



Week 1: “Getting Sheepish”

We often hear people talk about a “personal relationship with Jesus,” but what does that mean? We know what personal relationships with other people look like, but can we really have that kind of relationship with God? Many of us were taught that God wants obedience, not a relationship. We were told that doing the right thing is what God wants from us. But what if that’s not true? What if God actually wants us to get to know him and wants us to live lives that are defined not by obedience, but by abundance?

Discussion Questions

1. *If you grew up in church*, you may have experienced a faith that was based on participation but not a faith that was personal. Did you feel connected to God, or did you feel like you had to simply be obedient to him?
2. *If you did not grow up in church*, you may have heard church people talk about their relationship with God as being personal. Have you ever wrestled with the idea of God being a personal God? What does the phrase “a personal God” mean to you?
3. Jesus taught many things about God and about our relationship with him, but how did Jesus’s actions with those around him show us what a personal relationship with Jesus looks like? Did the way Jesus interacted with others reveal anything about how he wants to interact with us? What else about Jesus’s life tells us what a personal relationship with him looks like?
4. **Read John 10:1–5,14.** Sheep know who their shepherd is and they listen to him. They trust him and follow him. But the sheep can’t know the shepherd without spending time with him and listening to his voice in order to become familiar with it. If we are called to follow Jesus, our shepherd, how do we become familiar with his voice?
5. **Read John 10:10.** Jesus wanted us to follow him as sheep follow a shepherd, but *why*? What is Jesus’s hope for us according to John 10:10? What do you think it means to “have life, and have it to the full”?
6. Adam highlighted five disciplines from Richard Foster’s book *The Celebration of Discipline*. The disciplines were study, prayer, serving, guidance, and celebration. Why do we need these disciplines in our lives?
7. Which of these disciplines is the most difficult for you to apply? Which one do

you think you can apply right away? What is your plan for applying this discipline?

Moving Forward

If we truly want to understand what it means to be in a relationship with Jesus, we must figure out how to make it personal—not one based on doing good things but on connecting with God. We connect with the people around us by getting to know them and spending time with them. So how can you spend time with God this week and get to know him in a new way—a way that doesn't involve doing something *for* him but rather spending time *with* him?