

"Experiencing God" – "How to Know and Do the will of God" – Jim Putman

Here is where we are going today – let me just read you the 7th Reality, it says this – you come to know God by experience as you obey Him. And He accomplishes His work through you. I want you to hear that – you are able to experience God when you obey Him. I want you to look at John 14:22 – Jesus has been telling the disciples that He is going to go away – He's going to come back – He is not going to reveal Himself to the rest of the world what He does to the disciples – at least initially – and the reason for that was – Jesus had to die on the cross. That was the plan. It wasn't like He came to save the world and He knew - everybody can listen to Me and do what I say – no, He knew, Isaiah 53 says that He would come into the world but His own would not recognize Him and they would put Him on the cross for the sins of all mankind. Jesus knew what was going to happen. And so He wasn't going to use His powers to conquer the first time He came. He is going to do that the second time – but the first time He uses His power to reveal that He can do all things is when He chooses love well, even on the cross. So Jesus is saying – you know – I am not going to do things the way you think – and so Judas – there are two Judas' in Jesus' discipleship team – one was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, but this is the other Judas – it says then Judas... verse 22... Not Judas Iscariot – said but Lord why do You intend to show Yourself to us and not to the world? And so here is what Jesus says – Jesus replied anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them and We will come to them and make Our home with them. Anyone who does not love Me – will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own, they belong to the Father Who sent Me.

Now I want you to stop right there. There are a couple things I want to point out about this. Jesus is saying I am going to show Myself to everybody when I raise from the dead – in effect that is what He is saying – when you understand the whole plan, – I'm going to die on the cross and I'm going to raise from the dead and then anybody who obeys my teachings – I am going to show myself to them. But here's the point – this is really important a lot of people leave this out. See a lot of people want to preach this gospel that says hey today if you're here Jesus knows you by name and He loves you and He wants to save you. All you need to do is pray this prayer with me, come up front, let's just pray a prayer, and if you prayed that prayer or if you come up front and we get you baptized – it is like you have crossed the finish line. Here is how it is going to work – you are going to claim salvation from hell – you have got hell insurance – you don't need to be discipled – you don't need to get in a group – you don't need to obey Jesus – you see you are saved from your sin and Jesus' commands are really divine suggestions. And you can do what you want – because you are saved. And so you come to church on Christmas and Easter or whenever you can get it in – you know every once in a while try to be generous – right? Follow your own dreams and Jesus is going to come into your life and He is going to help you chase your dreams. No that's not what's going on here – you see Jesus is the Messiah – which means King – the King of kings and the Lord of

lords. In the garden, Jesus walked with Adam and Eve – God created this place where He could come and spend time with us, and yet He was still supposed to be King. He said you are free, you have got all this freedom to do all this stuff, but, this right here – this is the one thing, I don't want... Look at it, but don't eat it. The devil said you want to choose your own right and wrong – you don't want to let Him choose your right and wrong. Listen – He is trying to keep you down. He is lying to you. Just do what you want. You'll get to keep all of this beautiful stuff and eat from the tree too. You will get to decide... remember it's the tree of knowledge of good and evil... You will get to decide what is good and evil. You don't have to listen to Him. See it was supposed to be a relationship we had with God, but He was King. The Creator and the King. We rebelled. Now we live in a world of our own making. Everyone does what is right in their own eyes. It is world of darkness, of sin where the devil can play in the dark. It is a world where... It's still got beauty in it because God created it. But it is now been contaminated. It is a kingdom of man. And God allow that to continue because much like when you have raised your kids to know the Lord and to do the right things – and then at some point they have to decide do they want to live that way or do they not. And what you are hoping is they will decide to live that way, but if they choose not to you are hoping that they will understand that what you taught them was for their good and if they don't do good they are going to live in those consequences. And you are hoping that those consequences will lead them back to understanding everything you said as a parent was really because you love them. And You knew they didn't know. God allowed the world to continue because He wanted us to discover – it is really best He is King. And He really does know what He is talking about and He really does love us. And so He comes down – God the Son comes down and says have you had enough of this yet? But He comes down as King. God – Lord. And those of us believers we say I don't just want an event – you see that is what we want we want an event Christianity – we want to have a baptism or we want a prayer – whatever – and we treat it like, it's almost like people who want to have a wedding but don't want to have a marriage. Spend a whole bunch of money on the wedding. Right? But don't want to live a married life. And the commitments they make, they are just for the event. I vow to stay with you forever – sickness or health – that's just words you say for the ceremony. But you really don't mean them. Or you mean them as long as it goes the way I want it to go. Is this making sense? And then there I didn't really mean that – it was really a vow I made to be married – that was just – if it turned out the way I wanted, I would do that – but as soon as it doesn't, I am out. Is this making sense to you? Notice when Jesus says – if you love Me you will obey Me, and My Father and I will come to you and live with you.

