



I'm Overwhelmed!

An *Experiencing God* Devotional Experience

Introduction

These devotional guides were written to help you deepen your walk with God as we go through this season of *Experiencing God* together as a church. As part of your experience, you may want to read the scriptures referenced here in context to get a broader understanding of the concepts introduced. As you complete this experience, you may also want to record the things that God speaks to you in a journal and share them with your small group. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to complete this devotional. Feel free to respond as the Lord leads!

God's Perspective Is Vital

Joseph needed God's perspective to understand his circumstances. He had visions of greatness when he was a youth (see Gen. 37:1-11). Yet his older brothers maliciously turned against him and sold him as a slave.

Joseph was taken to a foreign country where it appeared he would spend the rest of his life in bondage, never to see his family again. Then things got worse. He was falsely accused of a heinous crime and thrown in jail. Later, when a fellow prisoner Joseph had helped was released, he hoped the man might help him in return. Instead, the man forgot about Joseph. For someone who had committed no offense, Joseph's life appeared to be undeservedly harsh and unfair.

Then the pharaoh had a dream, and all of Joseph's life experiences began to fall into place (see Gen. 41:1-8). His fellow prisoner remembered and mentioned Joseph to Pharaoh. Joseph interpreted the pharaoh's dream, which was a warning from God of impending disaster. Joseph was appointed the second in command in all of Egypt, and ultimately he saved his father, brothers, and their families from a devastating famine.

Reviewing all God had allowed in his life, Joseph declared to his brothers, “You planned evil against me; God planned it for good (Gen. 50:20). When Joseph's life was placed in the context of God's eternal purposes, every major experience in his life – both good and bad – could be seen to have a purpose and to result in good.

When you face difficult or confusing circumstances, they can overwhelm you. If you bury yourself in the circumstances, you will always have a distorted understanding of God. For instance, you might say, “God doesn't love me” or “God is not fair,” but both of those statements are false. Have you ever been in the middle of a tragic or fearful situation where, in your prayers, you began to accuse God of some things that you know are not true? Perhaps you began to question God's love or His wisdom. Maybe you were afraid to say that He was wrong, but you sort of said, “God, you deceived me in letting me believe that this was the right thing to do. Why didn't you stop me?” A whole lot of wrong conclusions can result if you try to look at God from the middle of a painful situation.

What should you do instead? First, ask God to show you His perspective on what's happening. Look back at your situations from what you already know about God. When you face a troublesome time, the Holy Spirit will take the Word of God and help you understand the event from God's perspective. He will reveal to you the truth of your circumstances. Then you can adjust your life and thinking to what God is doing.

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When circumstances seem bewildering:

1. *Settle in your mind that God forever demonstrated His absolute love for you on the cross. His love will never change.*
2. *Do not try to understand what God is like from the middle of your circumstances.*
3. *Go to God, and ask Him to help you see His perspective on your situation.*
4. *Wait on the Holy Spirit. He will take the Word of God and help you understand your circumstances.*
5. *Adjust your life to God and what you see Him doing in your situation.*
6. *Do all He tells you to do.*
7. *Experience God working in and through you to accomplish His purposes.*

God is sovereign. You may face a situation like Joseph in which God does not tell you what He is doing – at first. If so, acknowledge His love and sovereignty, and depend on His sustaining grace to see you through the situation. There are some things that happen in our lives we may never understand until they are revealed in heaven. Then we will celebrate with people like Joseph that God was indeed faithful and loving – even when we didn't understand all He was doing or allowing in our lives.

You cannot know the reality of any situation until you have heard from God.

(Experiencing God, 198-208)

Engage

1. Are you in the midst of a confusing situation? How are you seeking God's perspective on it?
2. What lies or distortions about God are easy to entertain in the middle of chaos?
3. In hindsight, what perspectives have you gained from the troublesome times in your life?
4. What things in your life might be impossible to understand until they are revealed in heaven? What promises and truths about God can help your perspective as you wait?
5. Dedicate some time to purposefully interact with God around this topic of God's silence perhaps through a prayer walk, time the word, journaling, or silence. Share your experience with your group.

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Questions, discussion prompts, and small group challenges
have been influenced and derived from *Experiencing God* (Blackaby, 2021) and related materials.
We encourage your use of all Blackaby resources for deeper study. – Blackaby.org

We're here!

We would love to hear about how things are going in your small group!
Reach out any time with questions, ideas, thoughts, or concerns.
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