

“When I Hang Out With God...”

Psalm 62

2

Introduction

Great song! I love that message of the need to draw near to God. And many of us wonder how to do that, or we want to experience more in our relationship with God. How can I draw nearer to God? How can I experience more of God’s influence in my life? That’s what we’re going to talk about today.

In 2007, FoxNews.com reported that Americans spent more than 3,500 hours using media.

Average Americans spend more than 100 hours/person/year commuting to work.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics released a report about how we spend leisure time on an average day. Look at their chart...

Looks like we draw nearer to our TV than we do to God.

Probably now, more than ever, the saying is true: *“We live lives of aimless distraction.”*

Why don’t we spend time with God? Why do we hang out more with TV or media than we do with God? Perhaps we don’t hang out with God because...

- ***We don’t find the time interesting.*** We’re more attracted to tabloid news, sports highlights, sit coms or TV dramas, or... the unfolding NBA, free agent drama. None of which actually enhance our lives, by the way.
- ***The time is not entertaining enough.*** More and more we’re trying to get away from things that make us think and contemplate and evaluate. We’re making less mature decisions.
- ***We’d rather watch the movie than read the book.*** We tend to prefer the creatively rehashed, 2-hour version.
- ***We’re not confident we’ll benefit.*** We’re not sure it will actually make a difference – even though God has demonstrated a radical love for us and is the creator of the universe.

The problem is, when we don’t spend time with God, our lives end up lacking depth and we too easily get caught in sin. We are in the habit of allowing our life to become the sum of the entertainment we put into it.

Over the next couple of weeks we are going to be discovering 6 H.A.B.I.T.S that...

...will change your life. If you accept the challenge to develop these habits into your life you will begin to see change. These habits will change us more into who God desires us to be. Today we will glance at the first H.A.B.I.T. that will change your life. Let’s call it...

...hanging out with God.

If you have a Bible, I'd like you to open it to Psalm 62. While you're turning, I came across a great quote that really sets the context for our conversation this morning.

Ex. Writer Anthony Bloom described his father as a man who knew how to spend time with God. When he felt the need to do what he called "soul work," he would sometimes tack a sign to his front door:

"Don't go to the trouble of knocking. I am at home, but I will not answer the door."

Frankly some of us need to block the aimless distractions of life and get behind the closed door and hang out with God.

So I've had placed in each of your worship programs this "DO NOT DISTURB" sign. I hope you'll use it beginning this week to help you implement this desperate need all of us have to spend time with God.

In a way, this morning derives a little out of my story. Let me tell you what happens to me when I spend time with God. When I choose to block the aimless distractions of this world and hang out with God I benefit. First,

When I hang out with God, He gives me PURPOSE.

Look at the first verse from Psalm 62. It says...

"My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him." (Psalm 62:1)

The fact is, we all need to be rescued. And, ultimately, we need to be rescued from ourselves. Later on we're going to be looking at a Proverb that says,

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. – Proverbs 14:12

We need to be rescued from ourselves. Most people think they can embark the life they've always wanted by doing it their way - by turning over a new leaf or turning their lives around. But there's only one problem: they remain the same person. They end up taking the same old self on a different dead end journey. New package, but same old self.

It's so easy to wander aimlessly through life without God's purpose and think we're doing OK, when, in fact, we're not fulfilling God's purpose at all.

On this other side of this door, in the inner sanctum of hanging out with God, we get purpose. We gain an understanding about ourselves. We understand more about the One who created us

and loves and longs to have and develop a relationship with us. Those discoveries on the other side of the door give us purpose.

Ultimately our purpose is to know and enjoy a relationship with God. As a matter of fact, God said he wants everyone to forfeit their tired and aimless lives and turn to him. The Bible says he is

“not willing that anyone should perish”

– that is spend eternity apart from Him –

“but everyone to come to repentance “

– that is surrender their old way of life and trade it in for new life with him.

This is exactly the relationship God designed us for. He designed us to have a relationship with Him. The Bible actually says that

“... [we] were created by Him and FOR Him (Colossians 1:16).

Do you see that? We were created for Him.

You see the good news is this. We can get rid of the old self and get a new self. The Bible says that when we begin a relationship with God, we actually become...

*“... a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)*

It's like this. On the other side of this door we learn...

“... to put off our old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of our minds; and to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22-24)

The purpose you'll find on the other side of this door is a new you. There is never a time we don't need to be renewed. Even if you've begun a relationship with God already. You need to keep taking off the old and keep putting on the new.

Literally, these verses are saying that we need *“to strip away”* the old way of life, like taking off old, filthy clothes. That is to say, as God reveals to us who He is and His ways in the Scripture, we make the choice to turn from the old ways [take off “old self” shirt] – like anger, lying, filthy language, envy, selfishness, grumbling, complaining, bad attitudes.

