

Luke 22:39. “[After the Last Supper,] Jesus . . . went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives . . . , withdrew from the disciples . . . , knelt down, and prayed.”

For further insight, read Luke 9:20-36.

- a. What kinds of things seemed to be on Jesus mind at this point in time? When Jesus got to the top of the mountain, centered himself, and began to pray, what kinds of things do you imagine he needed to talk to God about?
 - b. Why do you suppose God sent Moses and Elijah? What kinds of things might they have talked to Jesus about?
 - c. What impact did this prayer encounter with God seem to have on Jesus?
5. On Sunday, Jeff focused our attention on that key phrase that says, “While Jesus was praying, the appearance of his face changed.” Luke 9:29.
- a. In your mind’s eye, how do you imagine Jesus’ face changed?
 - b. Think back across your own life and tell us about a time you’ve had an encounter with God that had a huge transformative impact on you.
 - c. When you have a Personal Encounter with God in prayer and worship, how does that impact your mind? Your feelings? Your body?
6. The kind of prayer encounter that transforms us, and lifts the weight of the world off our shoulders, requires more than 5-10 minutes of reciting prayer requests to God. Jeff offered an outline of key steps for high-impact Personal Encounters with God gleaned from a cross-section of prayer and meditation resources. Virtually all these resources recommend the steps outlined on page 3. Take a moment to read through the steps together, then tackle the questions below.
- a. Which of the Five Steps is most challenging to you or potentially most helpful?
 - b. Where is your favorite quiet place to encounter God?
 - c. For you personally, what method listed in Item 2 of the outline (or beyond the outline) best helps you quiet yourself and open up to God?
 - d. Do you tend to ask God questions in prayer? Do you sense answers? If so, how would you describe this process for you, if a friend asked you to explain how it works for you?
 - e. Do you have a regular schedule of quiet times with God? What’s your schedule? Are you keeping your schedule?
 - f. Do you practice “Balance Breaks” or “Sacred Pauses”? What form do they take for you? Are they helpful? How so?

How To Have Personal Encounters With God

1. Go to your quiet place.
2. Quiet yourself. How? Experiment with various options such as:
 - a. Listening to a few minutes of worship music.
 - b. Gazing at nature or an object, like a candle or cloud.
 - c. Sitting in silence, breathing, dismissing all conscious thoughts.
 - d. Pondering a Scripture passage.
 - e. Repeating a Bible verse or breath prayer over and over again as a mantra.
 - f. Expressing gratitude for the blessings of the last 24 hours.
 - g. Visualize being in a beautiful place.
3. Speak to God from your gut and listen to what God says back.
 - a. Tell God what's stressing you and ask what God wants to say to you.
 - b. Verbalize or write down what you sense God saying.
4. Schedule your encounter times with God or the crush of life will **ALWAYS** crowd them out.
5. Take a couple brief "Balance Breaks" or "Sacred Pauses" through the day (1-2 minutes each).