Why God's Presence Changes Everything

She was childless in an age when children gave women value. She was an outsider in an age when they were shunned. And as a woman, she was not someone a famous prophet would befriend. But she was hungry for God's presence, and that's all that mattered!

The unnamed Shunammite woman of 2 Kings 4 and 8 was likely not an Israelite. But she had heard about Him from her Israelite neighbors. And she wanted in. So, she intentionally sought out the prophet Elisha, the man of God, and urged him to come to her home. This was not a simple invitation. She would not take no for an answer.

Once Elisha came, she wanted him to stay. But it wasn't just Elisha; he represented God in her day. She longed for God. Psalm 42:1 (NIV) describes her yearning, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God."

She then went above and beyond to make Elisha comfortable, even building a special room just for him. She did not ask Elisha for anything. She just wanted his and God's presence in her home and life. By welcoming Elisha, she welcomed the presence of the Lord.

Elisha went there often. And I imagine she hung on every word he said about God and what God had done for His people.

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The Shunammite woman's hospitality and hunger caught God's attention. Elisha, prompted by God, wanted to bless her in return. Even though she couldn't think of anything she needed,

Elisha prophesied that she would have a son within a year. Can you imagine her surprise and joy?

She had given up hope of having a child, but God knew the deepest desires of her heart and blessed her abundantly. Psalm 21:6 reveals that a benefit of God's presence is joy and unending blessing. Hunger for God's presence always ends in blessing.

But that was not the end of the Shunammite's story. Several years later, her young son suddenly fell ill and died. Can you imagine her pain and sorrow? But instead of being paralyzed by it, faith rose up inside her. Maybe she remembered hearing how God used Elijah, Elisha's mentor, to raise to life the son of a widow in Zarephath.

So, she laid her son on Elisha's bed and went to find the prophet—who was quite a distance away. In her heart, she trusted that God could work through Elisha and bring her son back to life.

When the Shunammite woman finally reached Elisha, she poured out her heart to him. But she didn't let doubt consume her. Instead, she cast her cares upon the Lord, as it says in 1 Peter 5:7. She sought the man of God because she believed he spoke for the Lord. She knew God's presence would change everything—and it did!

Elisha responded immediately to the woman's plea. He sent his servant to lay his staff on the boy, which did not work. But when Elisha shut himself up in the room and prayed over the boy, the child was miraculously brought back to life!

The sign of

his restoration was seven sneezes.

Now, seven is the number the Bible uses to

indicate completion and perfection. I believe those seven sneezes were God’s

assurance to the Shunammite woman that her son was healed completely and perfec

tly. She did not need to worry about him dying prematurely again.

God is so go

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to His presence and trust Him.

Are you barren in some area of your life? Do you feel like an outsider? Seek out God's presence like the Shunammite woman. Welcome Him in and make room for Him in your home and life. As you draw close to God, He will meet even your unspoken desire with His goodness.

Take your burdens and cares to Him—God's presence will change everything!

Rabbi Kirt Schneider *takes you on a journey into the river of God's Word and Spirit in his book, Entering His Presence.*

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