

How to Have a Fruitful Relationship with God

"Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. (Exod. 25:8)

Beginning in Exodus 19, we see Moses and the Israelites approaching Mt. Sinai ... and this is where they are going to be for a while.

In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ² When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. (Exod. 19:1-2)

This is where the 10 commandments are given

This is where God tells Moses to build a tabernacle of worship

Now immediately you are going to wonder: Why does God need a tabernacle to dwell in ... isn't God everywhere? ... can a building contain God?

... and those are valid questions.

God is everywhere, that is exactly what the prophet Isaiah says in Isa. 66:1

Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. (Isa. 66:1)

King Solomon, in his prayer dedicating the Solomonic temple admitted that it God couldn't be contained in a building.

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built! (1 Ki. 8:27)

Both the 10 commandments, and the command to build a tabernacle of worship are not about something that God needs ...

... it is about God's desire to benefit and bless us.

It is not that God needs to dwell with us ... but rather that God is keenly aware that WE DESPERATELY NEED HIM TO DWELL WITH US.

At this point, Moses and God's people are at Mt. Sinai but they are not going to remain there.

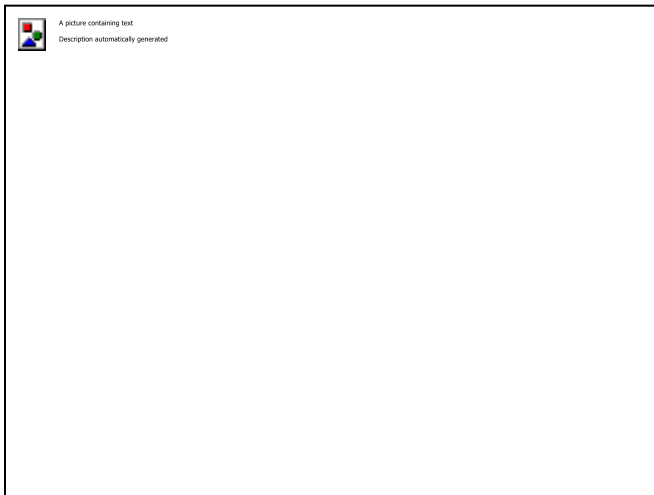
At some point they are going to move away.

... as long as they are camped around this holy mountain they are going to be conscious of God's nearness.

... but once they move away this tangible/visible connection to God ... will be broken.

This tabernacle that God commands Moses to build was serve as the place where God's people and God's presence intersect.

... and it was to be visible from every point of Israel's encampment.



The Tabernacle standing in the midst of the camp ...

... the visible presence of the Sanctuary was to assure them that just as the glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai,

... so God's presence would continue to dwell in their midst no matter where they wandered in the wilderness.

... they desperately needed God to dwell with them ... AND SO DO WE!!!

However, unlike them ... because Jesus Christ has died and rose again ...

... God's Spirit doesn't dwell in the interior room of a man-made building ...

... God's Holy Spirit dwells in us ... believers ... we are the temple.

However, just as they needed the assurance of God's presence ... SO DO WE!

... Many of us struggle with assurance.

... We struggle with really believing that God loves us

... really believing that God has forgiven us

... really believing that God has poured out His blessings and His grace on us.

Today from this part of Israel's history I want to give you three things that will strengthen you ... give you confidence ... in your salvation.

1. Be Prepared

If you hope to have a fruitful relationship with God there are certain necessary preparations.

- **Willing to Obey**

'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Exod. 19:5-6)

... this isn't about salvation, this is about having a vibrant, healthy, happy, relationship with God.

Are you willing to obey what God has commanded?

This is the very question Moses poses to the Israelites ... and look at their response.

So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. (Exod. 19:7-8)

I hope you see what is happening.

If you don't read the Bible carefully you will think that Moses went up on Mt. Sinai and God told Moses everything at once and Moses came down and unloaded the truck.

... this simply is not the case.

Moses went up the mountain and God spoke to him. Moses came down and spoke to the people ... and then Moses went back up ...

... up and down, up and down etc... In fact, in this part of the text Moses makes this journey "back and forth" 7 times.

