



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Don't forget your first encounter with God!

The word 'encounter' simply means to 'run into', and running into God is the best thing that can happen to us. We need an encounter because only an encounter with God can transform us and give us purpose and direction like no other. The key to having a divine encounter with God is how we position ourselves. He will show up in our circumstances when we are aligned with Him. Position your heart to meet with God. When we approach the Word in our times of prayer, we should position our hearts to meet with God. Ask God for revelation about what You're reading. Have a dialogue with Jesus: Ask specific questions.

My first encounter with God was when I was laying in my bed with my husband and He told me to bring my daughter up in church and she was only three years at the time. Jesus invites all of us to have a personal relationship with him. Encounter is about entering into this relationship through real, authentic experiences and recognizing his presence in our lives and in others. Personal encounter is a personal experience that brings one into a proper understanding of who Jesus is. It is an encounter that will lead a person into a total yielding or surrendering of himself to the Lord. James 4:8 says "Come nigh to God, and He will come nigh to you," which speaks directly about being close to the Lord through prayer or meditation so we can feel His comforting embrace around us no matter what we are facing.

In the Old Testament and New Testament there were many men and women who had life-changing encounters with God—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Disciples, Saul, Ananias, widow of Nain, Samaritan woman, etc.

Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Haran and finally to Canaan. Abram obeyed, walking away from his home for God's promise of even greater things in the future. God then established a covenant with him, telling him that he would make him a great nation (Genesis 12:1-2). God spoke to Moses from an unexpected source: a burning bush. At God's command, Moses removed his shoes and covered his face as well. Moses made excuses because he felt inadequate for the job God asked him to do. Moses wanted to know God's name, God called himself **I AM**, an appellation describing his eternal power and unchangeable character (Exodus 3:1-14). Jeremiah thought he was too young and inexperienced to be God's spokesman to the world. But God promised to be with him. The God who made our mouths can provide the words He wants us to speak. God did not insulate Jeremiah from jailings, deportation, or insults. Jeremiah's work was to warn not only the Jews, but all the nations of the world about God's judgment on sin (Jeremiah 1:1-19). Hagar's story is a story of exile and a story of meeting God in the midst of her pain and abandonment. Her experience living in a foreign land was both agonizing and clarifying. Hagar and her son, Ishmael, survive, adapt, and meet God in a place of painful endurance (Genesis 16:6-16).

Jesus told Peter and Andrew to leave their fishing business and become "fishers of men," to help others find God. Jesus was calling them away from their productive trade to be productive spiritually (Matthew 4:18-19). When Jesus called Matthew the tax collector to be one of His disciples, he immediately followed Him and left his lucrative career (Matthew 9:9-13). As Saul traveled to Damascus, pursuing Christians, he was confronted by the risen Christ and brought face-to-face with the truth of the Gospel. At the center of this wonderful experience was Jesus Christ—Saul did not see a vision; he saw the risen Christ himself. Immediately after receiving his sight and being with the believers in Damascus, Saul went to the synagogue to tell the Jews about Jesus Christ (Acts 9:3-20). The widow of Nain situation was serious (Luke 7:11-17). She had lost her husband, and now her only son was dead—her last means of support. In fact, as Luke repeatedly emphasizes, she was just the kind of person Jesus came to help—and help her he did. The Samaritan woman came at noon, however, probably to avoid meeting people because of her reputation. Jesus gave this woman an extraordinary message about fresh and pure water that would quench her spiritual thirst forever. The Samaritan woman immediately shared her experience with others. Despite her reputation, many took her invitation and came out to meet Jesus (John 4:1-42).

True conversion comes from a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and leads to a new life in relationship with Him. God may be trying to lead you to a place of greater service and usefulness for Him. Sometimes the decision to follow Christ requires difficult or painful choices. Don't let the comfort and security of your present position make you miss God's plan for you. We must never allow feelings of inadequacy to keep us from obeying God's call. No problem is too complicated for God if you are willing to let Him help you. We all need to fish for souls. **The Gospel is for every person, no matter what his or her race, social position, or past sins.**