

**ZONDERVAN™**

*God Is Closer Than You Think Participant's Guide*  
Copyright © 2005 by John Ortberg

Requests for information should be addressed to:  
Zondervan, *Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530*

ISBN-10: 0-310-26639-4  
ISBN-13: 978-0-310-26639-6

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *Holy Bible: New International Version*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

*Interior design by Michelle Espinoza*

*Printed in the United States of America*

---

05 06 07 08 09 10 11 /❖ DCI/ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# C O N T E N T S

S E S S I O N 1:  
God's Great Desire for People / 7

S E S S I O N 2:  
Where Is God in My World? / 21

S E S S I O N 3:  
Partnering with God Today / 35

S E S S I O N 4:  
Listening to the Voice of God / 51

S E S S I O N 5:  
God Wants a Relationship with You / 67

S E S S I O N 6:  
Heaven Breaking Through / 81



Session 1

# G o d ' s G r e a t D e s i r e f o r P e o p l e

*The story of the Bible isn't primarily about the desire of people to be with God: it's the desire of God to be with people.*

John Ortberg

## Questions to Think About

1. It is one thing for us to talk about how much we want to experience God, but how much do you think God wants to be with us? In what ways do you know God desires a close relationship with you?
2. The Bible says that God reveals himself to us. In what ways can we see, hear, feel, or otherwise recognize God's presence? When does God seem most real to you? What seemingly ordinary things in life have made you aware of his presence?
3. Is it possible for God to be with us here on earth, every day, at every moment—and for us not to be aware of it? Explain your answer.

## **Video Observations**

How close is God?

God looks at us through the eyes of a father

Jacob's story—God shows up where you least expect him

The message of the “bear” story: God is always with us

May the Lord's face shine upon you

## **Video Discussion**

1. How did you relate to the scene of John Ortberg speaking from the top of the tower as being a visual image of the way many of us view God? What other visual images or word pictures would you use to describe the ways in which we view God?
2. When we think of God as being far away, how does that view impact our relationship with him?
3. What did you think or feel when John Ortberg talked about God looking at each of us with the loving eyes of a father, like the father with his son's photograph on his screensaver?
4. What if God is really all around us—and we don't realize it? What might we be missing if God, like the adult bear snarling at the mountain lion, really is closer than we think?

5. Michelangelo's fresco of Adam and God in the Sistine Chapel represents the perspective that the Bible is about God's desire to be with people rather than our desire to be with God. In what ways does this perspective change your perception of your relationship with God? What practical difference might this new perspective make in your life?



<b>Scripture Passage</b>	<b>God as Our Father</b>
Psalm 145:17–19	
Psalm 46:1–3	
Psalm 32:8; Isaiah 42:16	
Psalm 103:8–14	
James 1:17	