“I Don’t Feel Connected to God”

April 28, 2011

What should I do if I don’t feel like I need to repent? How can I make myself more humble towards God?

This question is coming from a time of doubt in my life. I just have not been very connected with Jesus lately. I feel somewhat connected with God, though the personal relationship I used to have with His Son has gone out the window. It’s a strange situation. Part of this problem may be coming from not being humble before God – I feel like I can get by on my own sometimes. I don’t have any specific sin, just general ones that I struggle with day to day like pride. I was mostly looking for repentance in general.

Thanks for responding, and I hope this is clarifying. I also hope you enjoy your job. Thanks!

Hey Kara,

Yes, this is helpful, thanks. It seems as though you’re basing the status of your relationship with the Lord only on how you feel. Perhaps you no longer have those warm-fuzzy feelings that you used to have in high school (I’m guessing based upon your email address that you graduated in ’09). This kind of experience is very common for several reasons. Firstly, in most of American Christianity (especially in Evangelical and Charismatic circles, and most especially in youth group programs) we over-emphasize feelings. Of course some of this is very natural because as we are growing into adulthood through our teen years, our emotions are developing and often on overdrive, which isn’t bad per se; it’s just how it is. Other reasons we often over-emphasize feelings have to do with our Church history in this country, especially the Great

Awakenings and the efforts made to reach those on the Frontier. At any rate, the point is you're not alone. I have experienced the same exact thing you're talking about.

Here's my recommendation. We are all driven much more by our bodies than our brains. We typically consider this a bad thing, but it isn't. It's how we were created, embodied. I don't start feeling tired until I brush my teeth at night. Why? Because I brush my right before I go to bed and my body associates the two habits. But if I wait until I *feel* tired, I'll stay up way too late. We have all sorts of routines like this. Since we are creatures of habit (by God's design), what we often need are habits and routines (which is a word we're really scared of) to help us remember God because *most of us* feel like we can get by on our own most of the time.

So, some suggestions.

> *• Go on walks… without your iPod. You can train yourself to pray for your friends, family, the world… during these times. It will take time to discipline your mind, and that's okay; be gracious with yourself. Eventually, your mind will associate prayer with these walks, and it will just happen without your having to think about it. You might need to make these walks at the same time every week or every day, whatever. This can be tricky when our schedules are regularly changing, but that's okay too. The lunch hour can be a good time for this, especially since we are highly influenced by our stomachs. You can take your lunch with you or use that time to fast and pray (which includes, of course, repentance).*
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> *• Visit churches with different practices than you're used to. This may seem like an odd suggestion, but if you've only ever experienced one type of liturgy (which all churches have, it's just a church's Sunday morning (or whenever) routine), how can you know if it's a liturgy that is a good fit for you? We're all a bit different, and some habits won't*

work for some people like they will for others. On the other hand, visiting other churches can help us understand our own church liturgy in ways we never really thought about before, making our Sunday morning practices less mere routine and more spiritually-connected routine. These visits can occur frequently if you're not that connected to your current church or not going to church, or they can be more spread out like once every other month or so. Some churches have weekly communal prayers of repentance. I find these quite helpful.

• Finally, be communal with whatever habits your try. With one or two friends or a mentor you can really trust, let them into this part of your life. Another reason we struggle so much with spiritual habits is because we have the insane notion that we have to do it all on our own—just me and God—like if I tell someone I'm going to try to start prayer-walking or whatever, then I'm just bragging and being unspiritual. This is a trick of the Enemy; he knows us well.

I hope this will be a helpful start for you. Please feel free to let me know how things are going, because, yes, I do really like my job.

Blessings to you,
Renea

Wow,

Thank you very much for your suggestions! These sound like great ideas that will work. I'm especially excited to see what kind of churches I can visit – although I love my own church, that I am involved in, I love to see different ways of worshiping. Thank you very much.

This blog post originally appeared at

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