

**2020**  
**BIBLE STUDY RETREAT**



**Oakwood Baptist Church**

**January 16-18, 2020**

**Beach Cove Resort**

**North Myrtle Beach**

# Speaker



**BOB PAYNE**

Bob is the Director of Experiencing God Weekends for Blackaby Ministries International. He has served under the personal mentorship and teaching of Dr. Henry Blackaby for twenty years. He has served in more than 250 churches in the US, Canada, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, the Middle East, Nigeria, and Sudan.

## 2020 Bible Study Retreat

# Experiencing God Weekend

### Thursday Evening Session: 6:30 PM —9:00 PM Page

6:30-6:45	Time of Worship	
6:45-7:45	Session 1: Introduction & Practical Application .....	7
7:45-8:00	Break	
8:00-9:00	Session 2: Reality 1 & Small Group Discussion .....	9

### Friday Morning Session: 8:30 AM—Noon

8:30-8:45	Time of Worship	
8:45-10:15	Session 3: Realities 2 & 3 .....	10
10:15-10:45	Break	
10:45-12:00	Session 4: Reality 4 & Small Group Discussion .....	14

### Friday Evening Session: 7:00 PM —9:00 PM

7:00-7:10	Time of Worship	
7:10-8:00	Session 5: Realities 5 & 6 .....	15
8:00-8:10	Break	
8:10-9:00	Session 6: Reality 7 & Small Group Discussion .....	17

### Saturday Morning Session: 9:00 AM—Noon

9:00-9:15	Time of Worship	
9:15-10:30	Session 7: Putting in All Together: Short Summary	
10:30-10:45	Break	
10:45-12:00	Session 8: Challenge, Adjustments, Commitment/Covenant	

You will be given time during the Saturday morning session to clear your room and check out. The hotel usually does not permit late checkout. Luggage may be brought to the Conference Room.





## Seven Realities from *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will*

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a **continuing love relationship** with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a **crisis of belief** that requires **faith** and **action**.
6. You must **make major adjustments** in your life to **join God** in what He is doing.
7. You come to **know God by experience** as you **obey Him** and He accomplishes His work through you.



# Moses' Example

## 1. God was already at work around Moses.

*"God heard their groaning and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."*  
Exodus 2:24

See Genesis 15:13 and Genesis 17:1-8

## 2. God pursued a continuing love relationship with Moses that was real and personal.

One example: *"Then Moses said to Him, 'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that You are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?' And the Lord said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing you have asked, because **I am pleased with you and I know you by name...**'"*

Exodus 33:15-17

## 3. God invited Moses to become involved with Him in His work.

*"I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land ....So now, go. **I am sending you** to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt."* Exodus 3:8, 10

## 4. God spoke to Moses to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.

*"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is **holy ground**. **I am the God of your father**, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.....I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt...and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them..."*  
Exodus 3:5-8

## 5. God's invitation for Moses to work with Him led Moses to a crisis of belief that required faith and action.

*"**Who am I**, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt? Suppose I go to the Israelites ...what shall I tell them?...**What if they do not believe me?**....I have never been eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue. O Lord, **please send someone else to do it.**"* Exodus 3:11, 13, 4:1, 10, 13

*"**By faith** the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land." Hebrews 11:29*

## 6. Moses had to make major adjustments in his life to join God in what He was doing.

*"The Lord had said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.' So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt."*  
Exodus 4:19-20

**7. Moses came to know God by experience as he obeyed God and God accomplished His work through Moses.**

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy have numerous examples of God revealing Himself to Moses. As Moses obeyed God, God accomplished through Moses what Moses could not do. And God received the glory for His work. One example:

*“When the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in Him and in Moses His servant.” Exodus 14:31*

# God's Will and Your Life

## Introduction - Paul prayed for the believers at Colossae

*"...Since the day we heard of (your love) we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...."* Colossians 1:9 (Also see vs. 10 – 12)

What is God's will? It is natural for Christians to want to know God's will.

- Jesus said *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work."* John 4:34
- Paul said, *"...we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."* 2 Cor. 5:9

A life surrendered to God leads to a knowledge of His will. Romans 12:1 - 2

- **Adjust your life to God:** Present your body. Be transformed in your mind.
- Give God your will, and you will *"prove what the will of God is.....good, acceptable, perfect."*

Jesus is your way. Jesus is your model.

*"I am the way and the truth and the life...."* John 14:6

To know and do the will of God, you must **deny self** and begin to live a **God-centered life**.

