

# Encountering God

## God's invitation to you

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**Encountering God through biblical teachings.**

## Introduction

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Hello, My name is David Peñate. I am currently in my final year of Theology and Ministry and this month I am going to take you through the monthly bible readings. This month we are going to journey together and discover how to encounter God. In other words, we are going to uncover how to experience God in our lives. God invites everyone into a loving relationship with Him and His ultimate purpose is to be deeply involved in our life. Therefore lets take a look at God's vision for our lives and how we can encounter God through the Bible.

**Week 2, June 8-14.**

## Day 8- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> of June: “Cosmic Battle”

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**Suggested Readings:** Revelation 12:4-9; Isaiah 14:12-14; Romans 1:19-32; Hebrews 1:14.

***“Instead, I sometimes think that God has put us apostles on display, like prisoners of war at the end of a victor’s parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the entire world-to people and angels alike”***

(1 Corinthians 4:9)

Have you ever asked yourself the question, why did Jesus come to this planet? Well, the short answer is “to save sinners”, however the Bible portrays a cosmic battle between good and evil, God and Satan. It is like star wars (the movies), only real! In this cosmic battle the perfect environment that God had created in the universe was thrown into turmoil when Satan (God’s rival) challenged God’s character. This universal battle ended in Satan been kicked out of heaven. Upon his expulsion Satan spread his rebellion, mainly, by his effective undermine of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Since then the effects of Satan’ rebellion, and humanities fall into his temptations, have had a huge effect. By it the image of God was distorted, that’s why we now we live in a world where so much hate, anger, jealous, malice, violence and death exist. However, God was not contempt to see His creation fall deeper into despair. And in his eternal love He sent his Son Jesus to show humanity the loving character of the Father. Jesus greatest gift for humanity was his death on the cross (John 19:7), that scene captured the full attention of all the universal. The cosmic battle came to its ultimate climax as Jesus came to redeem you and me from the everlasting pain and suffering. Today, we may be facing trails and challenges; however, Jesus’ death on the cross assures Him victory over all evil. Jesus invites you today to come to him just as you are, to put all your problems at His feet and experience the peace that only He can give amidst a painful world.

- **What does it mean to you that our lives are a spectacle to the entire universe?**
- **Why do think there exist so much pain, suffering and death on earth? Is there any hope?**

## Day 9 - Friday 9<sup>th</sup> of June: “The Lamb of God”

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**Suggested readings:** John 3:16; John 1:14; Isaiah 53:1-4; 1 Peter 2:21-22.

***“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ”.***

(John 1:29)

Do you remember when you were in school, either primary or high school? And if you've still in school even better. In school social groups always tended to form. You had the popular kids, the nerdy kids, the hipsters, the sportier kids and then those kids that didn't fit in- the outcast. Sadly the same happens in our society, we tend to put people in the outcast list because they're different. Surprisingly, things haven't changed that much from the time of Jesus. In Jesus' day there were many outcast- the sick, lame, blind, widowed, orphan and the poor just to name a few, where all considered social outcast. However, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him he uttered the beautiful words *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”*, these words are priceless as they contain the scope of Jesus ministry on earth for humanity. Jesus did not come to earth to seek fame and fortune; instead he came to save you and me from this devastating world, He came to heal the sick, bring hope to the poor and oppressed and seek the lost. Jesus came to save the outcast of society; through His ministry we witness Jesus (the stories in the Gospels) healing the blind, the lame, raising the dead, even reaching out to the tax collectors and criminals who were the ultimate outcast of the day. Jesus came to reconcile humanity back to God, Jesus came to restore and reconcile humanity back to the Father. Therefore, we ourselves may sometimes feel like outcast, like we don't belong, but let's not lose sight that Jesus came to save people just like us, He didn't come for the righteous, but came to save us- He came to save sinners like us.

- **What significance is there that Jesus came to save sinner and not the righteous?**
- **How is the life of Jesus (his works of healing etc.) Important or us today?**

## Day 10 – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of June: “Death of the Lamb”

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**Suggested Readings:** Romans 1:4; 3:25; 1 John 2:2; Philippians 2:6-11.