And then, after stripping away or turning away from the old way, embrace or put on the new way God reveals – like gentleness, humility, gratitude, patience, encouraging words, respect for God and others.

And when we take off the old and put on the new, we live the right way and set apart for God and His purposes.

On the other side of the door is a new way of thinking. When we put off the old, then we are not...

“... conform[ed] any longer to the pattern of this world,

and when we put on, then we become...

“transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)

On the other side of the door is purpose. But there's something else on the other side of this door.

When I hang out with God, He gives me the plan.

Psalms 62:8 says, “Trust in him at all times...”

OK, men, let me introduce you to something: this... is a map. Now, it turns out the ladies are much more familiar with these than you are, but here's the deal with a map. It helps you find where you are and gives you direction on how to get there.

Whoever came up with this concept is brilliant! Someone said, “Hey! Let's map every street in the town so people can find their

way around without GUESSING and burning more fuel than what's been spilled in the Gulf of Mexico! What a concept!

Now, manufacturers and marketers know about the unexplainable aversion the male member of the species has to these printed cartographs, so in an elegant and brilliant move, they digitized it, gave it a cool, scientific name, and they successfully duplicated the idea in something called... a GPS – Global Positioning System. Now, EVERY man HAS to have one. If it came with a remote the printed version would surely be obsolete.

Anyway, a map or GPS tells you where you are and where you are going.

Ex. Now, I have a confession to make. When my wife and I were in New York City last weekend, I carried a map. Now that's just between you and us. I don't want my masculinity questioned. But since I was in New York, I figured the people I saw there would never see me again.

But I have to admit, the map was extremely helpful. It led us around town... flawlessly!

Ex. One day, we were in Central Park, it was about 10 a.m., and we came to one of those “You Are Here” maps installed in the park [except it didn't actually tell you where you were]. Anyway, there was a woman there who pointed to the map, and said, “You're here. I know, we've been here a few times. We've been lost about a dozen times already today.”

That's the way it is with a lot of people and their lives. They try to figure it out on their own, on the fly, and they're lost.

There's a biblical proverb that says...

"There's a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." (Proverbs 14:12)

In other words, doing life our way causes us to drift more from God's way.

Fortunately, God has given us a map for life. It's the Bible. Again, a Proverb reveals to us that...

"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." (Proverbs 16:9)

So what that's saying is that when we spend time with God on the other side of this door, He determines our steps. We find out where we are and where we need to go. As a matter of fact, wouldn't be wonderful when you step through the door to be able to say...

"Direct my footsteps according to your word" (Psalm 119:133)?

Instead of guessing what life is all about and what I should do and what kind of decision I should make, I should look at the map.

All of us have questions about how to handle relationships (my marriage, my family), how to handle our money, how I should handle my work, or my business. All of us have questions about the best way to live life. Guess what, the God has revealed key principles in the Bible that address those questions. One of the best default settings we can develop in our thinking and in our lives is to...

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."— Proverbs 3:5-6

Seek God's direction. When I spend time with God, He gives me purpose, He reveals His plan, and one other benefit...

When I hang out with God, He gives me perspective.

Ex. If there was ever an illustration of losing perspective, it was these last several weeks with the LeBron James free agency debacle.

The most coveted free agent in the NBA kept the basketball world, and the fans who supported him, on pins and needles as he strung out his decision about which team he was going to play for.

Talk about losing perspective. This whole thing got so big, that many people couldn't see anything else in life for weeks on end. It was in every newscast. It was in every paper... for weeks!

It finally culminated Wednesday night with a huge ESPN production with James announcing he'd play for the Miami Heat.

But the fans weren't the only ones who had lost perspective. LeBron had lost perspective. He made it a huge spectacle about him. The fact is, there's a little of LeBron James in all of us.

Perspective is so important, because the way we see life *shapes* our lives. Perspective shapes everything: how we invest our time, how we handle our money, how we use our gifts and talents, how we pursue relationships. Perspective influences everything. And perspective is what brings stability to our lives.

That's why I love these next verses from our passage for today, Psalm 62. They say...

"He alone is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress, I will never be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge" – Psalm 62: 6-7

Those verses scream stability. But when we vacillate between doing it our way and doing it God's way, or see life merely from our perspective, we introduce instability into our lives. We're told in the book of James

"...a double-minded man [is] unstable in all he does" – James 1:8

But it doesn't have to be that way. On the other side of the door, God gives you stability during the twists and turns and ups and downs in life by revealing the right perspective on life.

And if there is ever a time we need the stability that perspective can bring, it's when we have problems. It's when life gets tough. When there's hardship and disappointment. Those moments seem so big, so magnified, that they consume our entire perspective and we lose hope. We need to see the bigger picture. We need to be looking for what God is doing and wants to do.

