

5 Keys to a Life of God Encounters

By the grace of God, my life has been filled with “God encounters”—God taking me to mountaintops, leading me through the valleys and walking with me in the small moments, every step of every day.

And you can live a life filled with God encounters too.

Guiding people into encounters with God has been my passionate pursuit for many decades. During all this time I have seen proof repeatedly: “God encounters are for everyone!”

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Initially, I thought I would keep it simple and highlight prayer, the presence of God and the prophetic.

But as I prayed more into this, I felt the Holy Spirit reveal a couple more key components that are vital to emphasize.

So, the fourth ingredient is the necessity of perseverance. Do not quit!

Then finally, the person of God Himself. He is the goal of our lives.

1. Prayer: Developing intimacy with God.

One of my favorite passages in the New Testament is Ephesians 1:16-19 (TPT). In this passage, we find Paul, an apostle and spiritual father, launching a letter to the church at Ephesus.

“I constantly remember you in my prayers. I pray that the Father of glory, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, would impart to you the riches of the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation to know him through your deepening

intimacy with him. I pray that the light of God will illuminate the eyes of your imagination, flooding you with light, until you experience the full revelation of the hope of his calling—that is, the wealth of God’s glorious inheritances that he finds in us, his holy ones! I pray that you will continually experience the immeasurable greatness of God’s power made available to you through faith.”

We all have two sets of eyes: our two physical eyes and the eyes of our spirit. It is critical to have the eyes of your heart open at all times. Pray, then, in the name of the Lord that they will be opened. Call forth the spirit of revelation into your life.

The fast-paced, instant society of our day is diametrically opposed to the gentle, quiet spirit you need to be a person of revelation. The Holy Spirit is searching eagerly for those on whose quiet hearts He can write the revelatory words of God.

Any friendship goes through different stages in its development. The same is true of your friendship with God; you move to progressively deeper and sweeter levels toward the goal of perfect union with Christ.

One of the glories of heaven will be the opportunity to spend an eternity getting to know the eternal love of our eternal God! In the meantime, you have the chance while on earth to become a friend of God.

2. Presence of God: When God draws near.

You cannot fully achieve true intimacy with God until you learn how to come before Him in worshipful adoration. An atmosphere of pure-hearted devotion is essential if you wish to experience deep, loving communion with your Lord.

David the psalmist wrote, “Here’s the one thing I crave from Yahweh, the one thing I seek above all else: I want to live with him every moment in his house, beholding the marvelous

beauty of Yahweh, filled with awe, delighting in his glory and grace. I want to contemplate in his temple" (Ps. 27:4).

In Psalm 46 the Lord calls on us to "Be still and realize that I am God" (v. 10).

This "realizing" goes far beyond mere informational knowledge. The Hebrew word *yada* is used for all types of knowledge, including the most intimate relationships. It is the same word used in the phrase "And Adam knew Eve his wife."

Knowing God means to be brought into vital, personal union with Jesus Christ our Lord. That's the kind of intimacy He seeks with you, but entering it requires cooperation on your part.

Pursue the divine author and His Word as a way of drawing near to the very presence of God!

3. The Prophetic: The voice of God in our lives.

If you draw near to God, you are going to hear Him speak to you. John 10:29 states, "My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me."

The first prophetic word I ever heard came out of my own mouth. It was in the fall of 1972 when I had just received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It happened one day when I was praying. A flow of words began to come out of my mouth. I said something like this:

"In the last week of the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry, He visited His Father's house. The zeal for the Lord of hosts came upon Him and He declared, 'My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.' He overturned the moneychangers' tables; He set free the caged ceremonial dove; healing occurred; and praise broke out among the children.

"In a similar manner, in the last week of the last days of

Jesus' ministry by His Spirit, He will come to visit his Father's house. Once again, he will declare, 'My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.' Cleansing shall come to God's house; the dove of God will be set free, never to be caged again. Healing gifts will spring forth suddenly, and great praise will arise from the children of God across the face of the earth."

The true message of Christ Jesus empowers and elevates all believers to the equal and supreme honor of knowing Him in a true, full and intimate relationship. He does not call you to a hierarchical organization where He only meets with elite leaders who then pass down His commands to lay people.

Instead, He calls you into a family where you become His child and He is your beloved, attentive Father. As a believer, you receive the opportunity to come and sit upon His lap and lean upon His heart and listen to His every word.

4. Perseverance: Character for the long haul.

You and I must heed the warnings of Jesus to keep moving forward and not look back. You don't want to live life looking in the rearview mirror. You need a good dose of raw obedience mingled with the fear of the Lord and an additional unpopular ingredient called old-fashioned perseverance.

"Jesus responded, 'Why do you keep looking back to your past and have second thoughts about following me? If you turn back, you are not fit for God's kingdom'" (Luke 9:62).

How do I keep committed, looking forward and not looking back when things get tough?

The more complex things appear to be, the simpler my approach becomes. I keep the eyes of my heart focused on the one. I do not veer away from the fear of the Lord. He still causes me to tremble.

There are days or even seasons that indelibly mark your life with pain or hardship.

How do you respond? How do you hang onto the God of promises when your perception of the promises of God seem to slip away or even evaporate? How do you live with a strong character and integrity even while walking through the valley of the shadow of death?

A lot of people ask me if I have a special key that enables me to carry on despite everything that's happened.

Here is my key, if it can be called that. By grace, I do not quit.

I have never stopped worshipping God. I run to Him with my pain. I forgive often. I have never stopped seeking counsel and input. I continue to be actively engaged in church life. I read my Bible. I do the everyday things like pray and praise. I have never stopped believing in miracles. I have chosen to love God no matter what. Quitting is not an option.

While I have wanted to quit many, many times, I haven't quit. I have pushed the pause button multiple times to reevaluate, calculate and realign myself.

God requires of you who put your hand to the plow to not look back. He calls you to persevere, continue in elementary faithfulness and never give up. Together, we press forward to the upward call in Christ Jesus.

5. Person: The testimony of Jesus.

Isn't the Bible breathtaking? Not one line is wasted. This is what you can expect every time you open your Bible. Jesus Himself will speak to you! He will reveal Himself to you!

The Bible is not dull or boring. How could it be? It is alive! It is a masterpiece written by a master Creator for the specific purpose of speaking to you, so you can know Him

personally both now and to the very end of your earthly race.

No matter where you are reading in the Bible, you should expect to meet Jesus through what you read. This is what keeps you coming back for more.

One of the goals of my life is that when I leave the room, the one who came with me remains. It is not as much about me leaving a fortune or great impact of accolades. Oh, how I desire to cast a shadow of the Almighty. This really is all about receiving and releasing the revelation of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wouldn't you agree?

"At this I fell facedown at the angel's feet to worship him, but he stopped me and said, "Don't do this! For I am only a fellow servant with you and one of your brothers who clings to what Jesus testifies. Worship God. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

In your quest for God encounters, make sure your goal is the author of the God encounters Himself. {eoa}