

The Seven Realities of Experiencing God

by Henry & Richard Blackaby & Claude King

1. God is always at work around you.

- I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. – *John 15:5*

2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.

- And this is life eternal, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. – *John 17:3*

3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.

- Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. – *John 14:21*

4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.

- Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. – *John 16:7*
- Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. – *Psalms 119:105*
- Call to me and I will answer you and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. – *Jeremiah 33:3*
- Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. – *James 1:2-4*
- Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. – *Hebrews 13:17*

5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action. (Turn in your Bible to Hebrews 11.)

- And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. – *Hebrews 11:6*
 - Abel offered a righteous sacrifice to God. (Heb. 11:4)
 - Enoch pleased God by earnestly seeking him. (Heb. 11:5-6)
 - Noah built an ark to save his family. (Heb. 11:7)
 - Abraham made his home in a foreign country. (Heb. 11:8-19)
 - Joseph gave instructions to bury his bones in the promised land. (Heb. 11:22)
 - Moses chose to be mistreated along with God's people (25-26); left Egypt (27); and kept the Passover (28). (Heb. 11:24-28)
 - The Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho. (Heb. 11:29-30)
 - Rahab welcomed the Israelite spies. (Heb. 11:31)
- In Hebrews 11:32-40, those who exercised faith experienced BOTH good and bad outcomes.
 - Good (32-35a): conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight, women received back their dead...
 - Bad (35b-38): some were tortured, some refused to accept release, suffered mocking and flogging, chains and imprisonment, sawn in two, killed with the sword, placed in animal skins, destitute, afflicted, mistreated, wandering about in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth, did not receive what was promised while alive on the earth...

Hebrews 11:38 – *“of whom the world was not worth...”*

6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.

- So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. – *Luke 14:33*
- Recount the story of Elisha in I Kings 19:15-21 & contrast it with the story of the Rich Young Ruler in Luke 18:18-23.
 - What adjustment was required of each?
 - Elisha: He had to leave farming.
 - Rich Young Ruler: He had to give away all of his wealth.
 - What was the response of each?
 - Elisha: He left farming and burned his oxen and equipment.
 - Rich Young Ruler: Remained rich and unsaved.

7. You come to know God by experiences as you obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through you.

- Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. – *John 14:23*

Illustration: Experiencing God through the ministry transition to Minneapolis, Mn.

- I met Heather at Northland Baptist Bible College. We were married two weeks after graduation in 1996. We moved to Minneapolis, MN to help my parents start Family Baptist Church.
 - I had the privilege of serving as youth/assistant pastor from 1997 to 2005.
 - God provided FBC \$300,000 from Fourth Baptist Church (sending church) to help get FBC started.
 - Later God provided \$1,000,000 to purchase the current building that houses the church (2201 Girard Ave N, Mpls, MN 55411).
 - I completed graduate work at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in 2000.
 - I started a doctorate in URBAN MISSIONS from Westminster Theological Seminary in Glensdale, PA in the summer of 2003.
 - Family Baptist Church sent Heather and me to start All Nations Baptist Church in the summer of 2005.
- While serving as senior pastor of ANBC, I also taught as an adjunct professor at a couple different institutions. God used these times of teaching to draw my heart toward a full-time teaching position TO TRAIN MEN AND WOMEN FOR URBAN CHURCH MINISTRY.

- Heather and I chose to fast and pray to know God’s will regarding the prompting He placed on my heart to teach in a full-time capacity.
 - Three weeks later, I received three phone calls from seminaries and colleges. *Each led by saying that “God had moved in their heart to contact me to see if I would be interested in teaching at their school.”*
- We accepted an invitation for me to teach at BJU in 2007.
- We started Palmetto Baptist Church in March of 2010.
 - Property
 - God provided a storefront facility to meet in free of charge.
 - God provided a church building to rent after 6 months of us meeting (620 Powdersville Main).
 - God provided a variety of locations for us to meet in over the years including Concrete Primary School gym, Powdersville High School, an office building near 620 Powdersville Main, and Velocity Sport Center.
 - God allowed us favor in the eyes of the elders at Bethesda United Methodist Church. One of the elders from Bethesda sold us a piece of property and self-financed the deal (Cely Lane Property).
 - The members of PBC paid off the mortgage.
 - The property is under contract to be sold (for more than 2x what we purchased it for...)
 - In the summer of 2020, PBC purchased a new piece of property (McNealy Road) to serve as the future home of the church building!
 - Programs
 - As the church has grown, so have the needs for programs to meet the needs of the people. Some of the highlights include the formation of Palmetto College Group (with the smaller groups known as Palm Groups), D-Groups, Youth Group, Thrive Group, and LIFE Group.
 - Church Planting (Centerpointe Baptist Church in Huntersville, NC, Cross View Church in Orrville, OH, and the current efforts in process to plant a Deaf Church).
 - Church Revitalization (Griggs Memorial Baptist Church; Gethsemane Baptist Church; White Oak Baptist Church; and Bethel Bible Missionary Church).
 - People
 - Missions
 - Alex Francia
 - Chris and Mary Spitzer

