

Hungry for His Presence

Jonathan Srock / General Adult

Glory; Presence of God

Introduction

Have you ever had a moment with God you can remember? What was it like? The moment you think of it, your mind replays that moment in your life. God had been moving in an unprecedented way in the Brownsville revival. I had been there, but it was when I came back to Pennsylvania and revival began to break out in State College.

I will never forget going to the altar for prayer for healing of my eyes. I was born with cataracts and have been legally blind since birth. Shockingly, God did not want to deal with that. He wanted to deal with me. Before I knew it, I was laid on the ground, wrapped up in visions of the Lord in His glory. Nothing else mattered. Even if I could get up, I didn't want to. God spoke to me about ministry for Him, and called me to minister however He wanted, not what I wanted. I agreed. I mean, how can you tell God know in a moment like that?

I don't know how long I was there but I remember hearing this gentle breeze. It wasn't the air conditioner. I was not near the fans, and this "breeze" was moving. Sometimes it would sweep over me, and then I would hear it somewhere else, and then close to me again. I will never forget that moment, and I want more moments like that in my life.

Today, I believe the Lord has a word for us. It is a powerful, challenging, and precious word. Do you long for God? Do you want His presence more than anything else? What are you willing to do to be in God's presence? What are you willing to give up? Time? Stuff? Other things you enjoy doing? We are talking about being Hungry for His Presence.

Presence Lost

Sin Ruins Our Connection With God ([Genesis 3:8-10](#)).

Before we realize where we are now, we must see what went wrong in the beginning. When God created Adam and Eve, they had a beautiful, intimate relationship with Him.

I want to start with [Genesis 3:8-10](#) because it is where our desired to be in God's presence changed.

Genesis 3:8-9 NLT

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Illustration: When you are familiar with someone, you know certain things about them. You know what their voice sounds like. You know their mannerisms and gestures. You are familiar with their clothing, facial features, and hair style. You can spot them from far away. We need to become so familiar with God that we know His voice and His desires for us. How familiar are you with Jesus?

What was it like to walk with God in the cool of each day? Close your eyes for a moment. What do you imagine the sound would be like? Is it the Lord's feet moving in the grass? Maybe He hums or sings in anticipation of His time with them.

The sound of God moving through the garden was familiar. Walking with God was a regular occurrence because they knew what He sounded like.

This word for walking is unusual because it suggests that He was purposely walking around. It also suggests that He wanted someone to walk with Him.

"Walk" is still a word we use to talk about our relationship with God. That's why you see things like, "Walk with the Spirit," and "Keep in step with the Spirit." We are still walking with God today.

Adam and Eve did not just hear the Lord and come out to spend time with Him. Instead, they hid from Him.

They hid themselves among the trees. Did they really think God could not see them? What are some ways we think we are hiding ourselves from Him? You cannot hide from God.

God asked the question of the hour, "Where are you?" Is God asking because He doesn't know? Can I suggest to you that God knows exactly where they are? He asks this question to help Adam and Eve realize where they are.

Did Adam and Eve realize where they were? Separated from God, so that God's presence is undesirable to them, alienated from one another, afraid of intimacy. Sin separates us from God.

Application: When you hear questions from God, they are for your benefit. He will let you think about where you are. God's questions are not because He doesn't know the answer. They are for you to find the answer in yourself and your life. Where are you in your desire and commitment for God's presence in your life?

Fear of the Lord Becomes the Wrong Fear ([Exodus 20:18-19](#)).

Genesis 3:10 NLT

He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

Second, sin has made us afraid of Him. There is the fear of the Lord, which is a good thing. But there is also being afraid of God, which we should not be because we know Him and are His children.

We know God loves us, that Jesus has seen the worst we can do and still died on the Cross for us. We have nothing to fear.

Adam and Eve are not the only ones. The Israelites had the same fear that kept them from drawing close to God.

Exodus 20:18-19 NLT

When the people heard the thunder and the loud blast of the ram's horn, and when they saw the flashes of lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, they stood at a distance, trembling with fear. And they said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen. But don't let God speak directly to us, or we will die!"

The Israelites see God come down on Mount Sinai, and they were watching and hearing everything. It causes great fear among them. They choose Moses to speak to God for them. They received God's words secondhand.

Application: Are you willing to let someone else speak to God for you? Are you afraid of God? You need to hear God for yourself. You need to experience His presence for yourself. Don't relegate your opportunity to know God more deeply to someone else.

Presence Gained ([Exodus 33:7-11](#))

Moses begins his relationship with God in a surprising way (Exodus 3:1-6). He sees a bush that is burning but not consumed. This piques his interest, and he goes to look at it.

He hears God's voice and is told to take his sandals off because he is standing on holy ground. The ground was not holy before God's presence was there.

Moses prioritizes being in God's presence, and he will need that intimacy with God to lead the Israelites. God's presence is essential for you to be successful in everything you do.

God Dwells with Israel's Leaders

Exodus 33:7-11 NLT

It was Moses' practice to take the Tent of Meeting and set it up some distance from the camp. Everyone who wanted to make a request of the LORD would go to the Tent of Meeting outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in the entrances of their own tents. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at its entrance while the LORD spoke with Moses. When the people saw the cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would stand and bow down in front of their own tents. Inside the Tent of Meeting, the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.

The tent of meeting was a special tent Moses set it up outside the camp. The people worshiped at their tents, but not any closer.

