



CAPTURED BY GRACE

Jeremy White, Lead Pastor
Valley Church

July 3 & 4, 2021
Week 2 – Distant vs. Close

Introduction:

Exodus 19:12-13; 16-19; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3

There was a time when the presence of God was absolutely terrifying!

Matthew 11:28-30

Three Lies We've Believed:

1. I must get _____ to God

The Claim: James 4:8 – James does tell his audience to draw near, doesn't he?

The Truth: We are as close to God as we'll ever be!

1 Corinthians 15:22 – We don't get any closer than being "in Christ."

Colossians 1:27 – We don't get any nearer than Christ being "in us."

1 Corinthians 6:17 – We can't have greater intimacy than one spirit with Him!

Ephesians 2:14 – We have been brought close by the blood of Christ.

Romans 5:10 – We are united to Christ through the resurrection!

2. I must _____ for Jesus

The Claim: Christianity is about living our lives for Jesus!

The Truth: Christianity is about Jesus living through us!

Colossians 3:3-4 – Christ Himself is our very life!

Galatians 5:16-25 – We are fruit bearers, not works-producers

3. I must _____ to myself

The Claim: Jesus said, "take up your cross" and Paul said that he "dies daily!"

The Truth: Colossians 3:3 – You already died with Jesus

Galatians 2:20 – You were already crucified with Christ

Romans 6:4 – You were buried with Him

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Personal Life:

1. How would you answer a friend who shares they are having trouble reconciling their Old Testament understanding of God with their New Testament understanding? How has the issue of "closeness with God" changed from Old Covenant to New Covenant? Discuss...

Ponderings:

2. As a group, look at your note page and discuss the common claims under each point. Then read the corresponding verses in answering the claims.
 - Why do you think there is so much confusion among Christians about their "closeness with God?"
 - What are the essential differences between viewing the Christian life as "living for Jesus" versus "Jesus living through us?"
 - Why do think "die to self" theology has become so popular in Christianity when the real message is "you already died with Christ...now it's time to live from the new self?"
3. The "flesh" can be described as the network of old thinking patterns, coping mechanisms and survival strategies that we once trained our minds to live by before following Christ.
 - Why is it so critical to understand that the flesh is *with* you, but it is *not* who you truly are?
 - How does the presence of the flesh help clarify why we are new spiritual creations, yet still struggle with sin? Discuss...

Promptings:

4. Do you most commonly experience God as someone you are clean and close with...or dirty and distant from? How are such thoughts and feelings formed? How would your daily life...moment by moment...take on new meaning and expression if you truly lived in the confidence of irreversible closeness with Your Heavenly Father?