



“I’m a Pastor Once Again”

I was attending a large convention meeting with my wife and my son Richard. Suddenly a man approached me and grabbed my hand. Fighting back his emotion, he explained that several years before, God had clearly called him to be a pastor. He had served in a church but had suffered deep hurts from vicious attacks by some of its members. He had resigned from the church, vowing never to serve in a church again. He obtained a good job in a new company and was soon a vice-president earning a large salary. For several years this man forsook his calling and immersed himself in his lucrative career.

Then the church he attended began studying *Experiencing God*. Through that course God reminded the bitter man that His love for him had never changed; neither had His call on his life. With tears streaming down his face, the man choked out, “I’m a pastor once again!” Bitter circumstances had taken this dear man’s eyes off the love of his Lord, but as he returned to that love relationship, God enabled him to overcome the difficulties he had faced in life.

DAY 4

God Invites You to Join Him

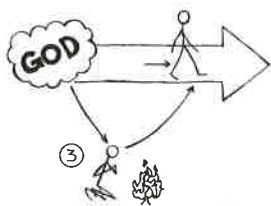
WHEN YOU SEE THE FATHER AT WORK AROUND YOU, THAT IS YOUR INVITATION TO ADJUST YOUR LIFE TO HIM AND JOIN HIM IN THAT WORK.

The Bible is the record of God’s activity in the world. In it He reveals Himself (His nature), His purposes and plans, and His ways. The Bible is not primarily a book about individuals and their relationships with God, such as Abraham, Moses, and Paul. Rather, the Bible focuses on the activity of God and His relationships with individuals.

1 Review reality 3 of experiencing God by filling in the blanks with the correct words. If you need help, look on the inside back cover.

Reality 3: God invites you to become _____
with Him in His _____

REALITY 3



INVITATION

God Works Through People

The Bible reveals that God has always been involved in the world. He has never been absent from it or from what is taking place in history. When we read the Bible, we are reading God’s redemptive activity in our world. We see that He chooses to take the initiative and involve His people with Him. He chooses to work *through* them to accomplish His purposes.

- When God was about to judge the world, He came to Noah. He was going to do an awesome thing, and He was going to accomplish it through Noah.
- When God was going to build a nation for Himself, He came to Abraham. God was going to carry out His will through Abraham.
- When God heard the cry of the children of Israel and decided to deliver them, He appeared to Moses. God came to Moses because of His purpose. He planned to deliver the Israelites through Moses.

Both the Old and New Testaments confirm that God works through people. When God's fullness of time had come to redeem a lost world through His Son, He gave 12 men to Jesus to prepare them to accomplish His purposes.

When God is about to do something, He takes the initiative and comes to one or more of His servants to let them know what He is about to do. He invites them to adjust their lives to Him so He will accomplish His work through them. The prophet Amos stated that:

The Sovereign LORD does nothing
without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).

2 Mark the following statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- a. God created the world and then abandoned it to function on its own.
 b. God is not absent. He is actively at work in the world.
 c. People do God's work by deciding what they think would be good to do and then doing it.
 d. God involves people in His work.
 e. God always takes the initiative to involve people in His work.

Answers: Statements b, d, and e are true. The others are false.

God's Revelation Is Your Invitation

You may be asking, *How does God invite me to be involved with Him?* Let's review Jesus' example from [John 5:17,19-20](#). (See unit 1, p. 16.)

Jesus' Example

1. The Father has been working right up until now.
2. Now the Father has Me working.
3. I do nothing on My own initiative.
4. I watch to see what the Father is doing.
5. I do what I see the Father doing.
6. The Father loves Me.
7. He shows Me everything He is doing.

3 Read the verses in the margin. How did Jesus know what to do in His Father's work? _____

How did Jesus respond? _____

To experience God personally, remember God has been at work in our world from the beginning, and He is still at work. Jesus lived His life with this awareness. He announced He had come not to do His own will but the will of the Father who had sent Him (see [John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 17:4](#)). To know the Father's will, Jesus said He watched to see what the Father was doing. Then Jesus joined Him in that work.

