

Encountering God – as a lifestyle!

For the church to be healthy, we must first encounter God.

What does it mean to encounter God?

In this context I believe it means we engage with Him – heart-to-heart.

Do we really trust Him? Do we enjoy Him?

Do we come to Him confident of His delight in us as His children?

Do we know how to process struggles and trials with Him and find our hearts fully met?

First, we must know that **God is far more motivated to heart connect with us than we are with Him!** He wants to meet with us and talk with us. He longs to have two-way conversation with us. How can there be true friendship if all the conversation is one way? Actually, **He wants us to live listening to Him** (Deuteronomy 8:3)!

The enemy's primary focus is to stop us enjoying intimacy with God. He knows that without intimacy we will always ultimately and be ineffective and unfruitful (John 15:5). The underlying root of our deepest struggles can be reduced to lies from the enemy we have chosen to believe about the heart of the Father – that He is not good, that we can't trust Him – or lies we believe about ourselves and our true identity – I am worthless, I will never be enough.

Do we believe the enemy's lies? We believe, not with our heads, but with our hearts (Romans 10:10). We get so used to subtle lies and doubts that we often accommodate them unknowingly, and our hearts become desensitized and we wonder why we struggle to enjoy intimacy with God. If we believe lies, we give the enemy authority in our lives, making it easy for him to pull us into bondage.

Lies we believe are typically born in wounds, especially when we are young and vulnerable. Perhaps we were not loved by an authority figure and the enemy sows the lie that the Father will treat us the same way. If we don't deal with these lies they can cripple us for life.

Unless I forgive the offender, I will remain under the power of those lies through my bitterness.

The Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6) will help us identify the roots that have given rise to our sinful behavior. As He helps us forgive for past wounds, renounce lies of Him and ourselves that were born there, we are able to fully receive His words of life spoken into our hearts, replacing the lies and setting us free.

Actively declaring and rejoicing aloud in the truth He speaks produces life in our spirit and renews our mind.

Despite the enemy's accusations, as believers we can all hear directly from

Jesus in our hearts (John 10:27). His voice will always reflect the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and easily align with Scripture. He will never discourage or condemn, but will always reassure you that He is for you.

In a nutshell:

Intentionally invite Jesus to speak and declare and rejoice in what He says.

“Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live” (Isaiah 55:3a).