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Why Doesn't God Show Up?

Written by Bill Perkins

Waiting for an Epiphany

Between my late teens and early twenties, I became convinced that I was on the verge of a spiritual epiphany—a paradigm shift that would revolutionize how I viewed and interacted with God. It would upset my conventional understanding of Christianity, replacing it with something contagious and overflowing. It would transform a structured, rote belief-system into a radical, fresh faith.

Deep down, I wanted God to impact the world . . . my world. I wanted prayer to cause miracles. I wanted faith to move mountains. I wanted what I believed to alter how I engaged with others.

I knew it was only a matter of time before I received this life-changing revelation. Occasionally I'd hear a sermon that moved me or notice something striking while reading the Bible, and wonder if that was *it*. But within days, the insight would fade, leaving me the same as before.

Every time, I returned to waiting—certain God would one day "show up" in a dramatic way.

Faith in Every Part of Life

Once I heard a sermon about incorporating faith into *every* part of your life. You shouldn't consider a certain time of the day or week holy, the pastor said, because all time is equally holy.

A light bulb went off in my mind—by setting aside specific time to pray and read the Bible, I had unknowingly cabined God in my life. I had only allowed his presence during those specific moments. So I abandoned my daily time with God, convinced it would somehow revitalize my faith.

But this only pushed me further from God.

Tired of Waiting

Eventually, I grew tired of waiting for a revelation from God. The conviction I felt must have simply been a reflection of my own desire to connect with the divine on a more personal level. God hadn't intended to speak to me, I figured.

Because if he had, it wouldn't have been hard to get my attention.

He Was There All Along

All these years later, I'm no longer convinced God didn't "show up" in my life. What I mean is, what if God has always been present in my life, only I've overlooked it? Perhaps by expecting a booming-voice-from-the-sky revelation, I've ignored the quiet voice of God whispering to me every day.

You see, I now believe God most often communicates, not through dramatic encounters, but ordinary, everyday life. That’s not to say he can’t appear as fire in a bush, or rain down loaves of bread, or split open the sea, or speak through a donkey.

Perhaps, though, God more often chooses to work in softer, subtler ways.

The slow transformation of our heart through prayer and obedience. The refreshing of our mind through daily reading of the scripture. The encouraging word from a friend when we’re weighed down by pain. The sunset in the sky when we’re feeling unloved. The smile of a stranger when we’re feeling unnoticed. The phone call from a parent or sibling at just the right time. The unseen opportunity we couldn’t have anticipated.

The list could go on . . . and it surely does in each of our lives.

Looking in the Wrong Place

The only reason I didn’t see God, I think, is because I had my eyes fixed on the sky when I should have been looking directly in front of me. It’s the same reason, I believe, we too often fail to see God today—because our expectations limit our sight. Perhaps when we lower our eyes, we will see him staring back at us.

It’s not climactic. It’s not dramatic. It’s not necessarily even exciting. But it’s real.

And ironically, by seeing God in the little things, I suspect we'll find deeper meaning in our daily lives. Because, finally, we’ll glimpse not only how much God loves us, but how he’s using us to love others.

Thomas Wells writes about living intentionally.