

Henry Blackaby: Still Experiencing God

Stop by the Billy Graham Library on Friday, April 13, from 1 to 2 p.m. for a book signing with Dr. Henry Blackaby, who has written numerous best-sellers, including *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. Pick up one of Henry Blackaby's books at Ruth's Attic bookstore, or bring one of your own copies for him to sign. If you don't live nearby, please enjoy this interview with Dr. Blackaby.

Why do so many people struggle with knowing what God wants?

They don't know God, and they're not in His Word. When you ask them, "What has God been saying to you in His Word?" they don't know what you're talking about. So I ask, "Have you spent time in God's Word to let God speak to you? Because God instructs the Holy Spirit what to tell you, and the sword which the **Holy Spirit** uses is the **Word of God**."

So when you're reading, you'll see things about God that you've never seen before. That's an encounter with God. The Spirit of God is bringing you face to face with God. He tells you in His Word what He's like, and then you have to decide whether you are going to obey Him. It doesn't even cross my mind not to. I mean, He is God, and at best, I'm a sinner. My best thinking is flawed by my sin. His thinking is not.

How did you know when God called You?

That one is unmistakable, because you see the activity of God throughout your days. Then there comes that moment when God says, "I've been telling you all along that I have the right to help Myself to your life any time I want." I was 17 and in a youth rally in Vancouver. It was as if I was the only one there, and God basically said, "I have the right to your life.

I want you to release it to Me for whatever purposes I have in mind.”

I’ve always believed that the call of God is not to be a pastor, not to be a missionary, not to be anything. The call of God is always to an unconditional relationship with Jesus as Lord. So the call is to the relationship. Whatever He assigns, the answer is, “Yes, Lord.” It’s never based on my talents and my abilities. He doesn’t say, “Look at all the talents and abilities you have. I’ll use them.” If He did, people would give me the credit. God says, “You need to understand that when I do something in your life, people will know that it’s Me, not you.”

Have you ever questioned your faith?

If you stay in the relationship, God always affirms Himself to you. Did I have to face some very rough times? I did. Because you’re a child of God doesn’t mean you’re immune. My dad died when I was 25 and my mother when I was 28. Those were tough moments. I was at seminary, and I respected them so deeply and wanted to be able to spend more time with them in my adult life, but I couldn’t.

Even when your daughter had cancer, your faith never wavered?

No, as matter of fact, it strengthened. God said, “All that I’ve ever accomplished for you is for such a time as this. This doesn’t take you out of My will—this will show you what My will is. If your faith is not tested, you’ll never know the dimensions of what I’ve provided.” So it took us to our knees to make sure we were spending time in God’s Word.

When you were writing *Experiencing God*, did you feel it was of God?

Oh, yes. Everything about it was. I had refused to write. I didn’t write until I was 55. *Experiencing God* was how I lived my life; it’s my life message. I remember a man in the

editorial division asked me to tell how I know the will of God. After I explained it, he said that he'd never heard it expressed that way before. God's people need to hear that, he said. Then he asked me if I'd be willing to write it down.

The day before, I was at a national lay renewal conference. The man guiding us said: "I want all of you to get alone with God and ask God if there is anything that He has asked you to do that you've not done." So I did, and the only thing that came to mind was writing. I thought, "No one has asked me to write, and I have no desire to write." Then he asked us to go back to God and tell Him that we would do what He asked us to do. So I thought I was pretty safe. I said, "Lord, if You clearly, unmistakably, undeniably show me that I should write, I'll do it immediately."

The next day, this fellow asked, "Would you be willing to write a course?"

I asked, "Do you clearly, unmistakably, undeniably feel that I need to do this?"

He answered, "Absolutely."

"I just made a commitment to God yesterday that I would do that," I said.

Did you expect *Experiencing God* to be such a success?

I had no idea what God was going to do; I never had written a book before. All I knew was that I was going to be obedient. God has taken it, and there are cool stories behind it. People will come to me and say, "Henry, I know you've heard this story a hundred times." I say to them, "Not this one. Yours is unique. And I'm always excited to hear about the uniqueness of what God is doing in a life."

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