

EXPERIENCING
God
THROUGH YOUR
BUSINESS

Study Guide



Experiencing God Through Your Business

In this pivotal series, filmed during the FCCI 2001 International Conference in Maui, Hawaii, USA, well-known author and lecturer, Dr. Henry Blackaby, provides incredible insights and truths from the Word of God. He explains in detail how every encounter with God, every experience with Him, lifts you to a whole new level of understanding of God and therefore, how you can relate to Him. And why, when God has spoken, you, as His servant, must make some adjustments... that "business as usual" is an affront to a Holy God.

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Born in British Columbia, Dr. Blackaby has devoted his lifetime to ministry. Dr. Blackaby studied English and history at the University of British Columbia as an undergraduate and earned his B.D. and Th.M. from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He holds four honorary doctorate degrees.

Blackaby has published an array of spiritually influential messages in his lifetime, most notably *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (1990), which has sold 4 million copies and has been translated into over 45 languages. His books, *Experiencing God Together* and *Experiencing God Day by Day Devotional*, both won the Gold Medallion Award.

Henry lives with his wife, Marilyn, in Rex, Georgia. They have five children (Richard, Tom, Melvin, Norman, and Carrie), all of whom are serving in Christian ministry, and fourteen grandchildren.



In pursuit of Christ's eternal objectives, we equip and encourage Christian business leaders to operate their businesses and conduct their personal lives according to Biblical principles.

Experiencing God Through Your Business

UNHURRIED TIME IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

SESSION ONE

John 14:10

Overview: The single greatest time saver for a business leader or CEO is an early morning unhurried time with God. When the God of the Universe instructs you at the beginning of the day, more can happen than any other time.

We need to spend much more unhurried time in the presence of God

The Scriptures are absolutely God-centered, they are not man-centered. By creation, God intended that our lives be God centered. The Scriptures must be the basis upon which we walk with God --“with the washing of the water by the Word.”

When we neglect the Word of God, our own reasoning (along with the counsel of others) begins to take over. We miss that absolutely crucial Word of God which is our very lives.



But, when we let the Spirit of God work by taking an unhurried time in the Word of God, we understand the ways of God and the nature of God. We begin to understand how to talk to God. Always talk to God from the Scriptures, because the Spirit of God has taken a word from the heart of God.

The significance of processing an encounter with God

There are no insignificant encounters with God.

1. How do you process it?
2. Why is it important that you process it?

Processing an encounter with God asks,“What is on the heart of God, what is He up to?”

When we have an event occur that we recognize as an encounter with God, we had better take all the time we need to process it. Otherwise, our hearts will harden and we will miss the next major encounter with God.

Jesus as the example: Jesus always did what pleased His Father. And, He always took the time to process. When the Father did something, we find Jesus going aside to pray. Every miracle in the life of Jesus was the activity of His father and it was a sign concerning His son.

INSIGHT

"Business as usual" is an affront to a Holy God.

Processing an Encounter with God

Questions to ask God when beginning to process an encounter with God:

- What are You trying to say to me?
- What adjustments in my company do I need to make?
- What adjustments in my personal life do I need to make?
- Are there any changes I need to make in my marriage?
- Is there anything with my family, including my grandchildren, that I need to adjust?
- What about my employees?

Adjustments must be made before God, first!

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PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. How important to you is regular quality time searching and praying over the Scriptures (explain)? _____
Do your current (regular) activities reflect this belief, how? _____

2. Have you recognized a recent "encounter with God" that you have personally experienced?
_____ Be prepared to discuss this encounter with your group.
What happened? _____

How did you know it was an encounter with God? _____

Did you do anything different as a result? _____

Why or why not? _____

3. In what ways have you "heard" from God? _____

What instructions have you received and how did you respond? _____

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John 14:10 Mark 6:44-52

WHEN GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

SESSION TWO

Overview: Every encounter with God, every experience with Him, lifts you to a new and higher level of understanding of God, and therefore, how you can relate to Him. When God has spoken, you are His servant. You must make some adjustments.

The temptation of feeding many to get a following never left Jesus. He understood that the crowds wanted to make Him "King" because He fed them.

Spontaneous Action: What you do spontaneously (without forethought) will reveal the quality of your relationship with God. If you have to think about it, you're in trouble. The spontaneous response of the heart of a Christian reveals the true relationship he has with the Father.

Jesus had to hear from His Father. He had to know why His Father had done such a work at this time.

Contrary Winds: The moment you have an encounter with God, expect some contrary (distracting) winds to keep you from processing what the Father has just said.

Every encounter with God, every experience with Him, lifts you to a new level of understanding of God and, therefore, how you can relate to Him.

When God reveals Himself, it's not just for information, it's for radical adjustment.

