

“Encountering God Through the Word of God”

Hebrews 4:12-13

June 11, 2017

INTRO ...Today's Desert Land of 'Encountering God'

Ps 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God"

"Over the years in my pastoral ministry, many people have complained to me that they do not have motivation to read the Bible. They have a sense of duty that they should, but the desire is not there." John Piper, "Reading the Bible Supernaturally", p. 255

"Encountering God Through the Word of God" ...God's Presence and Nearness—Imparted Through 'Words'/Concepts

John 1:1-2, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God. ...¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Ex 34:5-7 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.⁶ The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty

...The Presence of God was Encountered Through the Vehicle of WORDS!

WARNING & INSIGHT on 'Conceptual Encounter': There has always been a "War for the Ground of Our Experiences"

- When Did God's Word, God's Truth, God's Insights, God's Spirit Inspired Revelation, God's CONCEPTS become deficient or shallow or void of power?... When did we suddenly need another Volume of Words, Ideas, Concepts to bring us something of a Spiritual Encounter with the Living God??

...Here's What God Says about His Word

James 1:18, 21-25 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. ²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

1 Peter 1:23 you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

1 Peter 2:2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation

2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

...the Word is Profitable in such a way that it makes us ADEQUATE for every good work!

...The Problem is NOT with the Word—like we need something else or it has finally lost its energy like a battery! ...The problem is our LACK of ENCOUNTERING it! ...The Problem is OUR DISTANCE from the Word!

Learning the Art of Meditative Reading of Scripture

CAUTION: Bible Reading Can be Done with Little to No Encounter!

“...there is wisdom in both ways of traveling through the Bible: the steady march—two, three, or four chapters a day, showing you the great contours of God’s grand design—and also the slow march, where you read only one or two verses but some biblical picture settles into the core of your being and you consciously nestle into your own place in the palm of God’s hand. This slow meditative reading of a small text again and again may lead to an experience like being in a dark room when suddenly someone releases the blinds. The blinds fly up, the light rushes in, and you see all sorts of things that you didn’t see before.” J.I. Packer & Carolyn Nystrom, “Praying”, p. 91

- This Bible Jam is aimed at "Meditating on God's Word"

Ps 119:15 "I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways."

Josh 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success."

"People in the Western world have become so busy and so surrounded by a barrage of information that most of them no longer memorize passages or books of the Bible, and they do not know how to slow down to meditate. There is no easy solution for this deficiency. People must come to grips with what is important in God's eyes, and reorder their time and priorities accordingly." Vern Poythress, "Reading the Word of God in the Presence of God", p. 40

"Summer Bible Jam—FIELD MANUAL" ...a Manual for Drawing Near to God's Word

OUTLINE:

- **SEEING** (Reading & Observing a Passage)
 - > **SAVORING** (Letting a Passage Read You—i.e. Jam 1—your life, your setting, your calling, etc.)
 - > **ENCOUNTERING** (Drawing near personally)

AN INVITATION TO MEDITATION ...Heb 4:12-13

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

SEEING:

- Where are we in the Bible?

- There are Key Words to be Tasted and Seen... Don't Rush, Chew Slowly and Taste the Ingredients!

SAVORING—Savoring involves 2 Things: (1) Awareness of the individual ingredients
...(2) Bringing the Passage Near to My Own Life

“The Word of God is...”

“Living and Active”

“Sharp and Piercing”

Invading and touching “soul and spirit... our deep thoughts and intentions”

- One of the Vast Unexplored Territories of Man—isn't in some remote desert or jungle... it isn't a far away galaxy... it is the knowing of ourselves!!

Prov 27:19 As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.

Jer 17:9-10 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ¹⁰ ¶] the Lord search the heart and test the mind,
Eccl 9:3 the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live
Heb 3:12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.
James 1:14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

- The Word of God Delves Deep into These Places in Us—When We Draw Near to It!

“No creature is hidden... but are naked and exposed”

ENCOUNTERING—Seeing & Savoring that Brings forth Expression and Response ...it doesn't just return to life as it was moments ago. It doesn't just acknowledge that this 'stuff' is in the Bible.

...Review Field Manual—p. 16-18

"All of us know what it is like to read without seeing "wondrous things." We have stared at the most glorious things without seeing them as glorious. We have seen marvels without marveling. We have put gods sweet kindness on the tongue of our soul without tasting sweetness. We have seen unspeakable love without feeling loved. We have seen the greatest power and felt no awe. We have seen immeasurable wisdom and felt no admiration. We have seen the holiness of wrath and felt no trembling. Which means we are "seeing without seeing" (Matt 13:13). This is why we must continue to weave the thread of God-dependent prayer into our reading: 'Show me your glory' (Ex 33:18)." John Piper, "Reading the Bible Supernaturally," p. 260

“When you know more of the Savior, pray your way to Him by it, as ships move into port by their sails. If you have seen His Manhood, go and plead His sympathy with you in your weakness! If you have thought more of His Deity, go and worship Him more reverently and pray that His Glory may be seen among the sons of men. Whatever point in the unutterable Glory of His perfection breaks most upon your mind, pray most that way—opening your window towards the sunrise. So will the Lord teach you more and so shall you have profited by that which you have learned. If, from day to day, my Brothers and Sisters, you learn more of your sinfulness, then you have more errands with which to come to the Mercy Seat. And if you make a new discovery by experience of your corruption and indwelling sin, fly at once to the Throne of Grace with your discovery lest it weigh you down and drive you to despondency. Make a ladder of your needs with which to climb nearer to Heaven. The more your necessities, the more urgent let your importunity be! Cry mightily to God because of the greatness of your poverty. I do not think there is anything in the Scriptures which we cannot pray over. If we learn the devices of the devil, let us pray against them! If we learn the depravity of mankind, let us pray God's Holy Spirit to create men's hearts anew! Everything from the first of Genesis to the end of Revelation, when we truly know it, furnishes us with fresh arguments for drawing near to God. Revealed Truths of God are as a Church bell summoning us to come into the Presence of the Lord and bow the knee before Him. As you hear a sermon, turn it into prayer!” **Charles Spurgeon**, Teachings from Exodus, kindle loc 11487