

The Presence of God **- Ron Stullenbarger -**

One of the most important pieces of our relationship with God is encountering His presence. His presence is meant to be at the core of all that we do. God so hated separation from us that Jesus was sent to pay the ultimate price. At Jesus' death the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from mankind was torn in two — signifying that God's presence was no longer contained but made available to everyone.

Psalm 139:7-8 says, *"Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!"* (Quotes are from the ESV.) And Psalm 84:3-4 says, *"Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!"* God's presence is everywhere. There is nowhere you could go that He won't be with you. There is no situation, conversation, job or place in which you can't meet with God.

So how do we encounter the presence of God? How do we experience his nearness? Encountering God is similar to encountering another person. We don't seek an experience with a friend; we simply seek to know them by spending time with them, and we gain an experience as a result. We don't seek to hear the voice of a friend; we simply engage in conversation with them as an act of wanting to know them, and we hear their voice as a result.

The only thing about seeking God that makes it different is that He is spirit rather than flesh. John 4:24 says, *"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."* But it is for that very reason that we can truly know Him! Scripture is clear that God is everywhere and that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. His presence is already with you. Encountering Him is as simple as taking some time to become aware of His nearness.

God longs for you to know Him. So great is His desire to meet with you Spirit to spirit, heart to heart, that Jesus gave His life. Take time to simply seek God. Meditate on His word. Allow Scripture to fill your heart with faith. And make space to rest in God's presence that your heart might come alive at the revelation of His nearness. Jeremiah 29:13 says, *"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."*