That is Reality 7 – you come to experience God when you obey Him. When you obey Him He comes in He lives in you, and you experience His presence. And so He is not talking about just an event – He is talking about a repentance of the heart. Baptism is not just an event It is a picture of a commitment – it is like wedding vows that plan on keeping. That I'm going to confess in front of everybody like when you get married – this is the woman I want to be with guys. And I'm saying this is them, I commit to them in public. I am not ashamed of them – I want everybody to know about this commitment. And baptism is a picture of dying to the life before Christ before marriage like burning the "black book" – well they don't use books anymore. It's done, my old life is done. Raised to walk in a new life with Jesus. There is a repentance of heart that says – it's in Acts 2, Peter gets up and they say what do we do now to be saved – and Peter says repent and be baptized. Repentance is a condition of the heart that says I am going to be changed from being self ruled – on the throne of my own heart – to – Your rule Jesus because You are right and You are good and You saved me – I don't want to just be saved in the penalty of my sin I want to be saved thinking with my own shortsightedness – my own limited perspective – my own selfishness that has left me in a condition of lostness. Not just separation from God in hell – but lostness in my own life. There is a repentance. God wants relationship with you He wants you to love Him – He loves you.

He says those who love Me will obey Me. Now that doesn't mean perfect obedience because we still have a sinful nature – it's when you get saved – it's like when you come out saying I'm going to live a new life – and you have this gap time between now thinking of heaven when it comes in its fullness. When God gets rid of the devil, our sin nature and all that, we now live amongst lost people – we get the Holy Spirit – we have the word of God as a light – and that's why you hear from God through His Word so that you are familiar with His voice – and now you are walking and joining Him in what He is doing. Listen we all know that we still struggle so it is not like OK if I sin if I don't obey His commands that means that I am lost again – and I don't get to experience Him. No – the kind of experience you have with Him when you are a Christ Follower – is there is a turning of your life – you want to follow Jesus and you struggle like man I did that again, you see there is a condition change, repentance creates a condition change in your heart, we're used to hate doing what God wants or you didn't care. And you love your own stuff. And now you like man my sin – I don't want that – I want what God wants. But that doesn't mean you don't still sin. But you don't live in it – you know practice it.

The Bible says – 1 John says no one who is born of God continues in sin – that word – network continues the practice so we still struggle with sin, but we don't practice it to get good at it. You practice football to get good at football. You practice medicine to get good at medicine, if your doctor... or a counselor. We don't practice, it is not that – that is not the trajectory that I want to live by. There is a change of heart. That's why 1 John the same writer gave us this passage and John says this – in 1 John 1 – if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just that He will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. My dear children I write this to you so that you will not sin, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One. So, I want you to understand it is not when you are Christ follower there is a condition change – you struggle when you are acting in a way that is not in line with God and what He wants – the Holy Spirit is like – hey – whoa – you don't want to do that. He doesn't say – you are no good and you are going to hell – that is the accuser, he can speak. The devil is the accuser – he accuses you – you are not good enough. The Holy Spirit says that is not you anymore – that is not what I want – you are my son, that is not the way you want to act. There is a repentance that changes our heart.

