

Not a Fan wk 3: *Choosing Intimacy*

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Today we're talking about a subject that (generally) women are going to say, "LOVE IT!"

And men are going to say, "Seriously?"

((((crowd participation)))

Today we're talking about choosing INTIMACY...(love it...seriously?)

Intimacy can be can be kind of a vague, nebulous term, so to frame this idea of intimacy, we're going watch this (funny) clip from the movie, *Date Night*

The couple played by Tina Fey and Steve Carrell play this game when they're out at restaurants where they make up what other couples in the restaurant are saying to each other. They call this game, "What's the story?"

(((((clip))))) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6u6Kn2mi4I>

What I like about this scene is that we've all been in restaurants noticing how close or distant couples are to each other. When we're at a restaurant, we can look at a couple--and without knowing them, without knowing what they're talking about--we can sense how intimate or how distant they are.

How many of you have seen what appear to be longtime married couples dining where they actually *said more* and *smiled more* at their *server* than to each other?

How many of you have seen the dating or newly married couple where when one of them says, "Pass the pepper," you wonder, "Are they really talking about pepper?" ;-)

How bout you? Have you been out to dinner with someone (spouse, or just a friend) and the conversation was just flowing, flying fast and you're not editing your thoughts, words are whipping back and forth and you just feel safe & relaxed?

Have you been to dinner or coffee (again, spouse, or friend) and you could hear the carbonated bubbles blurrp up to the top of your glass because it's so quiet? In your mind you were flipping through a stack of 3x5 notecards with topics written on them saying, "No, not that one, not that one, not that one..."

Here's the truth---when you and I are out to dinner with our spouse, Steve Carrell & Tina Fey could play *What's the Story?* about us based on our level of intimacy-- because this invisible thing called intimacy can be clearly seen in a normal place like a booth at a restaurant.

So here's one for you: What if Tina Fey and Steve Carrell were sitting across the room when you and I were having dinner with Jesus?

What would their version of *What's the Story?* look like if we were having dinner with Jesus?

First they'd be amazed that the water glasses became a wonderful cabernet sauvignon ;-)

But seriously...

Would we be nervous?

Would we guard our words?

Would we struggle coming up with topics?

Would we know what his interests are?

Would we be uncomfortable, not knowing what to expect?

Would it feel like forever until the food arrived?

Would we look like an awkward friend trying to connect or make a good impression on someone we look up to?

Or...

Would we be so relaxed?

Would we seem calm and affirmed?

Would we seem to be incredibly content and happy?

Would the conversation just flow?

Would this be a visible picture of invisible conversations you and He have had up to this point?

Would we look like old friends?

Today, as we talk about intimacy between us and Jesus, we want to ask the *Date Night* movie question, *What's the Story?*

When it comes to you and Jesus--and your level of intimacy with Him--*what's the story?*

(SELAH)

Probably the best Biblical word for intimacy is the word "know." It is first used in the context of relationships in Genesis 4:1.

PP1

"And Adam knew Eve his wife (*wink-wink-nudge-nudge*); and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD."

Genesis 4:1 King James Vers.

I'm using the King James Version here because the Hebrew word for 'know' is 'yada.'

This word *yada'* means *to know and to be known completely*.

Dial in with me for a second: The author of Genesis didn't use the word 'knew' or 'yada' to be discreet or conservative.

'Knew' and 'yada' are not terms for sexual relations; there are different words for sexual relations and they are used other places in the Bible.

But "yada" means an intimate connecting on every level:
physical, emotional, spiritual.

To know someone completely and have them know you completely.

One Hebrew scholar calls 'yada', "A mingling of the souls."

When we trace the usage of 'yada' through the Old Testament, we find that over and over again, *this* is the same word that's used to describe God's relationship with US.

Guys--this is where it might sound weird! The same word, the same connection used to describe a man and a wife is used to describe how God wants to know us.

But "yada" simply means: Jesus wants to be intimately involved in every single aspect of our life.

Nothing off limits.

100% intimacy with Jesus.

He wants an all-access backstage pass to everything we think, do and say.

In Psalm 139, the author David gives us a picture of what "yada" looks like:

PP2

O LORD, you have examined my heart
 and know everything about me.
 You know when I sit down or stand up.
 You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
 You see me when I travel
 and when I rest at home.
 You know everything I do.
 You know what I am going to say
 even before I say it, LORD.

Psalm 139:1-4 nlt

David says,
 "God, You know how I feel,
 You know how I hurt,
 You know what I'm thinking.
 You know what's buggin me.
 You know my insecurities.
 You know my secret thoughts.
 You know what makes me laugh."

(SELAH)

Does that kind of freak you out knowing that God knows 100% about you?
 Is that a little disturbing that we can have no secrets from God?

Does it play with your head that God's knows your worst moments ever--but yet He still loves you?

Most of us have a hard time knowing how to deal with intimacy.
 We can be masters at avoiding it. So it's not surprising that a common response to intimacy---is fear.

