

3. Stay Attentive

*12 And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.
– 1 Kings 19:12 NLT*

"Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." – Psalm 46:10 NLT

So how do we dwell in God's presence? We don't just invite Him in periodically. We expect that He is always present and we stay attentive to His voice.

What do the verses above reveal about how we might hear God's voice? How do you recognize God's voice- reading the Word, dreams or visions, an impression during prayers, words of a worship song?

When we are dwelling with God we are attuned to the Spirit's presence. Psa 46 says "Be still and know that I am God." Sometimes we need to intentionally quiet the noise around us and seek God's presence.

WRAP-UP

God invites us to do more than simply visit His presence—we're called to dwell with Him and make time with Him a natural part of our everyday lives. Rather than focusing on what we can do for God, our priority is to remain close to Jesus and allow His love, rest, and strength to shape us. Through prayer, reading the Bible, and worship we grow closer to Him and become more like Him. The key is to slow down, quiet the noise around us, and stay attentive to His voice, learning to recognize His presence in every part of our day. As we make dwelling with God a way of life, our relationship with Him deepens, and we learn to live each day with greater awareness of His presence and direction.

MEMORY VERSE

A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked. - Psalm 84:10 (NLT)

Challenge –

If you aren't sure where to start, try setting a daily alarm when you can get alone for a few minutes. Then breathe slowly and refocus your attention on God. Thank Him for His presence and invite Him in as you continue your day with renewed awareness that God is with you.

Dwell Formed by His Presence– Week 3

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two weeks we have been called to return to our first love and to align with God's direction and purpose. Now we are going to pause. You may think it is time to engage and move on, but in fact we are going to spend time in God's presence, we are going to dwell there. The word for dwell in Hebrew is *yāšab* and it means to sit, remain and inhabit. God calls us to dwell with Him, not merely to visit now and then, but to sit, remain and be fully present with Him. This is more than a weekly rhythm; it is a way of living that transforms us.

Ice Breaker

What is the longest that you've lived in one house?

Key Passage

1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of Heaven's Armies. 2 I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God. 3 Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow builds her nest and raises her young at a place near your altar, O LORD of Heaven's Armies, my King and my God! 4 What joy for those who can live in your house, always singing your praises.
– Psalm 84:1-4 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Fruit in Not the Goal

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

– John 15:4 ESV

36 "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" 37 Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind."

– Matthew 22:36-37 NLT

In John's Gospel Jesus says, "Abide in me." This is the commandment and this is the point. The evidence that you are abiding is the fruit you bear. But Jesus didn't say, "Bear fruit for me." because fruit is not the goal, the goal is to abide with Jesus.

Sometimes we get confused about what God desires from us because in our culture we tend to measure our worth by what we can do or what we produce. In what ways has that idea been reinforced in your work, in your family or other arenas? In Matthew 22 Jesus tells us the most important commandment. What does that commandment reveal about what God desires from us?

Producing fruit is not wrong, but we should never sacrifice our proximity to Jesus to do good for Him. As we take up residence in the presence of God, we receive His love, His rest and His strength. Our fruit, or our deeds, and the service we offer, flows naturally because of the time spent in God's presence. We don't abide so that we can bear fruit, we bear fruit because we abide.

2. Why Dwell?

*So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord--who is the Spirit--makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.
– 2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT*

After Moses spent time in God's presence his face would glow with the reflected glory of God. Paul tells the Corinthians that we also reflect the glory of God. We don't glow, but the more time we spend in God's presence, the more we are changed into His image. We become what we behold.

Consider how you spend your time. What would you say has your attention most in a typical day? Do you have a set time that you regularly shift your focus to God? If so, how do you spend your time in God's presence?

Depending on our stage of life we might find ourselves focused on our studies, our children or our jobs for most of the day. But this doesn't have to be to the exclusion of God. When we allow our daily tasks to dominate our thoughts, they can obscure what is of greater value; our connection to God. God's presence can, and should, be invited into every aspect of our lives.

There are many ways we can spend time with God. Consider which of these are already a part of your life and if there is an opportunity to grow even closer to God through this practice.

Gathering with others- Most of us gather corporately in a Sunday Worship service for time with God. This is an important part of your spiritual diet, but if you depend on 90 minutes once a week to sustain your connection to God it will be difficult to cultivate a deep relationship with God.

How frequently do you gather with one or more brothers or sisters in the faith to support, encourage and worship God together?

Reading the Word- Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" God's Word feeds our spirit. But We can treat it like a check box on a to do list rather than the beautiful feast it was meant to be.

When and how do you read the Bible? If it has become a task rather than a blessing, see if you can think of a fresh approach that would change your perspective and motive for reading.

Prayer – We can mistakenly reduce prayer to a request list that we recite hoping that our prayer will change a circumstance. Prayer is our communication with God and that includes both speaking and listening. 1 Th 5:17 tells us to "Never stop praying." This doesn't mean we repeat our requests but that we maintain an open line of communication with God. It's not about what we can change with our prayers but how our prayer changes us.

Are you comfortable in silence? Try starting a time of prayer with a minute or more of "active surrender" in stillness and silent listening. Expect that God wants to speak to you. Share less of your needs and more of your heart with God.

This list is not exhaustive. You may find other ways to dwell in God's presence- solitude, praise and worship, or fasting for example. But by whatever means you choose the time you spend in God's presence should bring you into a deeper and more intimate relationship with the One who created and loves you. As we abide in Him our desires are reshaped and time in His presence will be a blessing not a chore.