start listening.

B. Connecting with God enables us to follow His instructions

John 10:27”My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” (NASB)

Ps. 23:1-3 “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.” (NIV)

Prov. 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” (NLT)

1. One of the great blessings of hearing God’s voice is receiving directions from Him. It is normal for spiritually connected people to receive directions from God about their life and choices.

2. Unfortunately what most people do is make life choices by themselves and then ask God to bless those choices. Then, they blame God when they don’t work out!

3. God wants to lead us. He wants to guide us. He wants to show us which path to take. He knows life is confusing / complex / complicated. Therefore He tells us to listen to Him and He will lead us.

4. Once again though, people want God to operate on their terms not His terms. They tend to not maintain any connection with God and then expect God to show up and bail them out and show them the right path. Doesn’t work this way.

5. This is one of the greatest blessings of our Divine connection with God. Connection leads to guidance. Connection with God is like having a spiritual GPS. It just amazes me that many Christians don’t even believe this! They live and act
as if they have to figure life out themselves.

6. I can’t even begin to tell you how many times God has lead, directed, and guided my decisions over the years. I’m really not that smart. I’m just committed to listening and following. (How does Pastor Dale know? – Pastor Cam?)

- Why would you not want to stay connected to God in order to receive direction regarding your life? Are you making life decisions based on your understanding or God’s directions? He’s speaking. Are you hearing?

IV. Connecting With God Empowers Us Daily

A. Connecting with God moves us from the flesh to the Spirit

Gal. 5:16 “So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.” (NLT)

1. As we stay connected to God, we stay connected to the spiritual power source He placed in us when we gave our lives to Christ. His Holy Spirit lives in us! This is the only way we can live transformed lives.

Gal. 5:24-25 “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” (NLT)

2. Unless we stay connected to God, our lives continue to be dominated by our old nature / our old fleshly desires. This is the main reason why our lives don’t change. We are living by the flesh instead of living by the power of the Spirit.

3. Unless we stay connected to God and His Spirit we have no power to change. You’re a powerless Christian still dominated by your old life. You’re a spiritual being still dominated by your flesh…and you’re miserable!

4. This is one of the greatest keys to your Christian life. Unless we maintain our connection with God, His Spirit will not produce spiritual fruit in our lives (love / joy / peace / etc…) Without this connection, we automatically produce the fruit of our flesh…our old life. The old life just keeps hanging around!

B. Connecting with God moves us from the natural to the supernatural

John 15:5 “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” (NLT)

- See, with spiritual connection comes power to produce!

Eph. 3:16 “I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.” (NLT)

- It’s God’s purpose and plan to empower you to live differently!

1. The Christian life is supposed to be a supernatural experience. It is His desire that we go from a natural way of living to a supernatural way of living. Because of our intimate connection with God there is supernatural power that moves in us and...
through us. (I’m connected to the VINE! I’m plugged in!)

2. Trying to produce the Christian life without a connection with God is like me trying to turn this light on without it being plugged in. (Pull out light – try to turn on) Doesn’t work!

3. Yet, this is how most Christians are living their Christian life…without power! Without connection.

4. How about we decide as a church that one of our greatest goals this year is to get connected? Get plugged in? To grow in our understanding and experience with connecting with God.

Where we recognize this is our design / this is how I love God back and show my devotion / this is how I receive direction / this is how I am empowered to live every day in a supernatural way.

As I have asked the Lord what He wants from Foothills this year, this is one message I believe He is saying to us loud and clear. “FOOTHILLS, connect with ME.” I believe God is inviting us to experience more of Him this year. Will we follow? Can we make a commitment to this course today? Will you? “What does this look like?” In the weeks and months to come, I will be giving us very concrete things to work on and practice. BUT today, can we commit to this course? Can we make this an individual and corporate goal?