

ATTRIBUTE 1: GOD'S PRESENCE

Scripture Readings

The Bible has a lot to say about the importance God places on spending time with his creation. Review and reflect on the verses below.

1. Look up Genesis 3:8 and 4:16. What do these verses tell us about man's initial proximity to God?

2. Look up Genesis 28:15 and 31:3. These verses function as bookends, respectively recounting God's promises as Jacob departed and later returned to Canaan, the land God promised forever to Jacob's grandfather Abraham. How much did God's promises depend Jacob's physical location? In other words, did Jacob have to be in Canaan in order to remain in God's presence?

3. Read Exodus 2:11-3:12. What had Moses done to earn God's promise in 3:12?

4. Look up Exodus 13:21-22 and 40:34-38. What physical manifestations of God's presence are found in these verses?

5. Deuteronomy 31:7-8 records Moses' charge to his successor, Joshua. What does v. 8 say about the duration of God's presence with Joshua and the people of Israel?

6. Psalms 9 and 16 were both written by King David. On what did David base his trust and confidence in the Lord (see 9:10 and 16:8 in particular)?

7. What benefit of God's presence is described in Isaiah 43:2?

8. After 70 years of Babylonian captivity, a band of Israelites were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. What do we learn about God's presence from Ezra 9:9?

9. Read Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23. How do these verses mark a change from the typical Old Testament conception of God's presence?

10. John 14:26 recounts a promise Jesus made to his disciples the night before his crucifixion. What do we learn about how the presence of God will manifest itself once Jesus physically departs from the earth?

11. What is significant in relation to God's presence as we read Mark 15:38?

12. What does Jesus promise in Matthew 28:19-20 as we seek to follow his example?

Application Questions

1. Given the importance God places on his presence with his children, how should we respond in our relationships with our children?

2. Think of a time you attempted to build a relationship with someone (whether a friendship, a business relationship, or a romantic relationship). Describe the importance you attached to spending time with that person during this period.

3. What activities typically compete with spending time with our children? What are some criteria we use to decide how we spend our time?

4. Work is often cited as an activity that competes for time with our children. Should the importance of the job (e.g., a soldier being deployed overseas, a pastor visiting parishioners in the hospital, or a CEO employing thousands of people) be taken into consideration when evaluating how a father spends his time?

5. Is there such a thing as spending too much time with your children?

6. What are your feelings about the concept of “quality time”?

7. What activity or activities would you reduce or eliminate if you absolutely had to spend more time with your children?

8. How do you feel about the amount of time you spend with your children? If you don't like your answer, what first step could you take to improve your answer?