Throughout his leadership, I have counted at least 10 times Moses sought God's face ([Exodus 19:20](#); [24:15](#); [25:22](#); [33:7-11](#); [18-23](#); [34:29-35](#); [Deuteronomy 5:4-5](#); [34:10](#); [Numbers 7:89](#); [12:6-8](#)).

Even after Moses left the tent of meeting, Joshua, a young man, refused to leave. I think this is one reason he became Moses' successor.

Because Joshua stayed at the tent of meeting, the cloud did not go back to the tabernacle. God will stay with anyone who wants to be with Him in His presence.

Application: Do you take advantage of every opportunity to be in God's presence? If Moses and Joshua needed the Lord's presence to lead Israel, how much more do we need God's presence today? What can you do right now to ensure you will meet with the Lord?

God Dwells in Glory.

Letter six

The pillars of fire and cloud rested on the tabernacle, and when they moved, the people packed up and followed them.

The pillar of cloud guided Israel, but it rested on the tabernacle and tent of meeting to meet with Moses. The original language describes God's presence this way:

- From Exodus to at least Isaiah, every time a cloud is mentioned, it stands for the presence of the Lord.
- The word most often translated for how God dwelt among His people in the cloud and fire, (שֹׁכֵן, škn). is the same word rabbis later coined for this phenomenon as Shekinah ([Exodus 24:16](#); [25:8](#); [29:45](#), [46](#); [40:35](#); [Numbers 5:3](#); [9:17](#), [18](#), [22](#); [10:12](#); [35:34](#); [Deuteronomy 12:5](#), [11](#); [14:23](#); [16:2](#), [6](#), [11](#); [26:2](#); [33:16](#)).
- It means to dwell, abide, settle, or reside.

The glory cloud provided intimacy with God and guided the people in the wilderness. Sadly, the other Israelites (except Joshua) did not venture near the tent of meeting.

The glory cloud of God's presence appears a few more important places.

- The same glory cloud appears over the Temple as Solomon dedicates it to the Lord ([2 Chronicles 5:13 -6:2](#)). It is so thick and heavy that everyone in the temple cannot stand.
- The glory cloud rested over the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies in the Temple ([1 Samuel 4:4](#); [2 Samuel 6:2](#); [Psalm 80:2](#); [99:1](#)).
- Ezekiel saw the Lord's glory departing from the Temple because of Israel's wickedness ([Ezekiel 10:18-19](#)).

God Dwells in Tabernacles and Temples.

How does God dwell with His people today? He does not dwell in Tabernacles or temples anymore.

God's presence returned when Jesus came to earth. The Greek word behind "dwelt" in [John 1:14](#) is the word for tabernacle. This is significant because it means that Jesus's presence on earth was the same as God's presence in the glory cloud.

You are God's temple in whom He dwells. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#); [2 Corinthians 6:14-18](#)).

We are the temples filled with God's presence, the Holy Spirit. God is now living in us. And that is not all. We will dwell with God forever in heaven.

The Holy Spirit dwelling in us is a foretaste of heaven. He shows you what it will be like to live physically with God forever.

Presence Sustained

Jesus Promises His Presence

Matthew 28:20 NLT

Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jeremiah 29:13 NLT

If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

Jesus promises to always be with us. When we do not feel God's presence, the problem is on our end. God tells us to seek Him with our whole heart. We need to seek God, and He will meet with us.

We Must Be Sensitive to Him.

We need to build strategies to open us up to God's presence. These are strategies that keep us sensitive to God's presence in and around us. We seek Him because He is all we desire.

Hindrances to God's Presence

Worldliness

Worldliness can be anything that connects you to this world and draws you away from Jesus.

- Sin ([Isaiah 52:9](#))
- Impure Motives and Desires ([James 4:1-3](#))
- Loving the World ([1 John 2:15-17](#))
- Grieving the Holy Spirit ([Ephesians 4:30](#))
- Harboring Wickedness in Your Heart ([Psalm 66:18](#))
- Desiring the things of this world ([2 Timothy 4:10](#)); [1 John 2:15-17](#))

Relationship Struggles

We cannot show God that we love Him if we do not love His creation (others) ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)).

- Unforgiveness ([Matthew 6:13-14](#)?)
- Unresolved conflict ([Matthew 5:23-24](#))
- Anger ([Ephesians 4:31](#); [James 1:19-20](#))

Personal Issues

We can get in the way of God's presence in our lives.

- ## Practices to Invite God's Presence

God will not be relegated to second or third priority. He will not compete with other things in your heart and mind.

- Deepen your desire for God.
- Seek the Lord (Especially when you don't feel His presence).
- Take time to listen in silence for God's voice.

Spiritual Discipline

- ## Hard Disciplines

- Obedience to the Holy Spirit
- Surrender

- Sacrifice ([Romans 12: 1-2](#))

Conclusion

Here are some of the many benefits of being in God's presence. Jesus provides intimacy, guidance and direction, wisdom, healing (physical, emotional, spiritual, relational, and psychological), transformation, and peace and rest.

He knows exactly what you need and He can do in a moment what takes a lifetime.

You can come to Him with all your needs, cares, and worries. But have you ever just let Him decide the agenda? Maybe God will surprise you.

God made us for His presence. From Adam and Eve until now, God has been seeking us. Seek God as your first priority. Put nothing else before Him.

Take time to sit in His presence and wait on Him. You cannot learn to hear His voice without knowing Him in His presence. What will you surrender or sacrifice to be with Him?