Notice that passage, He says if you love Me you will obey Me – and My Father and We will come in with you and you will experience Him. You see what we're really talking about – obedience – you are going to experience Him if you disobey Him, but that is going to be like conviction like knock that off. That is experiencing God too. For those of you that are going – I just don't see your God doing anything in my life – oh really? Well do you have a conscience? That the Holy Spirit is saying hey knock that off – that is experiencing God. Any of you got that? OK – you are experiencing God. Left to yourself, if you didn't have the Word of God and you didn't have Him doing a work in you – as a Christian – you know there is power in that His discipline is Him working and that is experiencing God. And some of us experience it more than others. see we have been talking about if you want to experience God you have got to be obedient. You need to have a growing obedience in your life. A lot of you, if you're a brand-new believer, you don't even know really what He says. But you want to know because – it is like spiritual food to your soul – you want to know so that He can reshape your life. Now the problem is He starts to reshape your life in ways that is hard at times because you are used to that, you enjoy that, you may even like that. But you have come to the place where you are reminded that His love for you is deep and He died for you – and everything He ever said was because of His love. and you're like OK I like it, but I know You love me and if You say no – You know things I don't know. All right well that leads to a couple of things I want to share with you about obedience – some things I've learned over the years – and they are absolutely

scriptural, that I want to share with you. And so when you think about obedience – I first want you to know this – and I kind of you alluded to it a minute ago – number one if you are thinking about obedience, a lot of people go – OK I want God's direction in my life – I want Him to... Well, a lot of times we had given Him our plans – when we get saved – we say OK this isn't drug dealing, this isn't prostitution – this isn't – I have got a good plan – I want to be this – I want to be this – I want to do this. and sometimes God goes – you know that's a pretty good plan – but sometimes, a lot of times He goes no that is not near good enough for one of my sons or daughters. You think it is, but it is because you are looking through limited eyes so, no we are not really going to do that. And then sometimes we go yes we are. Yes I am.

That was my story. I wanted to be an Olympic champion – I wanted to give God the credit – I will use wrestling to serve you Lord – and God says yeah that's nice Jim no. At the time, that was a wrestling match, and it was painful and He was right. But sometimes, it isn't us and in Him a plan – Sometimes it's like all right Lord – I want You to tell me what You want – so let's lay it out – let's lay it out... You want me to do this for two years, You want me to do this the next five years – this is going to be this way, that way – just lay it out and I will do it. And God says no we're not really going to do that either – and we want Him to do that. God I want to know what You want to do. And let me just tell you one thing you need to know about experiencing God. It's like I said I already alluded to it. But let me say it again. God does a lot more talking to you about who you are. He has a lot more to say about who you are being – your character, then He has to say about your direction. I'm not saying He doesn't say anything about your direction, but ultimately He speaks most to you about who you are being. For instance I come home, I have worked all day, I'm a man, I only have certain number of words and I'd use them all up. I come home, my wife has a certain amount of words too, but she didn't use them all up – or if she did they were with her grandkids the words they are using, are not the words she wants to use. She wants to talk – I come in the door, I have had enough, she says hey honey are you doing? I say fine I go over sit down on the couch – I turn on the scepter of power [referring to the television remote] TV – I to her out – and here's what the Holy Spirit says – hey dude – you just walked by my My daughter –yeah but Lord – no, no, no – dude, I know what you want, but what you want isn't best for you or your relationship with her. Go back in there say you are sorry. and talk to your wife. You see the Lord speaks like that. When you are at work and your boss is frustrating you and you are in the lunch room or wherever you are eating lunch with a fellow employee and – and you start venting a little bit – you don't know why they're doing this and why they are doing that – and you have got a critical spirit – and the spirit of the Lord says Hey dude the fruit of the spirit doesn't include being critical.

