

Is This Unhealthy Lie Holding You Back From Encountering God?

Throughout the Bible, we find some of the greatest altar calls taking place outside the physical church building, yet many of us today are stuck in the mindset that God will only move inside the walls of a church. We plod along in our Christian walk, frustrated and discouraged, thinking that in order to receive our healing, deliverance or freedom we have to wait for the next church service or the next altar call. We spend week after week hoping our moment will come the next Sunday or in the Monday night prayer meeting or the Wednesday gathering.

We are constantly looking to tomorrow for that mighty encounter with God while squandering today. Appointed times for gathering with other believers are important. The Bible tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25). However, it is unhealthy for us to approach the altar or press in to God's presence solely at these gatherings. We cannot go from Sunday to Sunday having only one conversation with God a week. Living like this is akin to eating one meal on Sunday and wondering why you are starving and lacking in health and strength the rest of the week. Too many of us spend our week just surviving, trying to make it to our next Sunday "meal," instead of thriving in Christ. But the good news is that we don't have to wait until Sunday or some other special day to encounter God. We can encounter God anywhere, anyplace, anytime. All it takes is being desperate for His presence.

Abraham encountered God on the top of the mountain when he put his hope and trust in God instead of his own dreams and desires. Instead of building an altar to what he wanted, he built an altar and gave God what He wanted (see Gen. 12:1-8).

In Joshua 22, when the Reubenites, Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh dishonored the Lord by building an altar facing the land of Canaan, the entire congregation of Israel went to them and said, “What is this unfaithful act which you have committed against the God of Israel, turning away from following the Lord this day, by building yourselves an altar, to rebel against the Lord this day?” (v. 16). They knew the power of the altar. It wasn’t to be a once-a-week experience; it was to be a lifestyle of pursuing what God wants of us and not merely what He can do for us.

Is it time for your altar to become about what God wants from you instead of what He can do for you? Don’t wait until next Sunday or even tomorrow to meet God at the altar. Tomorrow can be the thief of today’s miracles. What is keeping you from having your altar experience today? Are you waiting for your circumstances to change? Are you waiting for the right sermon or right worship song? Is today convenient? Do you really think tomorrow will be more convenient? Let today be your tomorrow—choose to meet God at the altar wherever you are right now. The altar is not a pile of wood or stone; it is an encounter with the living God that takes place in our hearts and marks a change in our lives. It is where we surrender ourselves fully to God, allowing old habits and ways of thinking to die so new life can begin. If you are waiting on tomorrow to meet God at the altar, then likely you are missing your moment. God desires to meet you today. He has something for you right now. {eoa}

 *Adapted from Rebuilding the Altar—A Bold Call for a Fresh Encounter with God by Pat and Karen Schatzline, copyright 2017, published by Charisma House. If you long for a closer walk with God, but although you attend church and read the Bible, His presence eludes you, then this book is for you. It will challenge you to return to the altar where you can encounter Him. To order your copy, click on this link.*

Prayer Power for the Week Beginning Aug. 12, 2018

Make a point this week to draw closer to God through Christ, who is our altar. As you encounter Him there, let the Holy Spirit set you ablaze for Him again. Seek the Lord's face and feel His presence as you worship Him. Continue to pray for worldwide revival beginning in your own church, city and nation. Remember the persecuted church but keep asking for more laborers to expand His kingdom. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem so that Israel would fulfill God's purpose in this season. Pray for our president and those working with him to ensure peace, prosperity and protection. Pray for our children and their educators as they return to school. Ask God how you can help the victims of natural disasters, such as the California fires, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes and excessive heat. Read: Genesis 12:1-8, Hebrews 10:25.