

# INTRO TO ENCOUNTER

as of 10.21.2021

This is a very practical teaching on Spirit-led evangelism. How do we live a life where we consistently experience divine appointments? How do we know when God is leading us into a divine appointment? What are the assignments we might have in the context of a divine appointment. With God's help those are the questions we hope to

answer in the next 90 minutes.

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR A LIFE OF MISSION

How do our choices and lifestyle influence our effectiveness as partners in God's mission? This is a quick review in the context of the Great Commission.

### **Intimacy.**

Our fruitfulness in the Great Commission is directly connected to the time we spend with God.

Read **JOHN 15.1-6**. Fruitfulness is a result of being connected to the vine. we connect with God's heart in the Secret Place. The more time you spend with God the more compassion you are going to have for the lost. The more time you spend with God the more you are going to love Him and love other people. The more time you spend with God the more you are going to hear His voice and be able to discern His will.

That's why Jesus modeled this lifestyle for us. He spent time with God. He received instruction from God the Father through God the Holy Spirit. and then He went out and did the works of the Kingdom.

**consecration.** our fruitfulness in the Great Commission is directly connected to our willingness to engage in the sanctification process.

Our ability to experience intimacy is related to creating spaces where God can address issues in our hearts that inhibit and interrupt our fellowship Him.

Walking in a Psalm 139 heart posture ("search me God . . .") keeps us in close fellowship with God and in the flow of progressive sanctification. God's active correction in our lives is a great assurance of our eternal standing as His sons and daughters.

See **HEBREWS 12.1-13**

Being willing to make lifestyle choices that set you apart from the world around you also contributes to intimacy (e.g. caffeine, sugar, media, entertainment, idols of any kind). anything else that would pull on your heart or exercise control over you. See **1**

**CORINTHIANS 10.23**, "you have freedom to do anything but not everything is good for you."

### **Dependence.**

We need to understand our great need for God in this process of souls coming into the Kingdom. i love what the Lord tells us in **JOHN 6.63**

"The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words i have spoken to you are spirit and life."

Spending time with God is a practical way we can acknowledge that reality.

Let's look at one more passage that expresses the heart posture God is looking for. **MATTHEW 5.3**, "God blesses those who are poor [in spirit] and realize their need for Him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs."

Another practical way of walking in a place of dependence is inquiring of the Lord. ultimately fruitful Spirit-led evangelism is about answering the questions.

1. where do i go?
2. who do i talk to?
3. what do i say (or do)?

Which brings me to the next principle of a life prepared for mission which is availability.

### **Availability.**

Availability is a significant factor in experiencing divine appointments and walking in the Great Commission.

Being deliberate about anything in life is always more fruitful. You may or may not have a natural gifting in a certain area but if you work hard and practice you usually get better at whatever you set your heart towards. [**give examples of two heart postures towards the Great Commission. Sit at home on the couch with the remote control and TV on and say "God send people to me," or actually going out on outreach. Who do you think is going to have more divine appointments?**]

Its the same way with evangelism. if you are waiting around for God to send you divine appointments He certainly will but if you actively seek divine appointments you are going to experience many more.

What does that look like?

I think for one thing it means being intentional about doing corporate outreach. there is nothing like making a commitment to doing outreach as part of your lifestyle to change you on the inside. if you do say "yes" to that then this DNA that you have been exposed to will sink deep into your spirit and be rooted and grounded.

I think the other way it looks is being intentional about lifestyle mission. build conversation with the Lord into your lifestyle. If you need to go to the grocery store then ask God, "which grocery store do you want me to go to?" if you need gas then ask God, "which gas station?" if you are on a date with your spouse ask God, "where should we go?"

Don't be religious about it. If you don't hear anything then go with what is in your heart for it is written "the steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord."

This lifestyle cultivates intimacy with God, helps you practice getting direction from the Holy Spirit and results in a significant increase in divine appointments. when you get to where you are going, without striving, be open to the people that God may highlight to you. when God does highlight people to you then ask God how to engage them or just start a conversation.

