

This Dangerous Sunday Ritual Leaves Believers Hungry for God

Personal spiritual experience in some American churches has become less acceptable as a viable expression of personal faith and formation. This giant—the devaluation of personal spiritual experience—has become such a part of the Sunday ritual that some followers of Jesus believe they'll go through life without actually having authentic and personal God moments.

Yet, the truth is that the Spirit is continually using your life experiences as a teaching method. Personal experiences, both good and bad, were how David learned more and more about his God. Just like He did for David, God has a significant purpose for your life and uses His Spirit to carry those messages to you.

Maybe you struggle believing that you can actually experience God personally and often. Like He did for David, God wants to reveal your unique identity and provide direction from day to day. There is an invisible but empowering energy of the Holy Spirit available to you. When someone you love comes into your house, you eventually become aware of his presence. And so it is with the Holy Spirit. God, by giving His Son, did not just provide a transactional way for you to connect with your future in a far away place; He provided a way for you to connect *now* through the Holy Spirit.

Here is a bold and biblical assumption: God, through His Spirit, is actually involved in your life *every moment*. God has always had a plan to communicate with His people through His Spirit and those messages hold wonderful implications and opportunities.

This means that God has a communicational intent to get messages to you that are relevant for your life *today*. Your engagement with God must be more than just a passive acceptance of sovereignty. Your engagement with God by faith demands an active participation in the ongoing struggles and victories in your life (see Heb. 11:6).

You are not more loyal or more devoted to church history and tradition by believing in a somber, austere God who if it weren't for Jesus would have already stricken you dead. That's horrible theology, and frankly, not even Trinitarian. It's no wonder that a lot of the worship happening on Sundays has very little personal energy attached to it.

Would you want to come closer to a God who could turn on you at any moment? This kind of teaching and thinking negatively impacts our expectation to encounter God, and just maybe, because of this theology, we're secretly hoping that we never do. Don't lose sight of John 3:16 when you're thinking about the Father: "For God so *loved* the world."

Certainly we've all known a few people who have gone off the deep end regarding emotionalism. However, I know just as many who have gone off the shallow end and are excessive in their belief that you can't know God tacitly and through experience. To deny that God the Father, Son, and Spirit have communicational intentions toward you has no historical or biblical evidence.

Slay the internal giant telling you that you can't experience God personally. God, through His Spirit, is sending you, an ordinary disciple of Jesus, messages about your identity, your purpose, and is giving you ways to bless the people and world around you—and He's doing it *every day*.

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