You don't extend your ministry for God by trying, planning, and visioning, because it's not your ministry - it's His. You'd better let Him do it His way, in His timing. This will be when He knows that you know enough about Him to handle the expansion of the work.



The greatest danger for a Christian is unguarded strength. This is when your business is at its best, when everyone is responding positively.

Understand:

- You don't deserve an encounter with God.
- He has something in mind when He entrusts you with an encounter with Himself.
- He expects you to send the crowds away.
- He expects you to get alone, and just be with Him.

If you don't process your last encounter with God, when the next encounter comes your response is going to be inadequate. Instead of rejoicing, you will be troubled, bewildered and confused.

The whole reason for the bewilderment and confusion is that you have not thought through your last experience with God. You have not processed it by talking it over with other believers and praying it through privately.



Experiencing God Through Your Business

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Our speaker has said that what you do spontaneously (without forethought), will reveal the quality of your relationship with God. Do you agree with this statement? _____
Why or why not? _____

How spontaneous are you? _____
2. Can you identify a specific incident within the life of your business when you "felt" like God was trying to "tell" you something, but you just couldn't understand what it was?
_____ Be prepared to discuss the incident or incidents with your group.
Did you feel that you finally learned what He wanted you to know? _____
How did you learn it? _____

3. In what areas of your business do you routinely seek counsel from other people (both inside and outside the business)? _____
Do you make it a regular habit to seek counsel from God first in these areas? _____
Why or why not? _____

Experiencing God Through Your Business

YOU CANNOT TRUST A GOD YOU DO NOT KNOW

Psalm 1 John 14:35

Overview: Don't get sidetracked in meeting the needs of the people, as THEY want you to. Do what He sent you to do. When God answers prayer (when God makes you successful) it is a means to an end –TAKE TIME TO PROCESS IT! Find out WHY He did it, what He intends for you to do with it.

When an encounter with God occurs, what questions should be asked?

- What logical, reasonable adjustments should individual believers make?
- What logical, reasonable adjustments should the corporate church make?

Meditation

Whenever you have an encounter with God and the Truth of God, go into the presence of God and talk to God about it until He tells you what He meant by that encounter.

Meditating is not from your perspective to God, but God's to you. Meditating day and night means that you are standing in the presence of God. In the night seasons, God is speaking to you. When you awake in the morning God is speaking to you. His Word is a living Word that He is explaining to you.

What you are doing reveals what you believe about God. If you expect God to speak, and you take His Scripture literally, you will be able to demonstrate that you understand God is Master and He has the RIGHT to speak to you any time and place He chooses. You will be ready to respond.

Allow Jesus to come to you in ways He has never come before. Let Him take you beyond where you have ever been. FAITH takes you in a direction to know and experience Him with no reference point except Him. Permit Him to take you into a situation that only He can resolve, so that you will know it is Him.

God's goal is not to merely redeem you from your mistakes; His goal is to make you know more about Him than you have ever known before.

If you encounter God lifting you out of an awful mistake that you have made, process it! Take time alone with God. Talk with Him, ask Him:

INSIGHT

Faith doesn't come by thinking, it comes by experiencing.

- How did I get into this mistake?
- What part of my walk with You was not "in place" and led me to such a decision?
- Lord, were you trying to tell me not to do it, but I listened to others and thought it was your council?
- Lord, I didn't know the difference between council of my friends and council from heaven. Help me to know the difference from now on.

Jesus was always doing three things (all were one thing, that is incorporated):

- Teaching – to reveal the Truth of God
- Preaching – to persuade to respond to the truth of God
- Healing – demonstrating in His life what He was teaching – the incarnation

Experiencing God Through Your Business

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Our speaker said, "What you are doing reveals what you believe about God." What are your thoughts on this comment? _____

2. Think about a time when you thought you were following the will of God, only to find out it was not – that the council of your friends and co-workers and your own flesh led you to a wrong decision. What did you do about it? _____

Did the experience permit you to see something new in God that you had not known before?
_____ Explain: _____

3. How much time does it take to process with God? (Speak from experience – don't give Dr. Blackaby's answer.) _____

Do you believe your past and present experiences in this area are adequate to learn what God is telling you? _____ What changes, if any, will you make in this area? _____

How will you be held accountable for the changes you commit to make? _____

Experiencing God Through Your Business

John 12:24-26 John 5:39-40

GAINING CITIZENSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Overview: Too many people try to get Christ to follow them – asking Him to go with them rather than going with Him (a follower must follow, not lead). Do you ask Him to go with you into your company? Or, do you ask Him to lead you into His company.

One of the greatest characteristics of God is His timing. Often the timing of God is as significant as what He does. God always moves in the fullness of His own time, not your time. If you're His servant, then the Master Himself has the RIGHT to determine everything about your life (He determines the time, the place, the direction, the purpose and the goals).