***“In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross”***

(Colossians 2:15)

Death! Is probably the most universally dreaded word on the planet. We don't want to know about, hear about it or see it. And if you have ever been to a funeral you will know what I am talking about, you know, that uneasy and uncomfortable feeling that death wasn't meant to be. And we get those uneasy feelings and emotions, because it was never God's plan for us to experience death. You see God's plan was for humanity to live in peace, love and in communion with Himself for eternity, death was never an option. However, when humans fell into sin, sin brought forth many consequences including death. Thankfully, in God's love and mercy he had a plan to save humanity from the consequences of sin. This plan involved God Himself coming to earth and dying for every person who had, was and is to live. The Father Himself presented His Son as a sacrifice. Through Jesus who himself said, *“that He did not come to be served, but to serve”* (Matthew 20:28) gave His life a ransom for us. Jesus death on the cross brought the good news of redemption. In other words, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins; the bible describes it as the “Lamb that was slain”. Jesus the Lamb died for you and me so that we could be reconciled to the Father. On this day Jesus invites you to reflect in His death and to know that He did this for you.

- **Why do think that God himself came to die? Why didn't He send an angel for example?**
- **Why do you think Jesus is described as a Lamb?**

## Day 11- Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> of June: “The Risen Lamb”

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**Suggested Readings:** Luke 24:36-43; Hebrews 8:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

***“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay”***

(Matthew 28:6)

After the crucifixion and death of Jesus, Mary Magdalene (Jesus friend) and Mary (Jesus mother) came to see Jesus tomb. However, they were meet with a surprise. This surprise was the appearance of an angel, who spoke to them saying that Jesus who was crucified was there no more because He had risen from the dead. QUICKLY GO and tell the disciples that Jesus has risen the Angel commanded the women, both Mary M. and Mary run quickly with excitement to tell the disciples the good news of Jesus resurrection. The two Mary’s new what the resurrection of Jesus meant, that’s why they were so excited (Matthew 28:5-10). You see the resurrection meant that even though Jesus, been God, took on the ransom of death for us, He also rose from the dead, meaning? “THAT OUR GOD IS ALIVE”, not dead. We worship a God who came to earth took on our penalty, died for us and was raised; we worship a living God. How much more does that change our thinking about God? Our God is a living God who personally cares for you, a God who came down from heaven to die for you and me because he wanted to redeem us; He wanted us to be with him for all eternity. Friends the living God who died but rose invites you today to encounter him, to seek him in personal way. Accept the call of the living God in your heart today.

- **What does it mean to you personally that Jesus rose from the dead?**
- **Are you willing to share the good news to others, that Jesus died for our sins, but also rose from the dead?**

# Day 12- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> of June: “The Gift that keeps on Giving”

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**Suggested Readings:** Romans 8:1-4; John 3:3-8; Hebrews 8:7-12; John 3:16.

***“For you are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus  
(Galatians 3:26)***

There was once a man who took his boat out for a cruise in the ocean. As he sailed deeper into the ocean he encountered rough weather, so much so that his boat capsized. Stranded in the middle of the ocean all-alone with no help in site he cried out to God to save him from the hopeless situation he was in. A couple of minutes later a boat arrived, the crew seeing the stranded man they offered to rescue him from the freezing ocean water. However, the man was reluctant to be rescued, instead he responded by saying “it’s ok God will save me”. So he prayed again asking for God to rescue him, an hour later another boat came across the man offering him help, and just like the first time he declined to be rescued. So he prayed again asking “God save me”, a couple of hours later a helicopter flew by attempting to recuse him, but yet again he refused by saying that He was waiting for God to rescue him. Sadly the man declined all the lifelines shown to him and perished in the ocean. Can you relate to this is man? Your answer most likely be; NO. However, what if I told you that most likely than not this is how we view and treat salvation? You see the ultimate gift, is God’s gift of salvation for a perishing race. In God’s eternal love He gave His only begotten Son Jesus to come and die for you and me, so that we, enough though evil, could have salvation. Sometimes may be like that man waiting for God to do some miraculous thing for us to accept salvation, but God works in different ways to save humanity. God’s whole focus is to save you, and He may use the people, location and situation that you least expect. Because of Jesus Christ Death, which is his gift to humanity, even if we fall time and time again, God is still willing and able to save us from this wicked world.