4 In the box "Jesus' Example," circle the key word in statement 4 that tells what Jesus did to recognize the Father's invitation to join Him.



God always
takes the
initiative to
involve people
in His work.

[John 5:17,19-20](#)

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working. I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does."

The Father loved the Son and took the initiative to come to Him and reveal what He (the Father) was doing or was about to do. The Son was alert for the Father's activity around Him so He could unite His life with what the Father was doing.

As God's obedient child, you are in a love relationship with Him. Because He loves you and wants to involve you in His work, He will show you where He is working so you can join Him. The key word in statement 4 is *watch*. Jesus watched to see where the Father was at work. Then He did what He saw the Father doing. For Jesus the revelation of where the Father was working was His invitation to join the activity. When you see the Father at work around you, that is your invitation to adjust your life to Him and join Him in that work.

Is it possible for God to be working around you without your seeing it? Yes. Elisha and his servant were in the city of Dothan surrounded by an enemy army. The servant was terrified, but Elisha remained calm. "Elisha prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.' Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17). Only when the Lord opened the servant's eyes did he see God's activity all around him.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem and its leaders as He prophesied the destruction that would take place in A.D. 70. He said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42). God was in their midst performing wonderful signs and miracles; yet they did not recognize Him.

Two factors are important for you to recognize God's activity around you.

1. You must live in an intimate love relationship with God.
2. God must take the initiative to open your spiritual eyes so you can see what He is doing.



Fill in the blank:

God's revelation to me of His activity is my _____ to join Him.



6 What are two factors important to your recognizing God's activity around you?

1. _____
2. _____



Unless God allows you to see where He is working, you will not recognize it. When God reveals to you what He is doing around you, that is your invitation to join Him. Recognizing God's activity depends on your love relationship with Him and His taking the initiative to open your spiritual eyes to see His activity.

Working Where God Is at Work

Our church sensed God wanted us to start new churches all across central and western Canada. Hundreds of towns and villages needed a church.



7 If you were in that situation, how would you decide which towns to choose? _____

Some churches would start with a population study or a survey. Then they would tabulate the results and apply human logic to decide where the most promising, productive

places might be. Instead, we tried to find out what God was already doing around us. We believed He would show us where He was at work, and that revelation would be our invitation to join Him. We began praying and watching to see what God would do next to answer our prayers.

Allan was a small town 40 miles from Saskatoon that had never had a Protestant church. It desperately needed one. One of our members felt led to conduct a Vacation Bible School for the children in Allan. We said, "Let's find out if God is at work here." At the end of the week of Vacation Bible School, we held a parents night. We said to the group, "We believe God may want us to establish a church in this town. If any of you would like to begin a regular Bible-study group and be a part of a new church, would you come forward?"

From the back of the hall came a woman who was weeping. She said, "I have prayed for 30 years that a church would be started in this town, and you are the first people to respond."

Right behind her came an elderly man. Deeply moved, he was also weeping. He said, "For years I was active in a church. Then I turned to alcohol. Four and a half years ago I came back to the Lord. I promised God then that I would pray four or five hours every day until God brought a church to our town. You are the first people to respond."

We didn't have to take a survey. God had just shown us where He was at work! That was our invitation to join Him. We went back and joyfully shared with our church what God was doing. The congregation immediately voted to start a new church in Allan. That congregation eventually helped establish several other congregations in surrounding towns.

God hasn't told us to go and do what we can. He has instructed us that He is already at work bringing a lost world to Himself. If we will adjust our lives to Him in a love relationship, He will show us where He is at work. That revelation is His invitation for us to become involved in what He is doing. Then when we join Him, He completes His work through us.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

God is at work in the world.

God takes the initiative to involve me in His work.

God must take the initiative to open my spiritual eyes so that I can see what He is doing.

When I see the Father at work around me, that is my invitation to adjust my life to Him and join Him in that work.

God's revelation is my invitation to join Him.

Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?



Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.



What does God want you to do in response to today's study?