

GOD'S GREATEST DESIRE

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Focus All mankind comes from God, is sustained by God and will go back to God. God made us like Him, and like God, we desire communion. God's greatest desire is to commune with us, to be with us forever. God created us to love Him and to be loved by Him.

Open Often as children or teenagers, we have the misconception that we know everything or think we know "most" things. Think of one example of something you thought you knew but were wrong. Did discovering the truth as an adult surprise you? Did this experience influence your future judgments or thought processes? If so, how?

Read When God wanted to make something, He spoke to what He wanted it to be made out of, be dependent upon and return to. *"Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, [plants, herbs, trees] ... Let the earth bring forth living creatures'"* (Genesis 1:11, 24). *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image according to Our likeness'"* (Genesis 1:26). Our spirits came *from* God, are dependent *on* God and will go back *to* God. In order for us to have life—for our spirits to be alive—we must remain and abide in God. God alone sustains us.

Each one of us was made in the image of God (*"Let Us make man in Our image"*). God desired a companion and that is why He made us. However, because we were made in God's image, we *also* have a desire for a companion and for communion. In the garden, God knew the only thing that would satisfy Adam was a bride—so He made Eve. God knew this because God has the same desire. God desires a bride. *We* are His bride. *We* are His desire.

Each of us is God's greatest desire. We were made like Him, to be sustained by Him so we could love Him and be loved by Him. God's plan is to present His Son, Jesus, with a bride—a companion. We are that desired bride and companion. The heart cry of God all through the Bible is that God desires for us to be His, to be His people, and He wants to be our God. He created us for Himself, but He also created us with a free will. We can choose to either love him or not to love Him.

Talk

1. As a child, did you ever have a favorite toy, stuffed animal or action hero that you would pretend was real? Name one or two characteristics about this toy that made you wish it was real. Did you ever find yourself modeling some of those same characteristics that you admired?
2. Think about someone you feel is a lot like you. What is it about them that makes you feel like you are so similar? Do your similarities with this individual affect your relationship? If yes, how? Are these affects positive or negative? Explain.
3. In Genesis 1:26, God said, *"Let Us make man in Our Image."* Do you believe you were made in God's Image? If yes, what are some of the attributes you have that are a reflection of the character of God?
4. Read the following scriptures: Exodus 6:7; Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 24:7; Ezekiel 11:20; Zechariah 8:8 and 2 Corinthians 6:16. What do you think are the themes of these passages? Does it surprise you that God wants you to be His people and that He longs to be your God? If yes, why?
5. Is it hard for you to understand God's great love and desire for you? Why or why not?

Live

God's greatest desire is for us to love Him and to be loved by Him. Lead the group in a time of personal reflection. Ask the following questions: "Have you allowed God to make you His very own? Have you allowed God to say, 'You are mine and I Am your God?'" Take a moment and allow time for all group members to quiet their hearts and ask God to be their God. If they have never accepted Jesus as Lord, allow time for all to receive Christ. If everyone has asked Jesus to be Lord of their life, then prayerfully ask God to show us if there is any area of our lives or hearts that is not in full submission to Him. Ask God to renew His Lordship and to fully restore all areas of our lives to line up with His Word and that we would be reflections of His love.

This week, encourage your group members to ask God if there is anything in their lives they have not fully surrendered to His Lordship. Encourage your group to lay everything down God might be speaking to them. Then tell them you will be praying for them all week to have a greater revelation of how much God loves them and how they are God's greatest desire.

Pray

Heavenly Father, we bless Your Holy Name. Thank You for Your great love towards us. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to take away our sins so we could be in relationship with You, our loving Father and Lord. Help us to have a greater knowledge and revelation of how much You love us and want to commune with us. I ask that all of us would walk in a deeper, more vibrant relationship with You than we ever have before! Help us to also give Your love to all those around us. Amen.