Often the Holy Spirit will give me a question to start the conversation. after a while you will get comfortable just talking with people. and remember (as my friend Hal Linhardt says) **you can talk with anyone, any time about anything.**

### **WHO IS GOD CALLING ME TO ENGAGE?**

Before we get into how to initiate a conversation i want to spend some more time talking about how to discern who God is calling you to get into a conversation with. here are some ways that God has shown me that i might be being invited into a divine appointment.

1. **they talk to me.** If someone starts talking to me that is a really good sign that I am supposed to have an encounter with them.
2. **lingering, repeated or significant eye contact.** The eyes are a spiritual gateway to the soul and spirit (**MATTHEW 6.22-23**). When i connect in the spirit with someone through their eyes then i start a conversation with them and inevitably get the opportunity to witness to them. Try to make eye contact with people. most people in our culture avoid eye contact.
3. **witness in the Spirit.** If I am drawn to someone that is often enough to let me know that God wants to do something in their life. You will increase in sensitivity to these leadings the more you do evangelism and the more open you are to interruption by the Holy Spirit. There have been times when this is so strong, I can't even continue the conversation you might have a vision of engaging someone or suddenly have a question drop in your heart for a person. You may

also get a word of knowledge or word of encouragement. These are all signs that the Holy Spirit is leading you to engage someone.

4. **design of circumstances.** You are sitting next to someone on a plane. Or your taxi driver is picking you up from the airport. Or the pizza guy comes to deliver to your front door. God puts you next to people who you don't have a relationship with Him. If you are living a life being led by the Spirit then potentially anyone God puts around you could be a divine appointment.

5. **HOW TO ENGAGE**

The Kingdom of God and ministry flow from relationship. our relationship with God is the source. that's what we have to offer. Our relationships with others become a conduit for the Kingdom of God to be released into their lives. relationships start with conversations. So starting a conversation is the way to start a relationship. Not every conversation will develop into a long term relationship but conversations are the currency of the heart.

We develop relationship by listening to someone sharing their heart and then sharing our heart with them. Not everyone will let you in right away. Usually trust needs to develop before deep sharing happens but many times the Holy Spirit will release grace and someone will start spilling their whole life story. That's a really good sign that God is doing something. opening the doors of their heart for the ministry of the gospel.

We have been over some of these but i want to revisit some of the ways we can engage people in conversation and potential relationship.

1. **be friendly.** smile. most people don't have joy. ask God that yours would be contagious. you have access to an unlimited supply of joy and peace. give it away. many divine appointments start with just being friendly and loving on people.
2. **casting the line.** Anyone ever been fishing? Do you catch a fish every time you cast the line? of course not! Most evangelism starts by just being friendly and then seeing if the Holy Spirit lands on what you say. Opening lines can be as simple as, "how are you doing?" or "those are some sweet red pants" or "what are you reading?" Whatever the Holy Spirit might highlight to you.
3. **meet a need.** Like Jesus feeding the 5,000 in John 6 and then preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. Pay for someone's gas. buy someone's coffee. [**share testimony of Shanna at Gas station**]. Buy someone's lunch or dinner [**share testimony from chinese restaurant in Ennis.**] Leave a Jesus-size tip. [**share testimony of waitress from Denny's**]. [**talk about gift card ministry**].

4. **connect in the natural.** Like Jesus in **JOHN 4** talking with the woman at the well. the conversation started around water then transitioned to spiritual things. Ask God what to ask them and what to say.
5. **direct approach.** "We are out today sharing the gospel with people, have you heard it?" "Do you mind if i share it with you?" (get permission principle)
6. **one-minute witness.** Ask them "can i ask you something? What is the best thing that has ever happened to you? in your entire life?" [listen]. Then ask, "can I share with you the best thing that ever happened in my life?" Then share testimony
7. **ask a question and listen.** I love asking questions that God gives me and then listening because then I can address issues in their story when I share mine. listening is like depositing in someone's love bank. After you make deposits you can make withdrawals. If you listen to them often they will listen to you.