You see God has a lot more to say – He speaks about who we are. Because the truth is no matter where He puts us, if we are not being who He wants us to be – who is best for us and everybody else – why would He move us into a position that our character disqualifies us for. Or if we were there, we would make a mess of it – spiritually and relationally. Number one – He wants us to be a certain kind of person. And He has a lot to say about us. And again – we go to Defense – well what about them – no, no, no – I didn't ask you about them – what you do you do for Me because of what I have done for you. Which leads to the second thing. God's principle of giving you more –directionally – is built around this principle of if you will be faithful with a few things – a little – then I will give you more. Jesus said this, and it is a powerful... He said right here in Luke 16:10 – whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much. And whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. He says if you are faithful with a little I will give you more – and so again a lot of times we don't – we look right past the little things because we think they are not important enough. and He says no it's those little things that build your character, and if you won't do those little things that build your character – I am not putting you in a big position because there is nothing worse than a person in a big position with little character. The enemy loves to

fast-track people based on their giftedness, into high-level positions because when those people fall at the character level, it doesn't just wreck them, it wrecks whole companies, it wrecks whole churches, it wrecks whole families, because people want to bypass the little things. God says no – if you're faithful with a little – if you're faithful with the character things – then I will put you into more important things. But, that leads to Number 3 – again sometimes what we think is more important, God says – that is nothing at all. You know the mom who decides that the reason she needs to go to work is because it can't be just a man's world – I want what every man has... And so I'm not going to raise my child. And we think that is big, because the whole world, the media, everybody is going to applaud for us. And God says don't you know that the most important thing you can do – that is going to have the longest lasting impact – is not trying to pursue what you think men are doing. It is that child who could change the whole world. It's that marriage that you broke into. I need another job because we need more money – because we need more stuff – and we can't downsize because you know I can't step back – I can go backward, so I have to take that job that takes me away from my family or I have got to take that role that has more responsibilities – and lots of times without more money – because I have got to be big – I have got to be – you know that's important, maybe they will put my name on a wall, and I'm just going to tell you I deal with a lot of retired people who spent their whole lives chasing those things. And you know what happened when they got off the train? It just kept going. And the things they gave up they can't get back. God says if you will be faithful in a few things, I will give you more, but they will be more in line with what He is doing with eternal things involved. Things that cannot be taken away from you. Things that you will want in 1 billion years, not in 10. Oh here's another one that I've learned. He won't tell you what to do next if you have refused to do what He told you to do last. Right? We're like – Hey I want to do this, God why aren't you answering? And He is like well I already told you to do something and you told me no. The steppingstone to the future that God has for you is being obedient where you are at. That is important.

2 Timothy 2:19 – turnover their real quick I want you to see this passage – powerful passage. Let's go into this quickly it says this – nevertheless God's solid foundation stands firm sealed with this inscription. The Lord knows those who are His and everyone who confesses the name of the Lord – listen to this – must turn away from wickedness. By the way James tells us to know the will of God and not do it is sin. Sin isn't just something that you do that you shouldn't do – it is something you don't do that you should. He says we must turn away – here is that old thing about obedience again – don't I just, what you mean I have to turn away from wickedness? What do you mean I have to turn away from sin. I mean just the big ones right? No – if God's Word says it, and as we grow we learn more and more and more. That is why it's a process of ever-changing we are never done with. We struggle to do the things that He already said to do, and we keep growing, and He keeps changing us and working in our life pressing on towards what He has for us in Christ Jesus Paul talks about. Forgetting what is behind, pressing on. Not that I have already attained it he said, I just keep pressing on. He goes on he says in a large house their articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some are for special purposes and some are for common use Those who cleanse themselves from the latter – meaning wickedness – and for doing mundane and unimportant tasks – is what he is saying – spiritually unimportant tasks – those who cleanse themselves from the latter be instruments for special purposes made Holy and useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Get this – you want to be a tool for special use for the Lord – you want to be involved in eternal things? You have got to get rid of wickedness in your life. It's opportunity cost. The time you are spending doing wickedness is time you could be spending doing the things of God. If you are so busy over here doing this – you cannot be involved in that over there. And if you are so involved in the good things and made them the greatest things – rather than say I'm going to limit the good things so I can