Intimacy is scary because it involves allowing ourselves to be vulnerable.
 And many of us fear intimacy with God and people (even our spouse) because we know from experience, that vulnerability and pain can go hand-in-hand.

I'm guessing everyone in this room as been betrayed or hurt--not by a *stranger*--but by someone close--someone we trusted--someone we were vulnerable with. It's like vulnerability is a fragile vase we both have a hand on.

I'm a person who has to make myself be vulnerable. My natural tendency is distance. And I think I know why.

Growing up my family was very funny. Making others laugh scored high points at our house. And that was fine, except there were no boundaries for joking around.

So when I got to be in high school and got into dating relationships and more grown-up ways, the jokes continued and I felt more like people were laughing at me than with me. At some point, it's appropriate to turn the laughter off.

So I very consciously withdrew and withheld my vulnerability.

So I came out of adolescence being very guarded. And so to this day--I'm *better* at vulnerability, but if you asked Sandra on certain days, she would probably say I have far to go ;-)

But here's the deal: my life experience doesn't exempt me from intimacy with God and others.

Your life experience--when someone picked up your fragile vase of vulnerability and smashed it on the hardwood floor--that does not exempt you from vulnerability with God.

Here's another *fear factor*: when we embrace intimacy and make ourselves vulnerable to God, He will find some stuff we're not proud of.

But get this. He is not the inflictor of guilt.

Our intimate God is the healer of past, present and future hurts.

In fact I love how *The Message* captures Luke 4:18: **PP3**

Jesus says, (I've come) "To set the burdened and battered free."

So if you have a fear of intimacy because through intimacy you have been burdened and battered---it is through intimacy with Jesus that He wants to heal you and set you free.

(((((Prayer of healing for people hurt through vulnerability...))))))

Couple things about this idea of intimacy with Jesus.

PP4

1. Intimacy with God is non-negotiable.

How critical is it that we foster intimacy God? That we know (yada) God?

Matthew 7:22-23 nlt:

On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.'

²³ But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me....'

Matthew 7:22-23 nlt

That stings...that flies in the face of our fast-paced, just-tell-me-what-I need-to-do, hour on Sunday, instant-gratification, twitter world,

Because knowing God isn't instant coffee.

Knowing God is a tree planted by a stream. It's slow. It takes a lifetime.

1. Intimacy with God is non-negotiable. (critical)

PP5

2. Intimacy with God is mysterious--yet attainable.

In the Old Testament God took the mysterious form of a cloud and pillar of fire in Exodus 13:21. That's how the people knew and followed Him.

And in the New Testament, Jesus said these words about the mysterious nature of our intimate God:

"The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit." John 3:8 nlt

"Ok thanks, Morgan--me nurturing intimacy with God is like trying to lasso the wind or a cloud--very 'helpful...'"

Intimacy with God being mysterious means this: It's unique to YOU.

Which means *you* have to engage God yourself and navigate your relationship with Him.

And yes, God *is* mysterious and how you intimately relate with Him is *unique* to you--BUT (game-changer coming up!)I

HE MADE YOU.

HE KNOWS YOU.

HE YADA YOU.

Which means He KNOWS how goofy and quirky and unique you are, which means He will reveal Himself to you in ways that make sense to YOU!!

So if you are a outdoorsy hunter-type, He's probably not going to show-up for you on Pinterest.

And if you're an artistic-type person, God is probably not going to show up for you on pg 3 of *The Wall Street Journal*.

In this mass-market world, God is still THE Artisan-- hand-crafting intimate relationships, one at a time!

And know this: Intimacy is not us alone--trekking the entire distance to God--it is God also coming towards us!
Intimacy is the Creator coming toward the created!

And as much as God is mysterious--like a cloud or the wind--intimacy is attainable.

Listen:

I love my wife, Sandra, very much.
I love my kids.
I love the friends I am blessed with.

But my wife, my kids, my friends--amazing as they are--don't come close to the peace,
reassurance
& boldness I get from my mysterious intimate relationship with Jesus.

Some days all I know is who Jesus is and what He is to me--and that is enough.
Enough to soothe my soul and mind. Why?

Because He's more than a concept or an idea.
Jesus is *personal* to me.
What I have with Him is REAL.

On day 3 of our *Not a Fan* journal it said to imagine Jesus sitting in the chair across from you and sing your favorite worship song to Him.

Instantly I thought, "Yikes, not sure if this is going to work."

And before I could complete that thought... this just blurted out of my mouth, seemingly without a conscious thought...

*"And I'm madly in love with You...
yes I'm madly in love with You...
and I'm madly in love with You...
yes I'm madly in love with you..."* (Madly, Charlie Hall)

Intimacy with God is mysterious...it's like a cloud or the wind. But it is attainable. Because somehow, ME--this never-brought-up-in-church guy-- instinctively sings love songs to a God I can't see...

