



Discussion Guide
Encounters – Part 2
LEADER GUIDE

.....

In Encounters, we'll look at ordinary people in Scripture whose lives were changed by a direct encounter with the presence of God. As we lean into the vision of Coram Deo—living before the face of God—we'll discover that God's presence is not meant to be an occasional experience, but the defining reality that shapes every part of our lives.

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

.....

**"Earth 's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God:
But only he who sees takes off his shoes. "**
[Elizabeth Barrett Browning]

LEADER RESOURCES || **Leader Note** We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well.

- **Passage Summary**
 - In this portion of Exodus, His people are living under oppression and are forced into slavery in Egypt. God sees, and God knows. Then, He acts to bring deliverance—first by delivering the one who will in turn deliver them. Moses has been in exile in Midian for years, and this encounter with God is the beginning that changes everything.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || **Leader Note** The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.

Which is the most iconic Exodus adaptation? Prince of Egypt? 10 Commandments?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || **Leader Note** Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!

Lord, help us to want You more. Help us to want Your presence, to want to know You. Bring us one step closer to You today.

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE || **Leader Note** Help your group memorize this verse together by having each person read it aloud. The goal is to enjoy hiding God's word in our hearts together.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
[Joshua 1:9]

BIG IDEA || **Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.

The presence of God transforms places of shame to places where we are with God, robbing shame of its power.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

Have someone read aloud Exodus 2:22-3:12 in the ESV.

1. How capable is Moses of delivering Israel? *He definitely doesn't seem ready, does he? It isn't Moses who initiates this, and it won't be Moses who carries it through. This has got to be God's doing from start to finish. Moses has a role, but God is the one doing it.*
2. Look through the passage at the word "see" and its related words. What do you notice? *God saw, and God knew. He looked (Moses), "appeared," "I will turn aside to see," The LORD saw that he turned aside to see, (Moses) was afraid to look, the LORD said, "I have surely seen..." "And now behold." It's a lot!*
3. Verses 24 and 25 are incredible—God heard. God remembered His covenant (He did not forget). God saw. God knew. What have you thought that God didn't notice? *This cry is like a child in distress, an agonized cry for help. God did not turn a blind eye to it—He acted. But to the people still in slavery in Egypt while a bush is on fire in Midian, it might still seem like God never noticed. They were in slavery for years, and that is a long time to wait for deliverance. We need to acknowledge places where we have cried out to God but have not yet noticed His action. Waiting is an important part of faith.*
4. Why couldn't Moses get any closer to the bush? *We don't understand holiness very well, and it's clear that Moses needed instruction in how to behave in the presence of God. He did instinctually seem to want to hide his face, and that was likely for fear of seeing God's face and dying on the spot.*
5. If you've felt or experienced the manifest presence of God, can you describe that encounter? *Not everyone has had a direct experience of God. Sometimes, we get a gentle word, a special time in the Bible, a dream or vision, or hearing Him guiding us or giving us peace in a troubled time. But the more intense God's presence is, the harder it becomes to describe. Some of the prophets in the Bible used "like" a lot, because it's unfamiliar.*
6. The wilderness was where Moses' shame had driven him. Where does shame drive you? *Shame tends to make us isolate, withdraw. But for some, it's easier to hide in a crowd than in a basement. It's important to realize the pattern of where we go when we're ashamed, so we can pause next time and meet God instead of continuing to run.*
7. What moment of this story resonates with you the most? *Some of us are right there with Moses when he is so insecure about his own capability. That's fair—and God reassures him. Some of us resonate with the curiosity to look and try to see something interesting. Some of us are more likely to argue with God. Sometimes, relating with what is going on helps us see what the story is showing us.*
8. What has the Lord been showing you lately? *This passage is all about seeing. So, what is He showing us that we need to see?*

9. What do you need to turn aside from so you can get a closer look at what God is doing? *It doesn't have to be something bad we need to repent of. Sometimes we need to let things go just to fill that space with more paying attention to what God is doing. This is a little more than being interruptable. It's being willing to stop what we've been doing so we can look closer.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || **Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Something has to happen for us to be able to **stay in the presence of God**.

As you consider your next step, reflect on: 1) Where have you been looking lately? Does shame turn your gaze downward? 2) How can you turn your spiritual eyes to looking up?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

PRAYER FOCUS || **Leader Note** *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another's personal requests!*

"Lord, send reminders through the week to turn our gaze toward You. We want to see Jesus. We want to run toward Jesus. Capture our attention and help us become ready to be in Your presence. Amen."