

Experiencing God: Part 2

The goal for this series:

- To become mature – a mature believer experiences God in relationship
- God is working all around us and we often miss it

Last week: Reality 1: God is always working. Remember what He is doing.

- Remember God's perspective: the world is broken and He is...
⇒ He is sustaining the world until it's fulfilled His purpose. He is seeking reconciliation. He is forming His church as His means to reach the world.
- The scriptures reveal a God-centered plan. God has a pattern in scripture.
- He draws us, He creates anew in Christ, and He invites us into what He has planned for us. (**John 6:44, Ephesians 2:10**)
- *Experiencing God* looks at Moses as an example—a pattern.

Reality 2: God is pursuing a love relationship with us.

- Many believe God should join us on our mission.
- Others believe that God wants to send us somewhere on a mission for Him.
- Some think He just wants to use us—not true! He loves mankind as a whole, and He loves us as individuals.
- God is inviting us into a love relationship with Him in the direction of the mission He is on.
- God knows our future before it happens. (**Genesis 15:13**)
- He allows us experiences that get us ready for our calling.

Exodus 3:1–4 (NIV) ¹Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” ⁴When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.”

Truths to embrace:

1. God is active and working in time and space with the big picture in mind.

- God knew how He would be working in the world in the future.
⇒ Even when He seems distant or unconcerned.
- Reasons for the 400 years: the promised land was a war zone—God was protecting them from the promised land; the Lord was binding them together as non-Egyptians—they would have dispersed; God was setting them up to plunder Egypt; God was going to demonstrate the difference between false gods and Himself; God was not ready to judge them, yet—He is loving towards even non-Jews in scripture (see Jonah and Nineveh).
- God uses peoples' free will and His power to bring about a complex and best outcome.

Genesis 15:13–16 (NIV) ¹³Then the LORD said to him, “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

Exodus 3:18–20 (NIV) ¹⁸“The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.’ ¹⁹But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. ²⁰So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

2. God is not interested in our plans for Him. The story is God-centered.

- Moses had the right goal the wrong method.

Exodus 2:11–12 (NIV) ¹¹One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. ¹²Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

3. God invites us into what He is doing. This is not a task but a relationship with Him.

Exodus 3:11–12 (NIV) ¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹²And God said, “**I will be with you.** And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.” [emphasis added]

John 15:1–8 (NIV) ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:13–15 (NIV) ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

A. God is going to prune us...

- Change our character.
- Do something in us, not just through us.

B. As we go on a journey with Him, His strength carries us through the task.

- A task without the strength that comes from God is pointless and fruitless

C. Even on a journey with Him, there are adversaries.

- Opportunities come with adversaries. The devil does not stand idly by.

1 Corinthians 16:7–9 (NIV) ⁷For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

D. When we abide in Him, it changes what we pray for.

- God responds to prayers that are according to His will.

1 John 5:14–15 (NIV) ¹⁴This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Questions to discuss at home and in your life group:

1. Why is it important to know who God is—what He is like? Why is it important to know He cares for you personally?
2. How have you experienced God drawing your heart toward Jesus?
3. When is it hardest to accept that God loves you? When is it easiest to believe?
4. What distracts your attention from an abiding relationship with God? How do you remind yourself to live in the relationship God is pursuing you with?