- Heston and Rebekah Blake
- John and Kristen Marino
- Niah and Allisha Merrill
- David and Darlene Sperr
- Joe and Beka Davis
- Scott and Christina Schulman
- Hannah Bender
- Alexis Shoemaker
- Jeff and Joanna Davis
- Paul and Deanna Miller
- Michael and Jessica Dunlop
- Rusty VanDonkelaar
- Ministry
 - Matt Bronkema
 - John Hollifield
 - Glen Huff
 - Austin Ohly
 - Brandon Ironside
 - Shelly Mills
 - Amanda Blake
 - Suzanne Villegas
 - Emily May
- Pastors
 - Kurt Stephens
 - Jason Little
 - Mike Durso
 - Bill Eisaman
 - Jonathan West
 - Ralph Gruendling
 - Ken Bixby
 - Koko Korver
 - Jairo Villegas
 - Josh Stephens
- Deacons
 - Josh Bracewell
 - Jared Burgess
 - Joe Bush
 - Kirk Hensarling

- Troy Hensarling
- John Hollifield
- Glen Huff
- Brandon Ironside
- Brandt Mills
- Charles Naselli
- Austin Ohly
- Kevin Schmidt
- John Summerlin
- Jonathan West
- Dan Zakes
- Watching “Free Burma Rangers” with Kirk and Heidi Hensarling.
 - It was a call to make sure you are participating in the “good work that God had preordained for you” (Eph. 2:10).
- Receiving the phone call from my dad that my brother, Karsten Ormiston, died suddenly from heart failure on November 10, 2019.
 - I conducted his funeral. I was moved by the number of people from every ethnic and social economic group gathered to honor the life of my brother. It reminded me of what used to be at FBC.
- Covid-19 pandemic impacted all of us.
 - It specifically allowed me time to slow down to think and pray.
- May 25, 2020, George Floyd died in Minneapolis, MN and sparked a national movement of riots in the inner cities across our land.
- Minneapolis started to BURN!
- I returned to prayer for peace in our cities. (Jeremiah 29:7)
 - I spoke with my fellow pastors about the stirring on my heart to personally reengage in urban ministry.
- Watch this 4-minute video of how the violence impacted my parents and FBC.
- In August of 2020, Heather and I flew to MN to encourage my parents and seek the damage first-hand. It was an overwhelming experience!
- In September of 2020, upon reaching his 70th birthday, my Dad announced his decision to step away from his responsibilities as the senior pastor of FBC. He called the church to begin the search for his replacement.
- I was contacted by the chairman of the pulpit committee about being a candidate for the open position.
- I informed the pastors and deacons and asked them to join me in praying about whether I should pursue this opportunity.

- In October of 2020, my Dad spoke at a chapel for Faith Baptist Bible College. He had a conversation with the president of Faith and confidentially shared that the pulpit committee had reached out to me. When Jim Tillotson asked what it would take to make something like this happen, my Dad threw out the number of \$30K for help with the transition (moving expenses, health insurance starter, new website... etc). A day later, Jim met with a generous donor who asked if he knew anyone heading into urban ministry who could use a one-time gift. Jim: "How much were you thinking?" Donor: "Around \$30K."
- While an amazing potential, the proof is in donations made not donations suggested. While waiting, I took some time to write down the pros and cons of making a potential move back to MN. It wasn't hard to come up with numerous positives about staying here at PBC. In the midst of that process... I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM THE DONOR. HE WIRED THE MONEY TO FBC WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK.
- When we returned to MN to officially candidate, I asked Heather if she would see if there were any D2 schools in MN as potentials for Elijah to play. She identified Concordia University. A connection was made with the coaching staff. After viewing some of his film and talking with him via Zoom, they offered him a FULL RIDE SCHOLARSHIP.
- FBC voted last Sunday to extend me a call to serve as their next senior pastor. The vote was 97% in favor of extending the call.
- Last Sunday afternoon, the chairman of the pulpit committee called me with the news.
- I accepted the invitation.
- I informed the pastors and deacons that afternoon.
- They formed a pulpit committee.
- The pulpit committee had their first meeting on Tuesday of this past week.
- This week, all the members of PBC will receive a survey form intended to assist the committee with the type of candidate you are interested in seeing here at PBC and a place to nominate qualified candidates.

APPLICATION:

- God is always at work around you.
 - Where is God at work around you?
- God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
 - How is your personal relationship with God going?
- God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.

- Has He invited you to become involved with Him in His work but you are delaying your response?
- God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
 - Have you considered what God might be saying to you through the Bible, prayer, circumstance, and the church? Are you even listening?
- God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
 - Are you currently experiencing a crisis of belief? Remember: it requires FAITH and ACTION.
- You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
 - What major adjustment does God want you to make?
- You come to know God by experiences as you obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through you.
 - Are you experiencing God through your obedience?
 - How is He currently working through you?