

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 17:3

Store In My Heart

Psalms 63:1

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.

How desperate are you to have God in your life?

The Psalmist cries out with this verse stating that his desire to be with God is a great thirst. Even a thirst and yearning that one might experience in a land with no water. I envision a scene of one crawling through the desert hoping to find even a drop of water to quench the great thirst that has become his entire life. Overwhelmed by such desire, he can think of nothing else.

Is this your desire for God? A desire that keeps you reaching toward Him always? We need God more than we need the things that sustain our life. Without God our end is destruction and suffering for all of eternity. Thirst for God!



“Experience God”

Russ Bowman

Twice in the last month I’ve run across “religious advertising” that has featured the phrase that entitles this article. In one instance, a local religious organization was promoting some kind of holiday program and the banner in front of their facility invited the general public to “Come Experience God”. The other circumstance is a bit more pronounced and permanent, as one of the prominent “community churches” in Beaumont has erected a high-tech sign outside of their building which features not only their name, but an electronic billboard as well. And between the two, they have also included the words “Experience God”.

I recognize that I’m not the smartest guy in town. But I’m not completely uneducated and illiterate, so I’m having some difficulty with the aforementioned concept. Just what does it mean to “experience God”? I understand the concept of “experience”. I’ve experienced the thrill of flying in a WWII fighter plane. I’ve experienced kidney stones and knee surgery. I’ve experienced the nervousness that comes from speaking before a large audience. I’ve experienced the loss of loved ones; anger over injustice; the awe of watching three daughters be born into the world; the love of a good wife. I’ve experienced a hole in one and a sub-par round of golf. I’ve experienced friendship; dating; parenthood; drought; hunger; elation; hair loss; bad coffee. I’ve experienced a lot of things. The concept defined means “a particular instance of personally encountering or undergoing something.” We experience events or perhaps sensations, particular circumstances or activities. We don’t experience people. That is not to say that we cannot have experiences with people, or even experience things along with people. But we don’t experience people.

I’ve never heard someone use such language with regard to another animate object. I haven’t “experienced” Tracy, though we’ve shared some experiences and I definitely have experience with her. I was almost thrown from an Arabian stallion named “Bando” one time, and while someone might try to argue that I had “experienced” Bando, it would be accurate only to say that I had experienced what Bando could do to me - his strength or even the influence of

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We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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For Our Information

Brenda Keisler had a nerve burning done last week. Ruben Keisler will get results from bone marrow test this week.

Camille Matthews is in rehab, doing ok.

Gloria Hurst had back surgery and will have a test to determine if she can go back to work.

Amy Simpson is out of town for work.

Tonight we start in 1Kings 11.

Wednesday we are in 1Timothy 5.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

his demeanor. But I can't experience a horse, or a dog, or one of my kids. Or God. It occurs to me that the advertising above is pandering to the unquenchable appetite of our generation for that which entertains, fascinates, or captivates us. We are becoming a people given to what is sensual or sensuous. And I don't mean what is merely sexual. I mean that we are given to whatever arouses our emotions, our senses, our attention. We want to be moved, amazed, enthralled, and immersed in the sights, sounds, smells, feelings of those things going on around us. So much of our culture is aimed at the tantalization of the senses. We are bombarded by visual and auditory stimulation - we stare at computer screens and televisions; we are constantly tethered to ipods and cellular phones; we lose ourselves in virtual reality video games. We live to be entertained. We want the rush of experience, and we live for the next thrill. We are losing our ability to think, to meditate, to reflect, to contemplate. That which is not dramatic becomes mundane, boring, even unbearable. No stimulation? No thanks.

And so, here we are, advertising that which is completely and utterly impossible. God is not an event or a circumstance. He is a being - a person if you will, though divine in nature rather than human. Technically, He is three divine beings, but that is really another issue. My point is that He cannot be "experienced" any more than you or I can. We can have experience with Him. We can experience a relationship with Him. But He is not to be considered on an equal plane with Space Mountain at Disneyworld or a pheasant hunt in South Dakota. Jesus didn't die on the cross so that our senses might be tingled or that we might have some existential or transcendental experience. He is a divine Personality Who designed and created us and with whom we have lost our association due to our own propensity for selfishness and immorality. He is kind and gracious to the point that He has made great sacrifices so that we can once again enjoy fellowship with Him. And He has the power to provide to His people an eternal and incorruptible body so that we might experience everlasting life in association with Him in heaven. That is the experience which He offers.

In the meantime, what He asks of us in this relationship is pretty mundane compared to much of the world's enticements. Discipleship certainly has its satisfactions, but it does not appeal to the thrill of sensuous satiation. God doesn't promise that every day will be emotional nirvana. In fact, He promises that some of the experiences that grow out of my association with Him will be frankly unpleasant - persecution, sacrifice, suffering, self-denial are pretty much guaranteed events at some point in the life of a godly man. Worship, even though it may prompt great emotions in us, is not designed as some dramatic catalyst to an adrenaline rush. It is the honest outpouring of honor and gratitude from forgiven men as we offer to God our appreciation - in accordance with His revealed desires. And in so doing, we teach each other and remind each other and encourage each other regarding this association with God that we have chosen. And, hopefully, He is satisfied and pleased with us.

I find it both reprehensible and sad that we have so digressed in our views of God. I wonder if He stands insulted. Or merely marvels at our pitiable sensuality.

(Even our worship is not a way to experience God. It is designed to draw us closer to Him as we praise and honor Him for what He provides for us. DLH)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!