DEFINE SPIRITUAL MARKERS

"Spiritual markers" are times when God has deeply spoken to you. They are moments of encounter with God. God builds on them and never discards what He has done. Spiritual markers are not isolated events and they are not "ends unto themselves."

Write down the significant moments in your life where something that God did shaped or changed your life - even if you haven't put into place what God was calling you to do at that time. This may be the moment of salvation, a marriage, an event with a child or even a quiet moment with Him.

Gaining Citizenship in the Kingdom of God

"You search the Scriptures for you think in them you have eternal life. And these are they, which testify of Me. But you're not willing to come to Me that you might have life."
John 5: 39-40

Dr. Blackaby's paraphrase of the Scripture: "You keep searching the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life. But you forget, the Scriptures were designed to lead you to Me. But you will not come to Me so that I can give you life."

In other words, only in a relationship with God can you have fullness of life. Many people do all kinds of Bible studies, and they search the Scriptures. The Scriptures are designed to bring you into a relationship with God. Many keep studying the Scriptures but never let the Scriptures bring them face-to-face with God.

INSIGHT

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to bring you into the Will of God.

THERE IS A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PICTURE AND LETTERS OF GOD, AND GOD HIMSELF.

RECOGNIZING GOD IN YOUR LIFE

The Scriptures are designed to help you know God, the ways of God, and the purposes of God so when He starts to work in your life you will know it is Him.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Take a few moments and write down two or three of the “spiritual markers” in your life. Be prepared to discuss them with your group.
 - A) What significance did they play in your life?
 - B) What evidence do you have that God was a part of these events?
 - C) What changes resulted from them?

2. What indication do you have that you know the God of the Scriptures – not about Him, but know Him? _____

Experiencing God Through Your Business

EXPERIENCING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

John 5:17-20

John 16:13

John 14:10

Exodus 3:1-4

SESSION FIVE

Overview: It is impossible to make a good decision in your life without reference to what God has already been saying and doing in your life up to now. It is all connected. You must learn to integrate what He said and did previously to what He is saying now.

Making Decisions

Why do you make the decisions you do?

Jesus' answer: you need to understand that my Father has been working up to now and that is why I am working. The Son does nothing on His own initiative but whatever He sees the Father do, that's what the Son does also. The Father loves the Son and shows him everything that He Himself is doing and He is going to show greater things that you may believe.

- How much of God dwells in your life as a Christian?
ALL OF HIM
- How much of the day is the fullness of God with you?
- How much of the day can He speak to you?
- How much of the day can He direct you?

INSIGHT

Your company is God's
supreme place of
worship.

When God spoke to people of the Bible:

- They always knew it was God.
- They always knew what He was saying.
- They always knew what they should do.

God intends for your company to become a world strategy mission center, a center of worship. But, He must have your attention. You must believe Him.

Bill Gates (the world) cannot tell you how to function in your business as a worship center.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. If neither the Son of God nor the Spirit of God take their own initiative (but let the initiative come from the Father), how should you function? _____

Describe what this might look like in your business on an everyday basis: _____

2. When God "speaks" to you, do you know it is Him speaking? _____
Do you always know what He is saying and what you should do? _____
Why or why not? _____

What experiences have you had that could help others in your group identify the voice of God in their lives? _____

3. In the past, how have you determined the direction your company would take on major issues? _____

_____ What percentage of these methods do you feel were "from the world" vs. "from the Father"? _____

Will you attempt to change this in any way? _____

Why or why not? _____

Experiencing God Through Your Business

GOD'S SUPREME PLACE OF WORSHIP

SESSION SIX

Hebrews 13:2

John 13:20

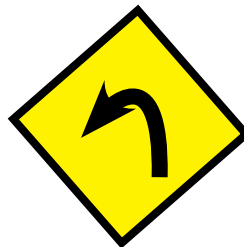
Luke 5:1-10

Overview: Do not separate your spiritual moments with God from your workplace. Because He dwells within you, your workplace is a temple of God. If more of God's children would see their workplace as a dwelling place of Almighty God, they would bear fruit 30 fold, 50 fold, 100 fold. We must let Him be Lord of our company- not just in word or in a motto- in real life.

If you believe that God sends people to you (your employees, your spouse, your children, others), you must understand that the way you treat them is the same way you are treating your Lord, God. "How you receive the one I send you, you receive Me and My Father." John 13:20

The problem is not that you don't understand what is contained in John 13:20. The problem is that you understand but don't want to do it.

God will often send you back to the place where you were unsuccessful. Whatever happens next, you'll know only He could have done it.



PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. How do you apply Hebrews 13:2 in your business? _____

2. Do you believe the people in your life are there by coincidence? _____
Did God place them in your life for a purpose? _____
What purpose do they serve? _____

Experiencing God Through Your Business

BY THE GRACE OF GOD

SESSION SEVEN

Ephesians 3:19-20 2 Corinthians 6 2 Corinthians 5:9
Galatians 2:20 1 Corinthians 15:10 Colossians 1

Overview: However small it might appear to you, there is no small experience with God. The full presence of God is always there and carries with it an enormous need to let God give you the full implications of the experience.

Processing an Encounter with God

Why is it critically important to process an encounter with God? God said "and he will learn how much he will suffer for me". This is in the original call of every believer. Every believer is called to a cross – the cross isn't something to suffer on, it's something to die on. The cross and suffering are never to be an intrusion into the Christian's life – they are a part of the Christian's life.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU TREMBLED BECAUSE GOD SPOKE TO YOU?

Certain Scriptures exist that will:

- Establish the foundation from which to look at your life and your company.
- Build a framework for understanding the ways of God.
- Provide a motivation in your heart to appropriate a truth from God.

The apostle Paul said: "Therefore, we are workers together with Him. We plead with you not to receive the grace of God to no avail." (It's making no difference in your life.)

Can you say with absolute transparent honesty before God that you believe your life, your company, and everything about you is the sum total of the Grace of God?

Can you say "I am what I am by the Grace of God... but with every ounce of my being I have not received the Grace of God in vain"?

Living by the Grace of God doesn't make you inactive, it makes you the most active person around.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. What do you think would happen if you began to allow Jesus to re-order your company?

Are you willing to allow Him to reorder your company sequentially, or are you in a hurry to get to "the bottom line"? _____

2. If you were to "take a tour" around your company, could you identify the Grace of God that allowed each individual part to exist? _____

Be prepared to discuss with your group some of the specific "parts" of your company that you can identify with an act of God's grace. _____

3. Do you actively seek to have Jesus more transparent in you? _____
What do you do to make this so? _____

If your employees were asked to identify a positive change IN YOU that they have witnessed in the past year, could they identify one? _____

Experiencing God Through Your Business

APPROPRIATING GOD'S GRACE INTO YOUR LIFE

2 Corinthians 1:20

Psalms 50:15

John 14:11-12

Overview: The Grace of God is wrapped up in the promises of God. The challenge is not whether the Grace of God exists, but whether you will appropriate it into your life – and when.

- Is the economic situation out of God's control?
- Do you lack wisdom in a particular situation?
- What prevents you from asking God?

How do you appropriate the Grace of God into your life? The Grace of God resides in His promises. Every promise that God has ever given is "Yes" in Christ.

Receiving the Grace of God in Vain

The moment you entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ every promise that God has ever made became an automatic "Yes". If you believed that, what would you do next? You would list every promise that God has ever given and ask him to become that way in your life and in your company.

But, what happens when you receive that incredible Word and then set every promise aside and never live by any of them. Rather, you try to live in your own wisdom, your own strength, your own capacities and never draw upon the promises God has given. That's called receiving the Grace of God in vain.



Every time of trouble is an opportunity for God to be highly honored. How? When His children call on him, and watch and wait on Him to deliver them, God is highly honored.

How many honors have been denied God that were rightly His, because in our time of trouble we never called on Him?

There is no trouble of any kind that you, as a child of God, can ever encounter from which God cannot perfectly, totally and thoroughly deliver you. And when He does deliver you, because you trusted Him (you received that as an assurance of God), He will receive the honor.

When a child of God believes God, calls on Him and lets Him deliver him, then God is highly honored.

The rewards:

1. The Father says, "Thank you for believing me, receiving from me and honoring me; you have been faithful and so I bless you."
2. You will see the incredible influence your life has had on others who are watching you. You will see the impact on your family. You'll see relationships change.

Experiencing God Through Your Business

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Can you recite (from memory) a specific promise of God? _____
Share it with the group and indicate a personal or business experience you have had related to that promise. _____

2. Tell your group about a time when you asked God for wisdom about a specific business related issue or decision and He provided an answer. What happened, how did you receive the answer? _____

Did you give God the credit for the answer (tell others that He provided the answer or solved the problem). _____

What happened next? _____

3. Have you thought about Dr. Blackaby's statement, "Every time of trouble is an opportunity for God to be highly honored?" Share your thoughts about this statement with your group.

4. What changes might you make in the way you operate your business as a result of this teaching series? _____

Experiencing God Through Your Business

Application & Commitment

James 1:22-25 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does." (NIV)

Series: "Experiencing God Through Your Business"
Date Series Began: _____
Date Series Ended: _____
Participant's Name: _____

One of the Biblical Truths (Principles) I learned from these lessons was: _____

I intend to apply this Truth (Principle) in my business by: _____

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will begin applying this Truth immediately. I ask and expect my group to hold me accountable for this and to check with me periodically to determine if I am doing so. Please ask me: _____

Signature

Date





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