

Nearness

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[0 : 00] Esther's Reflections Nearness Genesis 18, 8 and 16 And he took butter and milk and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them.

And he stood by them under the tree. And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

Psalms 91.1 He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 16.11 Thou wilt show me the path of life.

In thy presence is fullness of joy. What does it mean to be in God's presence? How can one truly know that they are experiencing the presence of God?

Abraham was a man who desired above all else to know his God. He was a man who had already received the great and mighty promises of God. He had lived for years under God's blessing.

[0 : 57] But I believe it all paled in comparison to the one overarching desire of his life. Nearness to his God. 1 Chronicles 22.19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.

When the Lord begins to move in a life with his calling and blessing, there can be a lot of commotion, a lot of noise, and a lot of activity. It's an exciting time and a special time.

The gifts of the Spirit are in action, and the Word of God is flowing forth in power. It would appear as if such a person is experiencing the presence of God to the fullest.

And many times this is truly the case. However, the commotion and activity is not the evidence of God's presence. 1 Kings 19.11-13 And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord.

But the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind, an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire.

[2 : 12] And after the fire, a still, small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave.

And behold, there came a voice unto him. The church in Corinth was a happening place. One could feel the energy as the people gathered to worship.

The Spirit was moving and the gifts were evident. Truly, this was a church to be a part of. And yet, something was lacking. 1 Corinthians 1.4-7-10-13 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, so that you come behind in no gift.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you. Is Christ divided? The gifting and calling of God is marvelous to experience.

But it does not necessarily indicate a life lived in the presence of God. Abraham was a man whose life was filled with the gifts and calling of God, but it was all secondary to the reality of being in the presence of God.

[3 : 29] So what is the presence of God? Nearness. Being in someone's presence is not about the feelings or the benefits of that presence. It's about nearness.

I can be in someone's presence and feel absolutely nothing, but it doesn't mean I'm not in their presence. Or just the opposite. I can have all types of gifts and blessings from someone, and yet not be anywhere near them, only benefiting from them.

In Genesis 18, Abraham was receiving his heart's desire. No, not the promise of a child, but the presence of his God. Abraham was in God's presence because of his nearness to God.

Isaiah 40.11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom. In Christ, our daily lives are lived in the very presence of God.

It's not a question of if that is true, or if we feel it is so, but do we believe it is so, even if we do not feel anything? Today, like Abraham, you can be near to God.

[4 : 41] There may be no evidence you can point to, but God is near. Romans 10.8 The word is nigh thee. Even in thy mouth and in thy heart. John 12.32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Jesus, the word made flesh who dwelt among us, has given his own life for the sake of nearness. Won't you today choose to live in the light of that truth?

Instead of looking for evidence, draw near. Exodus 33.14 And he said, My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.

Father, where are you when I don't feel you? Where are you when there's no evidence of your presence? And where are you when it would appear as if everyone else is experiencing something? Well, I feel nothing. You are right here. Thank you for being near to me at all times. Help me to live in the truth of your nearness, even if I don't always experience the feeling of your presence.

[5 : 52] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.