

# HEARING GOD

DISCERNING HIS VOICE



## LIFE GROUP STUDY WEEK 2: ENCOUNTER

WEEK OF JAN 28



### GETTING STARTED

This Wednesday night (1/31) we will be gathering in the Worship Center for **Encounter**. The focus of this Encounter is to pursue the presence of God together and to ask Him to help us learn how to hear His voice more clearly in our lives, both individually and as a church.

This three-day study will help us prepare for Encounter. It is designed for you to complete one section each day (the study & the accompanying video), starting Monday and finishing on Wednesday. However, if your Life Group meets earlier in the week, please complete all three days before your Life Group meeting.

Here are the three topics we will explore each day:

- **Day 1:** *The Story of The Presence: The Garden & Israel*
- **Day 2:** *Jesus: The Ultimate Tabernacle & Temple*
- **Day 3:** *Christ-followers: The New Temple & The Final Chapter*

As you prepare for this study, pause and reflect on God's ultimate vision for our lives reflected in the final chapters of Revelation:

*I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! **God's dwelling place** is now among the people, and **He will dwell with them**. They will be His people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*

**Revelation 21:3**



### DAY 1: MONDAY, JANUARY 29

## THE STORY OF THE PRESENCE: THE GARDEN & ISRAEL



### Hearing God Reading

Read pages 89b-90a in *Hearing God*, and then answer the following questions.

1. The story of the Bible is the story of God's presence—how we were created to live in God's presence, how we lost the presence, and how God has pursued us through Israel and the Messiah to restore us to the presence of God.

Since the start of Creation, God's desire has been to dwell with us and speak to us. **Read Genesis 1:27-28, 2:15-17, 3:6-8, and 3:21-23**, and then answer the following questions.

a. Were there any words or phrases that God highlighted for you from these passages? If so, jot them down.

b. Why were Adam & Eve cast out of the Garden and away from God's presence?

2. Despite our rebellion, God continued to pursue us through Abraham and his descendants: the nation of Israel. After God rescued Israel from slavery, He led them to Mt. Sinai where He entered a covenant with them. One of the first instructions He gave Moses was to build a special tent, called the *Tent of Meeting* or the *Tabernacle*, so He could "dwell" with the people. Once they built it, God came and filled it with His presence. Read the following verses and then respond to the questions below.

- Exodus 13:20-22
- Exodus 19:3-6
- Exodus 25:8-9
- Exodus 40:1-2, 33-38

a. What are some of the ways God revealed His presence to Israel in the desert? What did His presence provide for them?

b. Imagine yourself in Israel's shoes experiencing God's presence in this way. How do you think you would have felt or responded?

c. When the LORD made a covenant with Israel, what did He require of them in return? (Exodus 19:5-6)


3. Quickly review pages 89b-90a in *Hearing God* to give context to the following quote:


*The humanly unimportant ones are important to God. God being who He is, and now revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, we should be surprised if He does not speak to us.*

a. How might this truth *challenge* or *excite* you?

4. In last week's study we reflected on Psalm 25. Let's wrap up today by returning to it through the verse below. Make it your prayer and rest in knowing the Lord will lead and guide you.

*Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God, my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.* **Psalm 25:4-5**

 **Day 1**  
Take a moment to scan the QR code and watch the short video on *The Story of The Presence*.



## DAY 2: TUESDAY, JANUARY 30 JESUS: THE ULTIMATE TABERNACLE & TEMPLE



### *Hearing God Reading*

Read page 103 in *Hearing God*, and then answer the following questions.

Yesterday we learned that the story of the Bible is *The Story of The Presence*. We read how God rescued Israel from slavery, entered a covenant with them at Mt. Sinai, and then told them to build the tabernacle (and later the temple) so He could “dwell” with them. But the Tabernacle and Temple were both symbols of a future time when God would come to dwell with us in the body of Jesus—He was *The Ultimate Tabernacle & Temple*.

