



EXPERIENCING  
GOD

KNOWING *and* DOING THE WILL OF GOD

REVISED AND EXPANDED

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**Mark the following statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).**

- a. I can trust my experiences as an effective way to know and follow God.
- b. I should always evaluate my experiences based on the truths I find in God's Word.
- c. I may get a distorted understanding of God if I do not check my experiences against the truths of Scripture.
- d. I can trust God to work in my life similarly to ways I see Him working throughout the Scriptures.

How do you let God's Word become your guide? When I seek God's direction, I insist on following the directives I see in His Word. Yesterday's lesson is an example. Does God call people to follow Him without giving them all the details in advance? We know He called Abram to follow that way. Is that pattern consistent in the Scriptures?

**2 Read the following Scriptures about Jesus' call for people to follow Him. Write what Jesus told these people to do.**

Matthew 4:18-20: \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 4:21-22: \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 9:9: \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 9:1-20: \_\_\_\_\_

In some cases God gave more details than in others. We will look at Moses' call and discover God gave him a bigger picture of the assignment than He usually revealed. In every case, however, the individual had to stay close to God for His daily guidance. For Moses and the children of Israel, God led through a cloud by day and fire by night. For Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, and Saul, God disclosed little detail about their assignments. He basically said, "Follow Me, and I will show you."

## What Is God's Will?

When people seek to know and do God's will, many ask the question, What is God's will for my life? One of my seminary professors, Gaines S. Dobbins, used to say, "If you ask the wrong question, you will get the wrong answer." Sometimes we assume every question is legitimate. However, when we ask the wrong question, we may find an answer but remain disoriented to God and His activity. Always check to see whether you have asked the right question before you pursue the answer.

What is God's will for my life? is *not* the right question. I think the proper question is, What is God's will? Once I know God's will, then I can adjust my life to Him. In other words, what is it God is purposing to accomplish where I am? Once I know what God is doing, then I know what I need to do. The focus needs to be on *God*, not on *my life!*

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When I want to learn how to know and do God's will, I can find no better example than Jesus' life. During His approximately 33 years on earth, He perfectly carried out every assignment the Father gave Him. He never failed to do the will of the Father and He never sinned. Would you like to understand how Jesus came to know and do the Father's will?

**Read John 5:17,19-20 in the margin and answer the questions.**

- a. Who is always at work? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. How much can the Son do by Himself? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What does the Son do? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Why does the Father show the Son what He is doing? \_\_\_\_\_

## Jesus' Example

1. The Father has been working right up until now.
2. Now the Father has Me working.
3. I do nothing on My own initiative.
4. I watch to see what the Father is doing.
5. I do what I see the Father doing.
6. The Father loves Me.
7. He shows Me everything He is doing.



Watch to see  
where God is  
working and  
join Him!

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YOU CANNOT STAY  
THE WAY YOU ARE  
AND GO WITH GOD.

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through you.

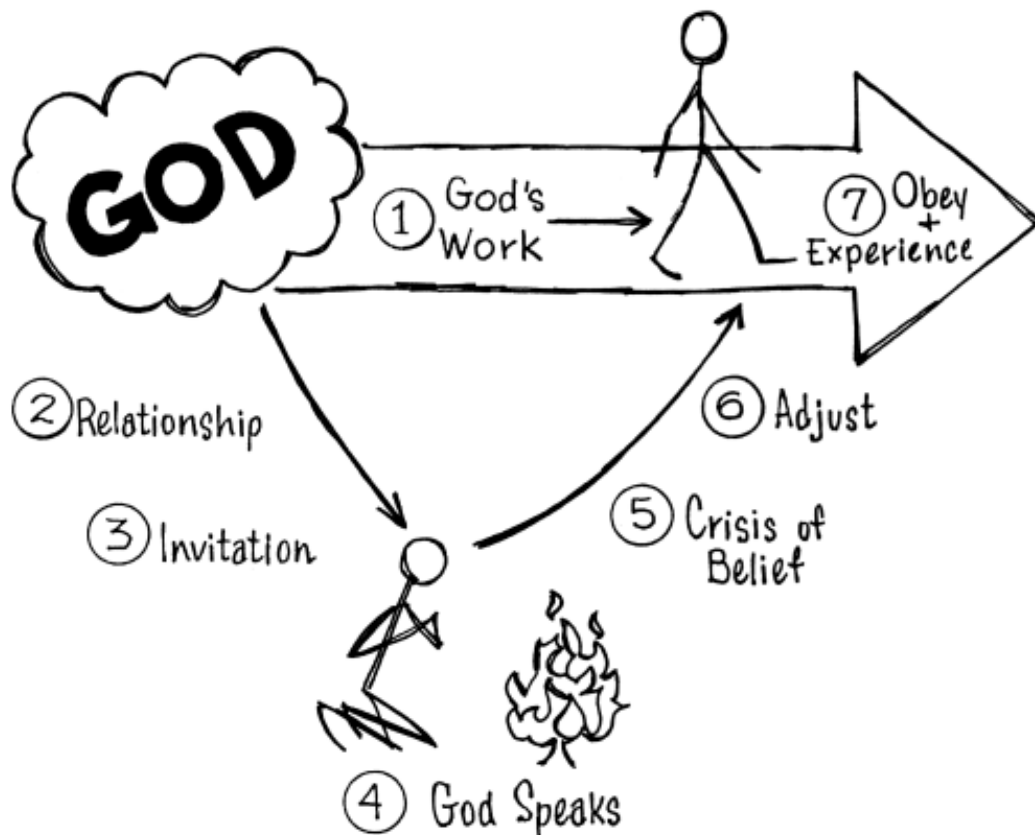
# God Works Through His Servants, Part I