*"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and **follow Me**."*  
Luke 9:23

The Bible is your guide for **faith** and **practice**. The Holy Spirit speaks God's will to us.

*"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."* John 14:21

*"When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."* John 16:13

A servant of God, must be  **moldable** and **remain** in the Master's hand, like the potter and the clay.

*"...For apart from Me, you can do nothing."* John 15:5

God places His will in our hearts.

Deuteronomy 30:11 – 14; Philippians 2:13

God develops your **character** to match His assignment.

- His will is to conform us to the image of His Son. Romans 8:29

*"...but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus."*  
Philippians 3:12



Does God have a **personal plan for your life?**

- According to **Psalm 139:13-14**  
“...in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.”
- According to **Jeremiah 29:11** “I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”
- According to **Jeremiah 29:13**, the believer’s part is to **Seek Him!**

## **Reality 1: God is always at work around**

*"My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too, am working.*

*...I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself;*

*He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because*

*whatever the Father does the Son also does.*

*For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all He does."* John 5:17, 19-20

### **Jesus Shared How He Functioned** John 5:17-20

- Who has always been at work? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who was in charge? Who took the initiative? \_\_\_\_\_
- What did Jesus do? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why did The Father show Jesus what He was doing?  
\_\_\_\_\_

- **Jesus Did The Father's Will Perfectly** (New King James Version)

**John 5:30** "I can of Myself do nothing. ...I do not seek My own will, but the will of The Father who sent Me."

**John 6:38**: "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

**John 8:29**: "He who sent Me is with Me; The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that please Him."

- God expects His people today to function the same way Jesus functioned on earth: **knowing and doing God's will**.
- God Himself is working in His world to bring about redemption for those who are lost without Him.
- The Father worked through Christ to reconcile the world to Himself.
- He continues to work through Christ's "body" on earth today, His church.
- God chooses to do His work through His people.
- God's revelation of His activity is His **invitation** to join Him.

### **How Do We Follow and Serve God?**

1. Find out *where* the Master is working. That is where you need to be. John 12:26
2. Watch to see *where* and *how* God is working and join Him.

**Reality 2: God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.**

**God pursues a love relationship:**

*"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."* Jeremiah 31:3

**God's servants respond:**

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*

*This is the first and greatest commandment."* Matthew 22:37-38

**God takes the initiative:**

- God is the One who takes the initiative to bring you into this kind of relationship.  
*"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God."*  
Romans 3:10-11
- God draws you to Himself. *"No one can come to Me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent Me draws him."* John 6:44
- He created you for a love relationship with Himself. 1 John 4:9-10; Romans 5:5-8

1 John 4:9-10, 19

*"This is how **God showed His love** among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

***We love because He first loved us."***

**God takes the Love Relationship Seriously:**

- A love **relationship** with God is more important than any other single factor in your life.
- You are called to a **relationship** before you are called to any form of ministry or service.
- The quality of the love **relationship** will determine the effectiveness of any kind of ministry.
- God's **presence** and work in your life is totally necessary to accomplish God's will.
- His constant presence is the most practical part of your life and ministry.

**God pursues you in a Love Relationship and then extends His love through you to others.**

- God wants you to **understand Him** and **know Him**.
- God wants you to **love Him**, **believe Him** and **trust Him**.
- God wants you to **experience Him** as you **obey His voice** and **follow Him**.



**Time Alone With God**

- Make the priority of your life “to love Him with all your heart.”
- Keep the “time alone with God” because you have a relationship, not in order to have a relationship.
- The quiet time is because you know Him and love Him, not to “learn about Him.”

**Write a prayer expressing your love to God.**

**Biblical names, titles, and descriptions of God identify how Bible characters personally came to know God, His purposes, and His ways.**

Check any names below that describe ways you have personally experienced Him.