### **THE MINISTRY OF LISTENING**

Evangelism is more about listening than it is about talking. Use questions to draw out people's hearts and invest in them. take a genuine interest in them. This conversation may lead them into eternity with God.

As you listen to them be listening to God. As your discernment grow you will often get a topographical map of their heart. They may share the lies that are keeping them from the Kingdom or reveal that the door of their heart is open to God (out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks). God will give you follow on questions through trial and error (and by revelation) to lead the conversation towards the heart issue that He wants to address.

As soon as God shows you the key then make the transition to the spiritual and engage them with as much grace and favor as God gives you.

### **COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT**

There may be many reasons that God is putting you in front of someone. People generally need multiple encounters with the reality of God before they are ready to respond to the call to surrender. They need to know that this is real.

Let's say it takes 7-10 encounters for people to get the point of surrender even though we know that everyone is different. Our job is to partner with God to bring them from a 3 to a 4 or a -5 to a 0. Sometimes we get to be there when they hit 10 and they are

ready to do business with God but most often we are laboring with the Holy Spirit to move their heart closer to surrender along that continuum.

here are some of the things that God may lead you to do.

1. **share your testimony.** Testimonies are powerful. they are the evidence of how the reality of God has manifested in your life. **REVELATION 12.2** tells us that our testimonies can push back darkness. When we share our story the Holy Spirit bears witness in the heart of the person we are talking to that what we are saying is true.
2. **share the gospel.** The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. **ROMANS 1.16.** own the gospel in your own heart language and share it whenever you have the opportunity. Contextualize it for our culture. its all about surrender to the Lordship of Jesus.
3. **healing.** The gospel is not a matter of mere talk but power. see **1 CORINTHIANS 4.20.** God may want to release healing to the person which many times opens them up to receive the gospel. Pray for healing whenever God puts someone in front of you and prompts you to pray for them. Encourage them to try to do something they never could do before. Ask them what their pain level is on a scale of 1-10. Pray again if you need to. If Jesus heals them share the gospel.
4. **prophecy.** God may give you a word of knowledge or a word of encouragement for them, that will often open them up to sharing the gospel with them. Also speak truth about who they are in God.
5. **prayer.** Pray for them for a felt need. pray the gospel into them. Pray for a revelation of Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and touch them right now. If the presence of the Holy Spirit manifests (and He will) then ask them if they are experiencing anything. If so, share the gospel and invite them to surrender.
6. **lead them to Jesus.** Give people the opportunity to surrender their lives to Jesus and respond to the gospel if you have shared it. Evangelism isn't just about cool encounters but about partnering with the Lord to bring people to a decision point about Jesus. don't be afraid to ask them. If they are willing to surrender then pray that the Lord would show them what sins they need to acknowledge and turn from. Wait on the Lord and encourage them to ask for forgiveness and surrender in their own words. If they ask for help then lead them in prayers of repentance and surrender.
7. **baptism of the Holy Spirit.** This usually follows surrender. Lay your hands on them and pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Give them a teaching on the Holy Spirit if possible so that they have understanding about what is happening.
8. **commissioning.** Often you will run into people who are genuine followers of Jesus. Give them an evangelism tool and ask them to listen to it. Pray that God

will show them who to give it to and commission them into the Great Commission.

9. **get their contact info.** If you are supposed to follow up with the person and you have favor then collect their contact information (name, email and phone). I often ask if they are on facebook because it's an easy way to connect that people are used to. We'll talk about follow up and discipleship during week 8 but start now.  
**[talk through NBSK instructions if you have time]**

### **DEBRIEFING**

Take time to debrief with your ministry partner (if you are on an organized outreach) and the Holy Spirit. What else does God want you to learn from that interaction? What did you discern and observe? What could have been done differently? This is one of the most important aspects of growing in evangelism is learning from the Lord as you go.

**CAUTION.** As you enter into this lifestyle be aware that those around you might get offended. Talk through with your spouse and family what God is doing in your heart and bring them into this. Encourage them to go through a Messenger Boot Camp experience or disciple them into this lifestyle. Give away what you have learned.

### **QUESTIONS?**