say yes to the great things – we are not going to be used for very important things. You see it is called "opportunity cost". It's a business term – your spending time just doing the wrong thing – you only have so much time – unless you decrease this over here – you don't have time for this over here. And so here is what I want to say about Christians in America right now. In America we do this – I prayed the prayer once – I did the baptism thing once – I did my thing – I will visit church you know – 1.1 times a month – I'm going to spend my money the same way as the rest of the world does – I am going to spend my time – but you know Christmas, Easter and if I don't have anything else going on I'm going to do that – and I ask why? – Well is because we have got to chase the buck, our kid's got to be good in sports, you know we've got all these things that we've got to do. I'm not saying you don't have a job and I'm not saying that your kids can't be in sports. But I am saying you have so much time and energy, and you want to be a bout the Lord and what He is doing, but we don't have time, there is no margin so we are we are rock skipping. You know you use that term or you take a rock across the lake and you throw it real fast and it skips – and you don't ever go deep into anything it's like surface everything – surface relationship with your marriage – surface relationship with your kids. You go on vacation once a year. And you're just too busy to spend much time other than that. You will make it up in your vacation time. But then your kid wants to bring somebody with them – they want to go on vacation with somebody they actually know.

– See if God is all about relationship – Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment? To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And to love your neighbor as yourself. He said and all of that hangs on love. All the commands He says, all of the laws, prophets and everything written in Scripture hangs on this. Those two – love the Lord your God – love your neighbor. It is all about. Relationship. See what God is doing is restoring relationship with Himself and relationship takes time. And God is trying to restore relationship with others. The Scripture says if you want in the light as He and in the light 1 John 1:5 – then you have Koinonia – deep abiding relationship with others. When you look at Christians, they have deep relationships. We are supposed to be known for our love. Relationship takes time. Reaching lost people, loving them well, helping them be a disciple of Jesus, entering into them where they are at and walking with them takes time. If I have no time, then what I want to do is I want to have once a month we hit the town with little Bible flyers – I checked the box – I hand you a flyer – You're going to hell, you need Jesus. Here you go. I did my witness thing because that is all the time I had, and so there is no time to get to know them to really know where they are at. There is no time to disciple them. I go to church a couple times a month and you know I have my little daily devotional time every once in a while – no listen if you don't have the time for relationship with God and others then your margin is taken up by things that are not of first importance to God. You can't get In a Life Group, can't do a class, I am just so busy... I'll just stay in my pajamas and watch it online because then I don't have to have the drive time there, I don't have the drive time back, I am just rock skipping through life. You can't be a part of what God is doing if you won't stop and see it.

– Like the good Samaritan you know – the guys walk right around him, they were too busy. One guy, a Samaritan who wasn't supposed to be godly, took the time to enter in and minister to a person because he had margin. You want to be a Christ Follower, you want to be about what God is doing, it means there has to be some time. Which means you have to cut away from some things that the world thinks you need, and you have come to believe you need. You have to make some decisions. Jesus called us to be Christ Followers. Not Christ visitors. While that leads to the last one that really has kind of changed my focus over the years. The last one is this. When you decide to join God in what He is doing, your experience will be that of a war. Now here is what I mean by that. If you go through Scripture, every time God was doing something in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the enemy was coming after the work of God. There was a war with a country. There was a war inside. The Israelite people. When Jesus came, here came the demons. They actually killed Jesus. When Jesus sent