Advocate (Job 16:19; 1 John 2:16)  
 Author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9)  
 Bread of life (John 6:35)  
 Christ Jesus my Lord (Phil. 3:8)  
 Comforter (2 Cor. 1:4)  
 Counselor, Wonderful (Isa. 9:6)  
 Defender of widows (Ps. 68:5)  
 Deliverer (2 Sam. 22:2; Ps. 18:2)  
 Eternal life (1 John 5:20)  
 Everlasting Strength (Isa. 26:4)  
 Father, My (Isa. 64:8)  
 Father to the fatherless (Ps. 68:5)  
 Fire, A consuming (Deut. 4:24)  
 Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11)  
 God of Mercy (Ps. 59:10)  
 God-Who-Forgives (Ps. 99:8)  
 God-Who-Sees (Gen. 16:13)  
 God, the Faithful (Deut. 7:9)  
 Guide (Ps. 48:14)  
 Head of the body, the Church (Col. 1:18)  
 Help in trouble (Ps. 46:1)  
 Hiding Place (Isa. 32:1-2)  
 Holy Spirit (John 14:26)  
 Hope of Glory (Col. 1:27)  
 Intercessor (Isa. 53:12)

Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:6)  
 Judge, the Righteous (2 Tim. 4:8)  
 King (Ps. 44:4)  
 Lamb of God (John 1:29)  
 Leader and Commander (Isa. 55:4)  
 Living Water (John 4:10, 13)  
 Light of the world (John 8:12)  
 Lord and Savior, the (2 Peter 3:2)  
 Master (Luke 5:5)  
 Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5)  
 Merciful, Faithful High Priest (Heb.2:17)  
 Peace (Eph. 2:14)  
 Potter (Isa. 64:8; Rom. 9:21)  
 Redeemer (John 19:25; Ps. 19:14)  
 Refuge and Strength (Ps. 46:1)  
 Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)  
 Rock of our Salvation (Ps. 95:1)  
 Savior, the (Eph. 5:23)  
 Servant, Holy (Acts 4:27)  
 Shepherd, the Good (John 10:11)  
 Spirit of Wisdom – and Revelation (Eph. 1:17)  
 Teacher (Matt. 26:18)  
 Truth (John 14:6)  
 Vine (John 15:1-2)  
 Wisdom from God (1 Cor. 1:30-31)

Write a few sentences to record a time you encountered God as one of the names above.

Add other names for God that describe your relationship with Him.


**Reality 3: God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.**

God takes the initiative to reveal His activity to His servant or His people.

- You cannot know the activity of God unless **He takes the initiative** to reveal it to you.

Amos 3:7 *"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets."*

- God rarely reveals the whole picture...only what we need to know. We follow Him.

John 8:12 *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

God is Who He says He is.  
God can do what He says He can do.  
I am who God says I am.  
I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me.  
God's word is alive and active in me. I am believing God!  
Beth Moore

- What God initiates, He completes.

To recognize God's activity around you:

- You must be living in an **intimate love relationship** with Him.
- God must take the initiative to **open your spiritual eyes** to see what He is doing.

*"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what the hope of His calling... is"* Ephesians 1:18

You never find God asking persons to dream up what they want to do for Him.

- **Understanding** what **God** is about to do where you are is more important than telling God what you want to do for Him.

When you want to know what God is doing around you, pray.

- **Watch** to see what happens next.
- **Make the connection** between your prayers and what happens.



**Reality 4: God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.**

*“When He puts forth all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know His voice.”* John 10:4

Throughout the Bible God continually spoke to His people. Genesis - Revelation

- When God spoke, it was usually unique to that individual.
- When God spoke, the person was sure God was speaking.
- When God spoke, the person knew what God said.
- When God spoke, that was the encounter with God.

In the gospels, God spoke through Jesus.

*Hebrews 1:1-2*

Today, He speaks by His Holy Spirit.

*John 16:13*

The **love relationship** is the key to knowing **God’s voice and hearing** when God speaks.

- To know the will and voice of God, you must give the time and effort to cultivate a love relationship with Him.
- Prayer is a relationship, not just a religious activity.

God speaks to reveal **Himself, His Purposes, and His ways.**

- God reveals His **nature** and **character** so you come to know, love, trust, and obey Him.
- God reveals **Himself** to increase your faith.
- God reveals His **purposes** so you will do His work.
- God reveals His **ways** so you can accomplish His purposes.

When God speaks to you, He has a purpose in mind for your life.

- The Holy Spirit may take the **Word of God** and help you understand your **circumstances**.
- When God gets ready for you to take a new step, it will be in sequence with **His previous activity** in Your life.
- **Spiritual markers** can identify how God has led in the past.
- Others in the church can help you understand God’s will.

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.  
As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* Isaiah 55:8-9

***Reality 5: God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.***

The "**crisis of belief**" is a "turning point" in following God's will. It is a "**crisis of faith.**"

God speaks and invites you to join Him in a God-sized assignment.

- You cannot do the assignment on your own. This is the crisis point.
- Will you follow Him by **faith**? Will you walk in **obedience**?