And I KNOW...
He loves me,
He forgives me,
He heals me,
He inspires me,
He calms me,
He rescues me,
He emboldens me,
He delights in me,
He hopes for me,
He dwells in me.
He hangs out with me...

(SELAH)

And somehow I think if Tina Fey and Steve Carrell looked across the room at Jesus and me, and said, *"What's the story?"*

They'd see something real.
Something natural.
Something other.

(SELAH)

PP6

1. Intimacy with God is a non-negotiable.
2. Intimacy with God is mysterious--yet attainable.
3. Fans choose knowledge; Followers embrace intimacy.

I don't know how this happened in American Christianity, but along the way we have somehow wrongly elevated knowledge about God over intimacy with God.

I'm guessing that 90% (or more) of the people in this room feel a certain amount of GUILT because we:

Don't know the Bible enough.

Don't know enough about God.

Don't know enough theology.

Don't know enough knowledge-based information.

And at the same time, I wonder--how many of us feel that same guilt over our level of intimacy with Jesus?

The reason we value knowledge over intimacy? It's EASIER.

For knowledge? Someone just tells you what to do:

Read your Bible. Read this passage.

Go to a small group--do this small group curriculum.

Knowledge is nuts and bolts. Cut and dried. Typically no vulnerability. Not mysterious.

Intimacy? Vague. It's as unique as you are. I can't tell you exactly how to do it. It's mysterious.

Knowledge about Jesus is easier than intimacy with Jesus.

Don't misunderstand...knowledge is invaluable. Knowledge is biblical.

The deal is It's about knowledge AND intimacy.

There's a story in Luke chapter 7 about knowledge and intimacy.

We'll see Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to his house. Simon had a TON of KNOWLEDGE about God and his teachings. And he's only really interested in Jesus because of the knowledge that Jesus might offer.

Simon certainly does not care about intimacy, or even basic relational hospitality for Jesus.

It was the custom to kiss a guest. Simon didn't do that for Jesus.

It was the custom to have your guests' feet washed. He didn't have that done for Jesus.

It was the custom to anoint a respected guest's head with olive oil. He didn't do that for Jesus.

We'll see an immoral woman--a woman who slept around--she perhaps didn't know much more than who Jesus was---but her interactions with Jesus were appropriately intimate.

PP7

Luke 7:36-50 The Message

One of the Pharisees asked him over for a meal. He went to the Pharisee's house and sat down at the dinner table. Just then a woman of the village, the town harlot, having learned that Jesus was a guest in the home of the Pharisee, came with a bottle of very expensive perfume and stood at his feet, weeping, raining tears on his feet. (dusty--not cleaned by his host..)

Letting down her hair, she dried his feet, kissed them, and anointed them with the perfume. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself,

"If this man was the prophet I thought he was, he would have known what kind of woman this is who is falling all over him." (Pharisee--"unclean")

Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Oh? Tell me."

"Two men were in debt to a banker. One owed five hundred silver pieces, the other fifty. Neither of them could pay up, and so the banker canceled both debts. Which of the two would be more grateful?"

Simon answered, "I suppose the one who was forgiven the most."

"That's right," said Jesus. Then turning to the woman, but speaking to Simon, he said, "Do you see this woman?"

I came to your home; you provided no water for my feet, but she rained tears on my feet and dried them with her hair.

You gave me no greeting, but from the time I arrived she hasn't quit kissing my feet.

You provided nothing for freshening up, but she has soothed my feet with perfume. Impressive, isn't it?

She was forgiven many, many sins, and so she is very, very grateful. If the forgiveness is minimal, the gratitude is minimal."

Then he spoke to her: "I forgive your sins."

That set the dinner guests talking behind his back: "Who does he think he is, forgiving sins!"

He ignored them and said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Luke 7:36-50 The Message

It's not enough for the Pharisee--or US--to know about Jesus.

We need intimacy with Jesus.

This story reminds us that all the knowledge of God is worthless, without intimacy with Jesus.

This story reminds us that fans choose knowledge and followers embrace intimacy with Jesus.

If Oakbrook is to be a church where people find Jesus and live like Him, we will never achieve that without growing in our intimacy with Jesus.

And I want you to know that you can be vulnerable and fully open with God--because unlike people:

God is fully GOOD.

God is fully TRUSTWORTHY.

God has never dropped the vase of vulnerability.

How do I know? Listen to this passage from Romans 8 that describes how madly in love God is with us:

PP8 Romans 8:28-39 The Message

"That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son.

The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there, in him.

After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid

basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us?

And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us.

Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way!

Not trouble,
not hard times,
not hatred,
not hunger,
not homelessness,
not bullying threats,
not backstabbing,
not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

(They kill us in cold blood because they hate you. We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.)

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us."

God has us. He's got us.
He is faithful.
He is good.
You can trust Him with your heart and the whole of your life...

So...it's you and Jesus in a booth in a restaurant..."What's the story?" What do you want the story to be?

(*You Have Me* -Gungor)