Ex. When I was in graduate school, I had to do an insect collection for my Entymology class. Most people collect insects between the ages of 5-7. I collected them at 24.

Anyway, I had a bad attitude about it. I can remember going out into this huge field, casually sweeping my net a couple times and saying, "There aren't any insects out here." Stupid statement.

But my wife rescued me. She encouraged me and we began looking for insects – everywhere we went. Outside our apartment, on the sidewalk, in the grass, when we were camping. And pretty soon, we were seeing insects everywhere... because we were focusing our attention on finding them. We had changed our perspective.

That's the kind of vision we see on the other side of the door. It's seeing God and his ways in the midst of everything else that's going on in life. It's like getting out a pair of binoculars, looking down the road of life, and magnifying and focusing on God's purpose in the midst of the frenzy of life.

When we spend time with God, we understand that problems have a purpose. How do I know that? Because someone counted more than 200 times words like trials, temptations, refining, and testing show up in the Bible. And God tells us that character and maturity are revealed and developed during these times.

"... we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Romans 5:3-4)

With that perspective I can see that what happens in my life matters. Every day matters and every problem has a purpose. And that perspective brings *me* stability when *life* is unstable.

Many of you are living unstable lives because your life is driven by your own way. You're led by your own way of thinking. You're led by your emotions – that is, how you *feel* about something. You're led by the "*wisdom*" of someone else. And your life is like a carousel - up and down and turning circles.

Hopefully, you can see that spending time with God is critical for all of us. Let's hear, now from a woman in our church who hangs out with God regularly. Listen to what she says...

Let me challenge you to go behind the door, put up your "DO NOT DISTURB" sign, and spend time with God. Get his perspective on life. We need that every day. Every day you can look forward to a time when, as the Psalmist said, you can...

*"... pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."
(Psalm 62:8b)*

So when you walk on the other side of this door, put up your "DO NOT DISTURB SIGN" and spend meaningful, dedicated time with God. When you do that, you can expect to find His purpose, His plan, and His perspective for your life. But you might be wondering what it looks like. Well, let's spend a few minutes painting a picture of what this time with God might look like. First, you need...

The Setting

Nearly every Friday morning Pastor Nick Cleveland and I meet. Both of us look forward to meeting – catching up, investing in one another's lives, encouraging one another.

But the first order of business is making a few important decisions:

- Your office or mine?

- Do you want to sit at the table, couch, chair?
- Need any coffee?
- What chapter from the book we're reading are we on?

The first decisions we make mainly fall in the category of “comfort” decisions.

The same is true for choosing a setting for spending time with God. As much as possible, choose a location where you like to be. For me, I love sitting on our back patio. I look forward to grabbing a cup of coffee and sitting on our patio in the cool of the morning during the spring, summer and fall.

I love being out there. It's a comfortable place free of distractions.

Some of you might be comfortable at your kitchen or dining room table. Some of you on your couch or your special chair. Some of you might like the outdoors. Find a place that works for you... and put up your sign: “Please Do Not Disturb: I'm Hanging Out with God.”

Not only do you need a setting, but that time needs to include a time of...

Listening

Nick and I have given each other permission to speak into one another's lives – about our character, ministry, and personal lives.

It's not a time for us to defend ourselves or our actions. Because we know we love one another in Christ, we know each other's words have the other person's benefit in mind.

Sometimes one of us might hear what we don't want to hear. We have to face some challenging truths. Other times our words are strongly encouraging and affirming. Regardless, what we hear from one another is for our benefit.

Likewise, my times with God must involve listening. I listen when I read and think and mull over the words of Scripture – God's revealed truth to me. I hear from God's Word truths about who I am, whom I should aspire to be, where I've gotten off track, how to get back on track, and how to live in a way that reflects His activity in my life.

I strongly encourage you to take the reading guide we've placed in your worship program and use it to listen to what God has for you. Use the devotional guides that accompany that reading guide. You can find them at our website or find printed copies [where?]

Our times with God must include listening. That's where we learn about our purpose, His plan, and His perspective.

After choosing a setting, and then listening, you will have your chance to talk.

Talking

Every time Nick and I get together for our Friday meeting, we give each other time to talk. We can talk through our troubles, our struggles and challenges; we share our victories; we interact on what we've been reading together.

Remember what our passage says?

*"... pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."
(Psalm 62:8b)*

When you spend time on the other side of the door, you can pour out your heart to God – to the one who loves you most. You can tell him your fears, your anxieties, your disappointments. You can celebrate your victories. And you can ask Him how to do what you just listened to him say.

So why not pick up the challenge today to spend some time every day with God? Choose a setting. Spend some time listening to God from what your reading in the Bible. And then talk to him. Pour out your heart to him.