- **How to do you experience God’s salvation daily?**
- **How should we live our lives knowing that God as provide the gift of salvation?**

## Day 13- Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> of June: “Death to Self”

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**Suggested Readings:** Psalms 1:1; Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 5:19-20; 1 John 4:4

***“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him.”***

(Colossians 2:6)

There are many teachings in the Bible, which teach us how to be more connected to God- to reflect the character of God and grow in His likeness. However, no more than the lesson Jesus teaches us in the gospel of John (15:4-5). Jesus teaches us to grow in him when he says, *“Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can so only if it remains in the vine”*. In other words, we can’t do anything without God in the picture. Instead, we must depend on Christ in order to grow spiritually, just as branches depend on the vine for growth so we must depend on Christ. But, how does this process occur? What must happen for us to grow in Christ? Thankfully, the Bible teaches us what must occur. An important aspect of the Christian life is newness and growth, this means, putting your old self to death and living a life in the newness of Christ. The Apostle Paul describes this beautifully when he says, *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...”*(Galatians 2:20). So how do we grow in Christ? By leaving our old life behind, by neglecting the things that harm our relationship with God. Our growth, joy and usefulness all depend on our oneness with Jesus. We must give ourselves fully to God. Every morning give yourself to God, let it be your prayer: *“take me Lord and make me yours, I lay all my plans at your feet. Use me today in your service, that I may reflect your character of love and mercy”*.

Amen.

- **What do you think it means to die to self? And what does it imply?**
- **What are some practical ways that we can apply to our lives daily that will help us grow in Christ?**

## Day 14- Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> of June: “The unfaithful Bride”

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**Suggested Readings:** Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 7:38; Ephesians 4:11-15; Colossians 1:17-18.

***“So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock-his church, purchased with his own blood-over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders”***  
(Acts 20:28)

Unfaithfulness is probably one the most looked down upon actions in our society. It feels one with rage, anger and distrust of that person. It is something we wish didn’t exist at all. If you have ever been the victim of unfaithfulness, dishonesty or betrayal you would understand what I am talking about- those awful feelings. It is in this same manner that God describes his people. In the Bible we find God describing his church as the bride and Jesus Himself as the bridegroom. Jesus love for his church is so deep that he gave his life for it and His sole purpose is for His bride to be perfect and holy in its ways, that it may reflect the character of the Bridegroom. You see, us individually, we make up the church of God and when we don’t adhere to God’s teachings we become that unfaithful bride. It is something that shreds God to pieces, it’s a human act which brings God to the forefront of his emotions, *“The Lord says: What did your ancestors find wrong with me that led them stray so far from me?”* God pours out all of his emotion in this verse trying to find a cause why his people have strayed from his ways. Thus, God speaks to us these same words; He speaks to us personally today and says, “ Will you guard yourself and those around you? Will you, as part of my church, be shepherds to those who have gone astray? Will you be a faithful bride to the one who with his blood purchased his church? God invites you today to experience the love, mercy peace and blessings he has plan for you, will you open your heart and let Jesus in?

- **The church of Jesus is also described as the body of Christ and Christ as the head. What does this say about the church?**
- **In what ways can you be a shepherd to others who have gone astray?**



# Week's Summary

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Humanities greatest need is having a genuine encounter and experience with God.

This week we have looked at how to encounter God through different bible teachings. This included, mainly, how to encounter God through his word. However, we also touched on how to experiencing God through God the teaching of good and evil, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, salvation, growing in Jesus and the church. It is my prayer that you will continue to seek God with all your heart, mind and strength.

Many Blessings.