

## *Escape Routes From ME-ville*

### “Jesus Visits Us In ME-ville”

We gladly approach the God of ME-ville in worship because we often believe that He can't be bothered to approach us in rebuke. Meanwhile the God of the Bible, wrapped in unapproachable light, lies outside the boundaries of ME-ville, outside our field of vision.

1. How do you think God is generally perceived by people in our culture today? Is God thought of more commonly as near to us or far off? Is it easier to think of God as inapproachable or accessible? Why? Read John 1:1-18 (God's incarnation) and Matt 1:18-25, (Joseph), Psalm 139:1-12 (David). What are the advantages of a God who does not remain far off? What new challenges does that present?
2. Use the Concordance in the back of a Bible, or scan the 4 Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), and spend some time reading about (Simon) Peter and how many times God visited him – more times than just the record of Luke 5:1-11. What were the reasons for Jesus' visits? How are Jesus' visits similar to visits He may be having, or has had, or is about to have with you? How, when, and where can you expect Jesus to visit you? Read also about Peter in the book of Acts and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter to find out how God's visits intercepted Peter's life in ME-ville and turned Peter towards THEE-ville.
3. How does Jesus show in Psalm 139:1-12, John 1:1-18, Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 5:1-11 or in Peter's life, that as He visits us and we encounter Him, He wants what is best for us? If Jesus were to invade your space today, how might He invite you, challenge you, boss you? What would you have to drop in your ME-ville to follow Jesus?
4. Read the booklet “My Heart Christ's Home” by Robert Munger. Take the booklet and walk slowly through the rooms/areas in your home, praying as you go. Estimate how much time you spend in each room weekly and what you generally do in that area. Give particular attention to temptations in your residence that cultivate superbia and the cultural messages things in the rooms convey about entitlement, self-worth, and perceived status. You'll be tempted to treat yourself harshly during the exercise, but remember Jesus is with you – that He is pro-you!
5. Go for a walk or drive (or a mental walk/drive if it is blustery cold) and ask yourself “if Jesus is pro-you, what does it mean for your neighborhood that He is also pro-them?”
6. Take “a prayer drive” through your neighborhood. What cultural messages do you observe? In what ways are billboards, stores, etc, reinforcing the notion of entitlement and promoting self-absorption? What does your community need to be delivered from? What tables in your community would Jesus visit and upend? What Pharaohs would Jesus visit and confront with the message “let My people go”? Which of these would your community have the most trouble leaving behind?