

## **Eight Grade: How Can We Know Him?**

*Often, we misdiagnose student's problems with God. Sometimes, we assume they have some huge mental block or philosophical dilemma with the nature of God, and that is the obstacle in the way of their faith. When in reality, they might have an intimacy problem, not a knowledge problem. Intimacy with God is the most transformative thing that can happen in our lives. Being close to our Creator transforms us from one degree of glory to the next. But many of us don't know how to go about being close to God. Gen Z in particular doesn't trust information as much as they trust their experiences, so this week, we're going to talk about how we can know God through the lens of how we can draw near to experience Him!*

### Introducing the Topic

*We want to give student space and opportunity to talk about their previous encounters with God or lack thereof, and what they think about it! There are no right answers here, so encourage honesty and perhaps even try offering some of your own personal examples if students need direction!*

-Have you ever felt yourself grow distant from someone? What was that experience like for you? What emotions did that stir up in you? Where is that relationship now?

-Have you ever felt yourself grow distant from God? What was that experience like? What do you think caused you to feel a drift?

-Have you ever felt really close to God? Why or why not? What was going on when you felt close? What did you learn in that season?

-Why do you think Christians make a big deal about "being close to God"? What do you think that means?

### Scripture Study

*As you transition to the Scripture Study portion of this session, remind students that Scripture is where we turn for truth. We want to continually reiterate that we study Scripture not just for the "Christian take" on a matter, but God's revealed word, given to us out of love for our good.*

-Read Hebrews 11:6 together.

-What do you hear this passage saying?

-What does it say you need to do to draw near to God?

-Do you believe God exists? Why or why not?

-What does it mean that "He rewards those who seek Him?" (*Doesn't always mean we get what we want, but it means we get what we were created for, abundant life that is*

*immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine, rooted in God, our source of life)*

### Practical Application

*This week, we're focusing on this one verse, and in this portion of the conversation, we want to spool out all the implications of the truth's in this passage, and let students apply that to their lives!*

-Do you really believe that life with God is better?

-Do you really think intimacy with God is worth fighting for? Why or why not?

-What do you think it means that "without faith, it is impossible to please him"? Faith in what? *(Faith in Jesus, and what He did on the cross for us. Without staking our whole lives on the sacrifice Jesus made for us, we cannot please God. He doesn't want our best efforts, He wants us to fully rely on His mercy and use the newly freed up energy we have from not having to strive so hard to be ambassadors of that mercy to the world.)*

-Is it hard for you to trust that Jesus really did enough? Do you find yourself striving for perfection or numbing out to escape the fear of failure? What do you think Jesus would say to you? Why is it hard for you to believe that?

-Us having faith in Jesus' sacrifice for us means turning away from our sin (anything less than God's best). Often our sin is disguised as "good" things that ultimately take our focus off God and onto our own efforts or entertainment. And when we're not giving God our attention, intimacy won't grow there. What are some things in your life getting in the way of that intimacy?

-What do you think happens as a result of intimacy with God? Would you prefer that to the state of your life now? Are you willing to change?

-How can this group help you make that change?