



The Silence of God

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!

The Silence of God: God’s Timing

I went through a lengthy time when God was silent. You probably have had that experience, too. I had been praying for many days, and there seemed to be complete silence from God. I sensed heaven was closed, and I didn’t understand what was happening. Some people told me that if God was not responding to my prayers, there must be unconfessed sin in my life. Someone even gave me a “sin checklist” to work through. Wanting to make sure I was right with God, I prayed through the list, but the silence persisted.

My problem was much like Job’s. You’ll recall that his counselors said his problems were due to sin. But Job felt he and God were on right terms. Job did not know all God was doing during that time, but for sure, his advisors were wrong. There was another reason for what was happening.

The only thing I knew to do was go back to God. I believe God, who loves me, will let me know what is going on in my life when and if I need to know. So I prayed, “Heavenly Father, I don’t understand this silence. You are going to have to tell me what You’re doing in my life.” And in time, He did – from His Word! This became one of the most meaningful experiences in my life.

I did not go searching frantically throughout the Bible for an answer. I continued my daily reading of the Word. I believed that as I read the Bible, the Spirit of God would help me understand what God was doing in my life.

One morning, I was reading the story of the death of Lazarus (see John 11:1-45). Keep in mind that John says Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. But having received word that Lazarus was mortally ill, Jesus delayed going to him. In the meantime, Lazarus died. Mary and Martha had asked Jesus to come help their brother, but all the way through the final sickness and death of Lazarus, Jesus did not come. They received no response from the One who claimed to love Lazarus!

Mary and Martha went through the entire funeral process for their beloved brother. They prepared his body and sealed him in a tomb. Still, they experienced silence from God. Only then did Jesus tell His disciples it was time to go to Lazarus.

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When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days. Mary said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:32). As I read her words during my "silent period," the Spirit of God began to help me understand something. It seemed as if Jesus said to Mary and Martha:

You are exactly right. If I had come when you asked, your brother would not have died. You know that I could have healed him because you have seen Me heal people many times. If I had come when you asked Me to, I would have healed him. But you would have never experienced any more about Me than you already know. I knew you were ready for a greater revelation of Me than you have yet known. I wanted you to see that I am the resurrection and the life. My refusal and My silence were not rejection. They were an opportunity for Me to disclose to you more of Me than you have ever known.

When that began to dawn on me, I almost jumped out of my chair. I said, "That's what's happening in my life! That's what's happening! The silence of God means He is ready to bring into my life a greater revelation of Himself than I have ever known." I immediately changed my attitude. With great anticipation, I began to watch for what new revelation God would teach me about Himself. I then had some incredible opportunities happen in my life that I might have missed without that kind of readiness and anticipation.

When there is silence from God now, I still pray through my sin checklist. If there is unconfessed sin, I confess and make it right. If, after that, there is still silence, I prepare for a new experience with God. Sometimes God is silent as He prepares you for a deeper understanding of Himself. Whenever silence comes, continue doing the last thing God told you and watch and wait for a fresh encounter with Him.

To summarize: *When you do not hear from God, you can respond in one of two ways. You can become discouraged and suffer guilt and self-condemnation. Or you can expect that God is about to bring you into a deeper knowledge of Him. The response you choose will make all the difference in how you experience God.* (Experiencing God, 190-192)

Engage

1. Have you been experiencing a period of silence from God? Why might God be withholding His Word?
2. Have you ever experienced a silence from God that, in the end, resulted in a deeper knowledge of Him?
3. How can you encourage someone experiencing the silence of God?
4. 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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