1. **Read John 1:1-2, 14, 18.** How do these passages reveal God's plan and desire to make a way to dwell with His people? (Note: The Greek word for “*made his dwelling*” in verse 14 is actually the verb “*to tabernacle*.”).

2. **Read John 2:18-21.** How does Jesus describe His body in this passage? What do you think He means by this?

3. In last weekend's message, Michael listed three key obstacles to believing that God can speak to us:

- *God... Is Too Busy?*
- *God... Is too Distant?*
- *I... Am Not Important.*


a. Have you ever wrestled with any of these obstacles? How so?


4. In today's reading from *Hearing God*, Dallas referred to an event in the life of the prophet Elisha. **Read 2 Kings 6:8-17.**

a. On the bottom of page 102, Dallas writes:

*We need to have done for our understanding what Elisha did for his young assistant on one occasion when they were in great danger.*

Elisha prays a powerful prayer over his servant in 2 Kings 6:17 that changed his perspective on everything. Take a moment to pray that verse over your life. Ask God to open your eyes to help you see and hear Him, and for your experience of His presence in your life to grow.

 **Day 2**  
Take a moment to scan the QR code and watch the short video on *Jesus the True Tabernacle*.



**DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31**

**CHRIST-FOLLOWERS: THE NEW TEMPLE & THE FINAL CHAPTER**



***Hearing God Reading***

Read pages 32b-35 and 274b-276a in *Hearing God*, and then answer the following questions.

This week we've seen how the story of the Bible is *The Story of The Presence*. We have also seen how God moved progressively closer to us, first through Israel and the Tabernacle and Temple, And then through Jesus himself, The Ultimate Tabernacle & Temple. But God wanted to come closer still. As a result of Jesus' death and resurrection, God is now able to come and dwell in us by His Holy Spirit, and we as Christ-followers, both individually and collectively, become the *Temple of the Holy Spirit*.

1. **Read 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 & 6:19-20.** What do we become (both individually and collectively) when we come to Christ?

a. Pause and reflect on this amazing reality. What are your thoughts and feelings about being the “temple”?

b. In both these passages, Paul asks, “*Do you not know that you are God’s temple?*” By asking this question, Paul is highlighting the fact that it is easy for us as followers of Jesus to forget this reality.

c. What in your life—past or present—has caused you to forget or take your focus off this truth? Explain.

d. Reread 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What does it mean to be God’s temple? What are the implications for our lives? Who do we now belong to? What do you think it means to “*honor God with your bodies*”?

2. One of the most important lessons we learned this weekend is that, if we want to hear from God, we need to become the kind of person that God will speak to—someone who is pursuing a true relationship where knowing, loving and pleasing God is our top priority.

On page 35 of *Hearing God*, Dallas Willard writes:

*Our failure to hear God has its deepest roots in a failure to understand, accept and grow into a conversational relationship with God...*

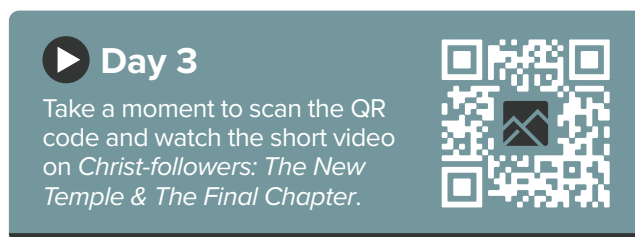
As we approach Encounter, and ask God to speak to us, to what extent are you seeking this kind of sincere relationship with God—where it makes sense for God to speak to you, because you are truly seeking Him with your whole heart?

3. The final chapter of *The Story of The Presence* comes in the final two chapters of the Bible.

**Read Revelation 21:1-4, and 22.**

a. What stands out to you from these passages? What is God's ultimate vision for our lives?

b. How can this future reality impact your life now and how you pursue God today?



## ENCOUNTER: HEARING GOD

Now that you have completed this three-day study on *The Story of The Presence*, spend some time thanking God for pursuing us through Israel, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit. And finally, pray for God to meet you personally, and all of us together, as we gather for Encounter on Wednesday night at 7pm.