We often act as though God tells us what He wants us to do and then sends us off by ourselves to try and do it. Then anytime we need Him, we can call on Him, and He comes to help us. That is not the biblical picture. When God is about to do something, He reveals it to His people. He wants to accomplish His work through His people or His servant.

When God is about to do something through you, He has to get you from where you are to where He is, so He tells you what He is doing. (Later, I will help you understand how you can clearly know when God is speaking to you.) When you know what God is doing, then you know what you need to do: you need to join Him. The moment you know God is doing something where you are, your life and its activity will be thrown in contrast to God and His activity. You cannot stay the way you are and go with God.

## Seven Realities of Experiencing God

The illustration below (and inside the back cover) summarizes the way you should respond to God's initiative in your life. The text of the realities is in the margin.



**Reality 5. God's invitation for Moses to work with Him led to a crisis of belief that required faith and action.** Moses expressed a crisis of belief when he made the following statements to God.

“Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

“Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

“What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you’?”

“O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

“O Lord, please send someone else to do it” (Ex. 3:11,13; 4:1,10,13).

**Reality 6. Moses had to make major adjustments in his life to join God in what He was doing.** Moses' crisis called for faith and action.

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. . . . By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned” (Heb. 11:24-29).

“The LORD had said to Moses in Midian, ‘Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.’ So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt” (Ex. 4:19-20).

**Reality 7. Moses came to know God by experience as he obeyed God, and God accomplished His work through Moses.** Many texts throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy illustrate how God revealed His nature and His purposes to Moses. As Moses obeyed God, God accomplished through Moses what Moses could not do in his own strength. Here is one example in which Moses and the people came to know God as their Deliverer.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army. . . .’

“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued them.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chari-



## What Can One Ordinary Person Do?

A wonderful Scripture that has helped me at this point is “Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops” (Jas. 5:17-18). Elijah was an ordinary man just like us. He prayed, and God responded powerfully.

When God healed the crippled beggar through Peter, **Peter and John** were called before the Sanhedrin (the highest Jewish court in the land) to give an account of their actions. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter boldly spoke to the religious leaders. Notice the leaders’ response: “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, *ordinary men*, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13, emphasis added).

The people you generally see in the Scriptures were ordinary. Their relationships with God and the activity of God made them extraordinary. Did you notice this statement: the leaders recognized Peter and John “had been with Jesus”? Anyone who takes the time to enter an intimate relationship with God can see Him do extraordinary things through his or her life.

**Dwight L. Moody** was a poorly educated, unordained shoe salesman who felt God’s call to preach the gospel. Early one morning he and some friends gathered for prayer, confession, and consecration. They heard Henry Varley say, “The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him.”

Moody was deeply moved by those words. Later he listened to the great preacher Charles H. Spurgeon. Moody thought:

“The world had yet to see! with and for and through and in! A man!”  
Varley meant *any* man! Varley didn’t say he had to be educated, or brilliant, or anything else! Just a *man*! Well, by the Holy Spirit in him, he’d [Moody] be *one* of those men. And then suddenly, in that high gallery, he saw something he’d never realized before,—it was not Mr. Spurgeon, after all, who was doing that work: it was God. And if God could use Mr. Spurgeon, why should He not use the rest of us, and why should we not all just lay ourselves at the Master’s feet, and say to Him, “Send me! use me!”

Dwight L. Moody was an ordinary person who sought to be fully and wholly consecrated to Christ. One ordinary Christian in the hand of almighty God can do *anything* God commands. Through this one common life God began to do the extraordinary. Moody became one of the greatest evangelists of modern times. He preached in revival services across Britain and America, where thousands and thousands came to Christ.

**2** **Could God work in extraordinary ways through your life to accomplish significant things for His kingdom?**  Yes  No

You might say, “I’m not a D. L. Moody.” You don’t have to be. God doesn’t want you to be a D. L. Moody. God wants you to be you and to let Him do through you whatever He chooses. When you believe nothing significant can happen through you, you have said more about your belief in God than you have declared about yourself. You have said that God is incapable of doing anything significant through you. The truth is, He

“The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him.”

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