



April 15, 2018
Pursuit

Day 1: From the time Mary encountered Jesus for the first time, we see in scripture her seeking Him out. Mary pursued Jesus, she sought out his company and His presence. Who do you enjoy being with? Why do you enjoy being with them? Think about at least one person you genuinely enjoy spending time with. Is it the conversation that you enjoy? Is it laughter? Is it the ability to fully be yourself when you are with them? Is it just easy to be with them, doesn't matter what you are doing, just being together is life giving? Is it all these things? Think back to the person you enjoy being with most. Write out 3-5 reasons you enjoy being with this person. Do you think any of these reasons might have been Mary's reasons for wanting to be with Jesus? Why or why not? Can you translate any of the reasons you wrote down to your relationship with Jesus?

Day 2: Imagine you are going to meet friends for coffee and conversation. You enter the crowded restaurant and begin to look around for your friends who have already arrived. In a corner, you see one of your friends trying to get your attention. You make eye contact and you see his eyes light up as he excitedly motions for you to join them at the table. Your friends are excited you are there and you feel immediately welcomed. Conversation is flowing between the three of them, and they are eager for you to join in. This is a safe place. Now imagine these friends are God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Spirit. Does this change the scene? If so, in what way? In the *Magnificent Story* by James Bryan Smith, he writes, "*Members of the Trinity are intermingling, known and fully known. Each of us is designed for and invited to participate in the greatest, truest, most real, most intimate relationship that exists: that of the Father and the Son. The Spirit reveals this to us and invites us to join.*" We are welcome. We are wanted. We are invited in. How might understanding the relationship in this way change how, and maybe even why, you pray? How might it change the way you interact with God? Imagine the scene described above for a time of prayer today. Consider writing about what you experienced in your journal.

****This weekend Cory mentioned a Next Step Challenge: To spend a total of 60 minutes pursuing a deeper relationship with Jesus. For the remainder of the week we have provided four different ideas to help you focus on being in His presence.**

#1: What words come to mind to describe God? What words come to mind when you think about Jesus? Are they the same? **Read John 14:9.** "If what you imagine God to be like is anything other than Jesus, then you have the wrong image of God." -Keasler. Our image of God profoundly impacts our relationship with him and Jesus. We can't have one without the other. Spend 15 minutes reading and meditating on John 1:1-5, John 14:9 and Hebrews 1:3. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to learn more about Jesus and yourself.

#2: Beauty is meant to draw us to the ultimate beauty, which is God himself. Take 15 minutes to listen to something beautiful. Before you begin, take a moment to pray and remember that Jesus is present with you. Listen to whatever music you find beautiful, whatever speaks to you. Find a place where you won't be interrupted or distracted. Notice the sound and nothing else. You might think about what you like about it. Or you may want to think of nothing and just enjoy the sounds. As the music ends, think about how God has given us our senses, not just for useful things, but also to take in beauty. How does the beauty you've just heard reveals attributes of God?

#3: Set aside 15 minutes for a "prayer walk". The idea is to spend time in conversation with God while you engage in your surroundings. If a walk isn't feasible, consider taking a drive or sitting on the back deck. Notice the trees, or the birds, maybe people walking by, or children playing. Imagine walking with a good friend and enjoying not only one another's company, but the beauty surrounding you. What do you see? What is on your mind? Are there things that are worrying you? Things you are excited about? Talk to God as you would a close friend. As in all good conversations, both speaking, and listening are involved. What is God saying to you? What do you learn from the surrounding nature?

#4: Through serving, attending to the needs of someone else, we are following the example set by Jesus. As we love, live, and serve as He did, we deepen our relationship with Him. Think about how you can help someone today. Maybe it is someone at work overwhelmed and could use some help. Maybe it is a mom with her hands full with kids and groceries. Maybe it is someone standing on the corner in need of a meal. Ask God to open your eyes to see someone you can serve. What do you learn about God through serving another?

One more step: Think back through the different ways you encountered the presence of Jesus this week. Was there anything that surprised you? What did you discover? Consider talking about these practices with a friend or your small group.



April 15, 2018
Reactions to the Resurrection
Pursuit

Reactions to the Resurrection:

- Thomas doubted. (John 20:24-29)
- Mary Magdalene _____. (John 20:1-18)

John 20:1-18 notes:

- Mary Magdalene desired to _____ Jesus what she had _____ Jesus.
- Mary Magdalene pursued Jesus because she wanted to _____ Him and not because she wanted to _____ something _____ Him.
- Her pursuit of Jesus was not _____ based, but _____ based.

60 Minute Challenge. Over the next 7 days, spend at least 60 minutes pursuing a relationship with Jesus.

- 15 minutes in God's Word.
- 15 minutes in worship.
- 15 minutes in prayer.
- 15 minutes of service.