

Experiencing God

by Anton Bosch

Anton Bosch challenges the modern notion of 'experiencing God' by emphasizing biblical truths and the importance of knowing God through Jesus Christ rather than through emotional experiences.

Scripture: Genesis 30:27, Ecclesiastes 1:16, Ecclesiastes 8:5, Romans 5:4, 1 Peter 5:9

Topics: "Spiritual Discernment", "Idolatry Warning"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches about the misconception of 'experiencing God' and how it is not based on the Bible but rather on ancient occultic practices and modern entertainment culture. He emphasizes that true transformation comes from being conformed to the likeness of Jesus, not from seeking mystical experiences. Bosch warns against idolatry and emphasizes that God can only be known, heard, and seen through spiritual discernment, not through worldly means like technology or techniques.

Transcript

I just did a search on the internet for the phrase "experience God" and came up with over 51 million references! Wow, that must be an important idea! "Well off course it is", I hear you say. "We must experience God" has become such a common idea amongst Christians today that we all accept, without question, that this is God's will for us. And of course none of us want to be so unspiritual that we don't want to have an experience with God and so many who have not "experienced God" silently sneak away feeling embarrassed, cheated, and inferior. Then there are those special, highly spiritual ones who have experienced God and walk around feeling superior to the rest of those who have never experienced this level of spirituality.

But what is the truth about experiencing God? I did a search through the Bible and found that neither the King James nor the New King James version use the phrase "experience God" at all. The English word "experience" appears three times in the New King James and three times in the King James. None of these scriptures refer to experiencing God in any way.

The idea of experiencing God is simply not based on the Bible. It finds its source in ancient occultic and pagan practices, and the modern entertainment oriented world where the emphasis is on experiences to the degree that many will use any means, even narcotics and witchcraft, just to have some kind of an experience. The whole entertainment industry is built around the idea of giving people an experience. Even shopping is supposed to be a wonderful experience which, it seems, only the fairer sex are capable of enjoying.

There is just no scripture that enjoins us to experience God, or that Jesus died that we might have an experience with (or of) God. Is God like a movie or a theme park or a bungee jump that has to be experienced? Is He the ultimate thrill? I guess to some people He is just that. A denomination in South Africa used to run a full page, full color, advertisement in a trendy magazine showing the derrière of a curvaceous young girl clad in denims. The following words were embroidered on the pocket of the jeans: "You've tried it all, now try Jesus". No wonder the leader and founder of the denomination was fired for multiple adulteries.

Did Abraham, Moses, Paul or anyone else in the Bible "experience" God? What was the experience like? What did they feel when they experienced Him? No, none of these men (or any others) experienced God. Some saw some aspect of Him and others heard him "speak" but none of the saints of the old or New Testaments "experienced" Him. The closest any one came to experiencing Him was John and the other disciples, who wrote "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled..." (1John 1:1). But that was unique to those who saw Jesus in the flesh and even they did not "experience" Him in the mystic way which is now being promoted.

If we were to experience Him, what would that experience feel like? Is it like the goose bumps we feel when they play the national anthem or the hair standing erect on our necks on an eerie night? Or is it like the experience of hearing a live orchestra play a stirring piece of music, or for some, the bagpipes or when the pipe organ hits those low notes that makes your very soul reverberate? Well, it seems that whatever experience some may claim to have, the world is able to produce exactly the same feelings, and even greater.

How do we get to "experience God"? One writer says: "Many have never had a personal experience of God's presence with images as the primary medium". So God's presence is in pictures? Yea right! Others will insist we can experience God through music, worship and meditation. None of these ideas have any biblical basis. Can you see Jesus on the mountain looking at a DVD so He could "experience" His Father, or Paul attending a contemporary Christian music concert so he could "feel" God?

And what are these experiences supposed to do? They are supposed to change us. Wilson and Moore speak about "...the power of digital media to create transformative experiences of God". Well, they have that partly right. These experiences are transformative and changing. But while the scriptures want us to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus (Rom 12:2), these experiences will change us into the image of the world. And no, it is not God you experience in the concert hall, at the parade or on a dark and stormy night and it is not God you experience when looking at the beautiful (often abstract) pictures of the PowerPoint presentation; neither is He in that magnificent cathedral with the powerful pipe organ. Oh, and was there not something about not making an image of God and worshipping it? (Exodus 20:4). (Sorry, I forgot that was Old Testament - modern Christians are far too clever to be bound by such ancient rules!)

Paul had this to say "we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising" (Acts 17:29). This kind of idolatry, for that is what it is, is exactly what Paul had in mind when he wrote about those who, "Professing to be wise... became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image..." (Romans 1:22,23).

Praise God, He can be known, heard and seen but not with natural senses and not through the use of technology and techniques. "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are

foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1Cor 2:14). God is hidden from natural eyes, ears and emotions. There is only one way to the Father and that is through Jesus Christ. No service, multimedia show, picture, music or drama can bring you into His presence - it is only by the shed blood and broken body of His Son that we are able to draw near to God (Heb 10:19-22). - To be continued.

Google

Gen 30:27, Ecc 8:5, 1Pet 5:9.

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Len Wilson and Jason Moore. Help! My Pastor Won't Plan Ahead. Technologies for Worship. October 2005. p15. (The article deals with how to get the pastor to allow the "media minister" more freedom to manipulate people's emotions through the use of media)

Ibid

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/anton-bosch/experiencing-god/>

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