His disciples out to the world, they didn't want to hear it. The enemy came against Him. See a lot of us think if something gets uncomfortable it cannot possibly be God's will. So if I want to be God's person at work and I am supposed to be there, then it must mean that He is going to make it easy for me at work. It can be the Lord... I prayed about this job, I got this job but, you know what they are just not very nice. And it was really complicated. And so it just couldn't have been God's will. I don't have the time for actually using that as my mission field. I mean, that cannot be God's will. No God leads us into difficult places. Now that doesn't mean there isn't the time to leave but, American Christians think that if something is uncomfortable it cannot be good. If I go to a church and I start to get involved – and there is a battle in Home Group – and there is a problem here, and what did you think, that the devil is going to stand back and go yeah I want you to spiritually grow – so you can reach lost people so you can take territory from me? I am going to stand back and let your church have it easy. That's what I'm going to do. No when you decide to be obedient to the Lord and join Him in what He is doing you are going to have to expect that you are going to have to pray. We'll wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces in the heavenly realms. We are going to have to forgive one another. There is nothing easy about that. We're going to have to be humble enough to receive correction instead of getting defensive. When there is a battle, and the old ways start sneaking in, because the enemy is whispering in the minds of people around, we have to get together and say you know what, I know what the enemy is trying to do here and I am going to fight for this relationship. We are going to talk this out. I am going to stay here, I am not going to run. Because it's uncomfortable, I am not going to go to a different church because you know, those people over there aren't jacked up. If there are people in a church, they are jacked up. And if the church is really moving towards doing what God wants them to do, the devil will definitely be there trying to get them fighting in the huddle so they don't win at the line of scrimmage. To be obedient to the Lord means that Jesus said you must deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow Me. Denying yourself isn't easy. I don't know about you guys, but I have a conflict going on between my ears all the time. Anybody else in here have that? Then you throw my wife in – there is me and my sin nature – then my wife has her, and her sin nature. And it is not easy. You know we live in a... [Culture] ... If I find my soulmate it will be happily ever after. You don't live in heaven. You want to make it through marriage you better be ready to fight. Yourself, and the enemy.

Well... I want as I close the series to say my prayer is that we will experience God. Our nation, our community, our marriages, our homes. We need God and the world is going to try to get us to fight all the wrong fights – and even if it's the right fight to fight – fight the wrong way. And we're going to get all anxious and angry and frustrated. You feed on Fox news, or MSNBC, or CNN you are going to pull your hair out and there are going to be a lot more bald people in one year. I'm not saying you're not aware of what is going on in the world. I am saying God has got a big battle for us to fight – I think the time is short. So if you have never accepted Jesus today I am not saying hey let me tell you something easy – there is nothing easy about following Jesus. It's a fight, it's just the right fight. And you have the right help in the right support if you will choose it. You need to say all right I will accept Jesus. I am ready. And baptism is commanded in Scripture. Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. Because it is more than just an event, but it signifies something important. If you have given your life to Jesus but you have never connected in a Small Group, Jesus, He shared His life in the gospel and those who believe, got connected with Him in relationship. That is why we do Small Groups. The early church met together in the temple courts and from house to house in relationship. They didn't just meet in the temple courts big group, they were doing life together. You were called to be connected, and Internet connection is not just a social group, the word of God is central and in those groups we are learning to become ministers. Not consumers. We have been saved and God has gifted us and He is working in us, and we are becoming a minister to

those around us and we're becoming ministers in the world and we are serving in the Body of Christ because this is a local Body that works together, loves each other well and organizes so that we can minister to those within and reach those who are without. Every week you know Sunday morning you know people come I need to be fed, it's me me me me – and I didn't like that music, and I didn't like that sermon – I'm going to find somewhere where I like everything that's going on... And you know what, that's a consumer mindset. That's broken – listen you are going to find broken stuff everywhere God shapes us and grows us so that we fill in the gaps rather than just point at them and say – hey somebody should fix that. We are all learning to be disciples who can disciple our own kids and be on mission with Jesus where ever we go. We call this the SCMD process. Jesus shared who He was – and He shared the truth. Those who believe, they got connected in relationship. In that relationship they got connected to relationship with God, the Word, they started to change. He change them from consumers to those who cared. Ministers – they were trained to be ministers. Every one of them, trained to be ministers. Ordinary people. And then they were sent out to make disciples to reproduce the process. What is your next step? If you are not connected – it is time to get connected. If you are not growing and becoming a servant – it is time to take the next step and start serving. As we get ready to go into this next period of time, God is working and He is inviting us. Will we be tuned in? I pray we will. What is your next step?