

Experiencing God's Presence - Ron Stullenbarger -

To know God is to experience God. Just as we experience aspects of one another as we grow in friendship, we experience the wonders of God as we seek to simply know Him. God is calling us to a life of seeking Him with all we are.

Experiencing the presence of God sounds to us like such a mystery. It sounds like this wonderful but evasive thing that some people get sometimes, but it isn't concrete enough to expect or place your hope in. We associate God's presence with emotions and music as if it was a breeze so light and momentary you almost couldn't be sure it happened at all.

But in reality God's presence is as simple as being in the presence of a friend or spouse. It's as simple and concrete as being around a person except for one simple truth: God never leaves. And just as you can be in the same room as a friend and not know it, you can live the Christian life apart from experiencing God's nearness. Just as you can be sitting right across from a friend and be so busy with technology or your own thoughts to even remember they are there, you can go through life focused on the busyness of present circumstances and miss out on the fact that God is closer than your breath.

But we find hope for encountering the presence of God in Psalm 27:4. Scripture says, *"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."* This pursuit, this action of seeking the living God, never comes back empty. To seek God is to encounter God. Emotions aside, complexities cast away — God is already with you. He is already closer than He could ever be. His Spirit, His presence in the earth, never leaves you and never forsakes you. And when you turn your attention toward Him, just as you can to a friend sitting across a table from you, you can encounter Him.

Psalm 139:7 says, *"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?"* His presence is always available. He's not a friend who turns away from you or hides His heart. He's not a small gust of wind that comes and goes as He pleases. He's a God who would suffer and die that He might tear the veil and make His presence fully, continuously available to all those who would seek Him. He's a God who's working tirelessly to restore His crown of creation to Himself that we might walk with Him like in the Garden of Eden, but this time for all of eternity with no possibility of a fall or barrier between us.

Your ability to meet with God is as simple as turning your attention toward Him and allowing yourself to be known!