John Gottman, favorite relationship researcher. Filmed couples interacting, cataloged their interactions, correlated this with future outcomes (happily married, divorce, unhappily married). Able to predict after 10 minutes observing any couple whether they were headed for divorce—accuracy rate of 94%. Crazy.

He noticed something he calls “bids for emotional connection.”

**Bids are little or big moves we make to create, maintain, renew connections.** As simple as saying hello-goodbye. Saying, “Isn’t that a magnificent cloud configuration? Or “You seem preoccupied—a penny for your thoughts.” A touch on the arm, a smile, a hug.

We make bids without thinking about it: observation or comment offered in hopes of response. Nice day! *Yeah!* (bid and a response)

What matters most is how attentive we are to each other’s bids. We can **ignore** bids, **rebuff** them or **respond positively**.

If you say, “**I had a doozy of a day!”** and I look at you and say, “Tell me about it!” = a positive response. Good connection. If I’m looking at my smart phone and go, “uh-huh” = a move away. If I said, “Can’t you see I had a hard day too? Are you the only person who has a hard day?!” = a rebuff, a move against your bid.

If we feel our bids are ignored or rejected, we stop making them. Huge factor in loss of connection.

It’s worth **paying attention** to how we make and respond to bids in our important relationships especially.

**Thinking about making and responding to bids is a way to think about our connection with God.**

I use **Divine Hours for daily prayer**. Compiles short passages of Scripture to form a back & forth—like lines of dialogue in a script.

Morning Office littered with human-divine bid & response.
“Search for the Lord and his strength, continually seek his strength” (Psalm 105:4)

To seek God is to make a bid.

The next line in morning prayer, shows bids going both ways, and the insecurity we feel making bids.

“Hearken to my voice, O Lord when I call; have mercy on me and answer me. [That’s the psalmist saying, respond to my bids!]

You speak in my heart and say, ‘Seek my face.’ [He’s sensing a bid from God there to make a bid]

Your face, Lord, I will seek. Hide not your face from me, nor turn your servant away in displeasure.” [OK! Here goes! Don’t reject my bid!] (Ps. 27:10-12)

The next line of the office expresses the raw fear that may keep us from making bids: “What terror you inspire! Who can stand before you when you are angry?” (Ps. 76:7)

Followed by a calming-reassuring voice, the one we need to listen to in order to take the risk and make a bid: “I sought the Lord and he answered me and delivered me out of all my terror.” (Ps. 34:4)

We’re really insecure about making bids! When I first started to make conscious-explicit moves toward God, I felt so shy--like asking a girl to dance at that horrible first Junior High dance. Making a bid is a vulnerable move.

The next line in the morning prayer shows God making bids for us:

“...what woman with ten dracmas [coins] would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, I have found the drachma I lost!’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.” (Luke 15:8-10)

God makes bids too! Yes, It turns out the girl at the Junior High Dance wants us to make the move, and is willing to make some moves of her own toward us! Bid baby bid!
This is **one of three parables in a row** about the **bid-making God**.

- God is the shepherd who goes looking for the one lost sheep, even if it means leaving the 99 found ones behind for a bit.
- God is the daft woman who turns her house upside down looking for her lost coin, then throws a party in the middle of the night when she finds it.
- And God is the father waiting for his wandering son to make a bid, to come back. Father gives a huge positive response to son’s bid—throws arms around him, kisses him. Then the father makes a bid to the older brother who rebuffing his younger brothers “come home” bid. Goes out to older brother asks him to come in to the party. **Bid & Response, Bid Baby Bid!**

**Our connection to God is all about recognizing bids from God and responding positively to them and making bids of our own.**

**Recognizing bids from God:** Actually, God is making bids to us all the time. In form of **gifts**, blessings.

We can **ignore** them, **refuse** them, or **accept** them with gratitude. Thanks is a **positive response** to bids from God in the form of gifts.

We could think of the beauty of creation all around us as a stream of bids coming from God. When we notice, take it in, respond with appreciation (WOW!) we are making a positive response to bids.

**Making bids, responding to bids can take many forms.**

I met with **Cheryl Carthage** recently. Cheryl is part of impressive Carthage family who started coming here once we opened our doors last year. **Mike** is Cheryl’s brother and **Kristin** is Mike’s wife, and **Justin** is Mike and Kristin’s son. And they often bring other members of the family to church with them.

Cheryl is younger than I am, but suffered a string of lost loved ones. Lost her **husband** when she was 41. In recent stretch lost a **sister**, her **mom**, and then most painfully, a year ago, she lost her only child, a son, **Carlos Jr.** to kidney disease. It was such a heart-break, especially on top of these other losses.
Carlos Jr. was a good man, loving husband and father. Playing HS football, he’d been using Motrin a lot without letting people know. Damaged his kidneys. Eventually had to be on dialysis. A year ago Christmas, kidney transplant. At first, great success, but then complications, within a month, died.

*How did you make it through?*

“*It was hard. I was angry at God for quite a while. How could he let this happen?*”

*I can only imagine, of course you were angry! How did you deal with that?*

“*After a while, I just told God I was sorry for being angry with him. And then I felt better about myself. I realized that when I lost my husband, as bad as it was, God made a way through. And that’s what he’s doing now. He’s showing me a way through.*”

I thought **what an amazing move**—in the middle of such understandable anger, having expressed it, having sat with it, to then make a move toward God, saying “*I’m sorry, and I’m ready to be done with the anger part...*”

*What an inspiration, talking to Cheryl!* If she could make a move like that toward God, maybe there’s a move I could make.

Next week introduce our Leap of Faith Lenten Practices. Lent is time to pay a little extra attention to our God connection.

• To recognize bids God is making.
• To respond positively to those bids.
• And to make some bids of our own.

**Silent Reflection**

Ask Spirit to sensitize us to bid-response dynamic.

• Maybe your response to bids in a key relationship.
• Maybe in your willingness to make some bids in relation to God.

Lord, have I been missing any of your bids? Not noticing gifts, blessings, having my face buried in my smart phone while you are seeking my attention?