What we are seeing here is a process.

... if I am going to bless them ... there must first be, in their hearts, a willingness to obey.

And as you see All the people say, "we will obey."

... so, God speaks ...

... when God speaks we need to listen ... this is the 2nd part of preparation ... you must be ...

- **Ready to Hear**

The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. (Exod. 19:9)

Paul says to the Roman Christians, "Our spirit bears witness with God's spirit, that we are the children of God."

Are you listening to hear God's voice.

... Somebody has said, "If you want to hear what God is saying read the Bible" ...

... The bible is God's Word and it speaks to us through reading, prayer, preaching, and through meditation.

Do you give yourself the opportunity to hear God?

If you want Christ-life to be lived out through you, you need have those windows of your soul opened.

... be willing to obey and be ready to hear

- **Consecrated Life**

¹⁰ The LORD also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; ¹¹ and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (Exod. 19:10-11)

What is the Lord saying here?

In order to hear God's voice so that you will know what to obey, you must consecrate your life.

The Christ-life is an inward and outward work.

The Psalmist asks the question in Ps. 24, *“Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Who will go into His holy place?”* The answer: *He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.*

I’ve heard Christians say, *“I’m not getting anywhere with my praying. My prayers seem lifeless. I feel like I’m just talking to the walls.”*

I’ve been right there where you are at.

Many, many, many times our prayer lives become cold and lifeless because we have unconfessed sin in our life.

We need to keep short accounts with God.

... God doesn’t deal in interest and ongoing accounts of indebtedness.

... If you want to hear God’s voice so that you can obey God ... then you need to get on your knees and get the slate wiped clean.

Confession of sin is necessary for salvation ... and it is necessary if you hope to have a fruitful relationship with God.

- **Reverence God**

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. (Exod. 19:21)

God has come down upon the mountain and revealed Himself to Moses.

... Now he tells Moses to set a boundary and warn the people to not get too close.

Why? Is God holding the people away? ... Keeping the people from Him?

There are a number of things happening:

First worship isn’t a spectator sport for the uncommitted or the apathetic.

Second, to look upon the undiluted glory of God would mean death.

Third, God didn't want them to see a shadow of something that they thought was God and then go back and make an image of it to worship ...

... This warning in the last part of Exodus 19 is what predicates the first four commandments in Exodus 20 ...

We must not trivialize, take for granted, belittle, or underestimate the holiness of God.

These four things are progressive:

If you want to prepare to have a fruitful relationship with God ... then reverence God, if you do it will compel you to consecrate yourself to God.

... nothing will fuel your desire to be consecrated to the Lord, more than the holiness of God

... that will open your ears to hear God speaking through His word ... you will know WHAT and HOW to obey.

2. Have a Place

⁸ *"Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. (Exod. 25:8)*

I talked about this at the beginning of the sermon but let me add one thing.

There must be both a private place and corporate place.

... A place to get alone with God, and a place to gather with God's people.

Remember Paul doesn't just tell us that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit ... Paul also tells us that the church is the body of Christ.

... both are necessary!

If you want your spiritual life to shrivel up then quit having a quiet time with God

... quit gathering to worship with believers.

And if you quit, finding those places of private prayer and public worship

... there will come a cold cynicism to your faith that will literally drip with bitterness.

... and find that's exactly where the devil wants you.

Don't do the devil's bidding—**decide and determine for yourself that you will have a fruitful relationship with God.**

Be Prepared—Have a Place!

3. Read the Word

¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." ²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." (Exod. 20:19-20)

For almost 2 chapters the Israelites have seen the Lord display His majesty ...

... they have seen the edges and affects of God's matchless wonder and glory

... and they have been so overwhelmed they don't want God to speak to them any more

... they want Moses to act as their mediator ... and they promise that they will listen

MOSES tells them to not be afraid to hear God speak...

I want to tell you today ... don't be afraid of God's Word.

God has given it to us to **TEST** us, **TEACH** us, to **increase DEVOTION** to God, and to **keep us FROM SIN**.

Here is why everyone of us should want a pursue a fruitful relationship with God.

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. ²⁸ But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works. (Ps. 73:25-28)