

Calling

The Ways of our Pursuing God

God Calls Us Into His Presence

Chapter 3, The Presence-Centered Life

By Bill Elliff

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And the expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world.

Psalm 19:1-4

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." **James 4:8**

"Return to Me," says the Lord, "and I will return to you." **Zechariah 1:3**

His Calling Voice

1. In times when you may have strayed from God's presence, what has He done to call you back? What circumstances, people, or scriptural truths did He use to get your attention and reassure you of His love?
2. What is your favorite passage of Scripture? Look it up and be prepared to read it aloud to the group, and then briefly describe why it is so meaningful to you.
3. Have you learned to turn to the Word of God to find God's direction and voice? Is His Word your final authority in all decisions? How does God's Word direct you?
4. Who have been some of your most helpful spiritual mentors or counselors? How has God used each one to call you to His presence?

Pictures, Promises, and Places

5. What specific promises as God spoken to you through His Word that led you to salvation? What happened as you trusted in Him, relying on His Word?
6. There are 7,000 promises in the Bible! What are 3-4 of your favorite promises? How has God used them to draw you closer to Him?
7. What places have become sacred to you? Places where you have encountered God's presence in significant ways? What happened there?
8. The author referred to entering the presence of God to "enjoy" Him. What does it mean to *enjoy* God? Is this true of your relationship with God? Do you enjoy Him?

*So then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as God is pleading through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **2 Corinthians 5:20***

*God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **1 Corinthians 1:9***

The Son, the Spirit, and the Body

9. When did the Lord Jesus call you to come to Him for your salvation? What happened during that time?
10. The Holy Spirit lives in every true believer. He does not speak with an audible voice, but He lives in us to "guide us into all truth." He communicates with us. What are the ways and means that the Spirit uses to commune with us?
11. How has God used His body, the church, to call you into His presence?
12. Have you ever genuinely trusted Christ as your Savior? Do you know for sure that you have a personal relationship with Him? If not, perhaps now is the day to bow and humbly, gratefully ask Him to save you.

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."
Romans 10:9-13

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." **Romans 10:9-13**

Dwelling

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God Brought His Presence to Us

Chapter 4, The Presence-Centered Life

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Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **Philippians 2:5-8**

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:14**

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—what we have seen and heard **1 John 1:1-2**

we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. **1 John 1:3-4**

The Divine Invasion

1. Why is Christ's coming the greatest evidence that God wants us to experience His presence?
2. Think about His physical presence on earth. What do you think it would have been like to be one of His disciples, to be around Him every day?
3. Think of your favorite moment of Christ's life on earth. What does this moment teach you about God's presence?
4. Why do you think His coming in the flesh was essential for us to ultimately experience the Father's presence eternally?

After the resurrection, a confused disciple said,
"Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us,"

to which Jesus replied,
"He who has seen Me has seen the Father.

John 14:8-9

What We Saw and Received

5. When you look at how the Bible describes Christ's time on earth, do you think it's possible to know His presence now in (not physical) but very real ways? Why or why not?
6. What does it mean that you are now a "recipient of His grace?" What has His grace brought to you that you could not have experienced otherwise?
7. In light of Christ's humbling act to come and live, die, and rise again on our behalf, how should we now live?