Following God's will requires **faith** and **action**.

- What you do in **response** to God's revelation or invitation reveals what you believe about God.
- True **faith** requires **action** – obedience – and confidence that what God promises will **come to pass**.
- Faith is believing that the God who called you to the assignment is the One who will **provide for its accomplishment**.

2 Chronicles 20:15 "**The battle is not yours but God's.**"

Philippians 2:13 "**It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**"

*"Without **faith** it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him."* Hebrews 11:6

*"**Faith** is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."* Hebrews 11:1

*"We live by **faith**, not by sight."* 2 Corinthians 5:7

Following God's will causes those in the **world to come to know God**.

- The only way people will know what God is like is when they see Him at work.
- When people see things happen that can only be explained by God's involvement, they will come to know Him.

"The reason much of the world is not being attracted to Christ and His church is that God's people lack the faith to attempt those things that only God can do."

Henry Blackaby

**Reality 6: You must make major adjustments  
in your life to join God in what He is doing.**

**Adjust your life to God.**

- Making major adjustments is another “turning point” in knowing and doing the will of God.
- You adjust to a Person – not a concept, a creed, or a doctrine.

*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.  
For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.  
Luke 9:23-24*

**EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS:**

◇ <b>Actions:</b>	behaviors, speech, how you pray, give, serve
◇ <b>Beliefs:</b>	about God, His purposes, His ways, your relationship with Him
◇ <b>Circumstances:</b>	job, home, finances
◇ <b>Commitments:</b>	family, church, job, plans, traditions
◇ <b>Relationships:</b>	family, friends, business associates
◇ <b>Thinking:</b>	prejudices, methods, your potential or abilities

**Joining God Requires Major Adjustments.**

- As His servant, you adjust your life to God so He can do through you what He wants to do.
- Adjustments prepare you for obedience.
- Obedience may be costly to you and to those around you. Disobedience is also costly.  
*“Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be My disciple.” Luke 14:33*

**God is interested in absolute surrender and total dependence on Him.**

- Any adjustment God expects you to make is for your good.
- God’s servants depend on God alone to complete what He wants to do through them.
- Adjusting your life to God requires moving from doing work *for* God to being totally dependent on *God* and *His* working and *His* resources.



**Reality 7: You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.**

### Obedience = Love

- If you love God, you will obey Him. Obedience is the outward expression of your love for God.

*Jesus replied, "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." John 14:23*

- If you have an obedience problem, you have a love problem.
- Obedience means joy and uninterrupted fellowship with God.
- Disobedience is costly.

### God Reveals His Will to His Servants

- **Obey what you already know** to be God's will. Obey His commands. John 14:23
- The reward for obedience and love is that **God will reveal Himself** to you. John 14:21
- God wants to reveal Himself to you and **to those around you**. John 17:20, 21, 23
- God's affirmation comes after **obedience**.

### God Will Complete His Will Through You

- When you obey God, **He will accomplish** what He has **purposed** to do.
- God will never give an assignment that He will not **enable you to complete**.
- You will be blessed when God does a special, **God-sized work** through you.

## ***My Response Letter to the Lord Jesus Christ***

*"...and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves,  
but for Him who died for them and rose again." 2 Corinthians 5:15*

- Praise Him for His great salvation and His unconditional love for you.
- Pray and ask the Lord to reveal to you any **adjustments** that He wants you to make in your life in order to live in a meaningful **love relationship** with Him, knowing and doing **His will**.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

***Dear Lord Jesus,***

## What do we know already about God's Will?

- It is His will that people come to **know Him** personally. John 17:3
- It is His will that people are **born again** of His Spirit and His word. John 3:3 – 8
- It is His will that all people come to repentance and **not perish**. 2 Peter 3:9
- It is His will that His people **love Him** with all their hearts, souls, and minds.  
Matthew 22:37-38
- It is His will that His people **hear His voice** and **follow Him**. John 10:3
- It is His will that His people are fully **surrendered** to Him as Lord. Romans 12:1-2
- It is His will that His people **abide** in Him. John 15:5
- It is His will that His people **walk** according to **His Spirit**. Romans 8:4 – 9
- It is His will that His people **make disciples** in every nation. Matthew 28:18 – 20
- It is His will that we **no longer live for self**, but for Jesus who died and rose for us.  
2 Corinthians 5:15
- It is His will that we are **ambassadors** for Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:20
- It is His will that we are set apart for Him and **reveal Jesus**. Galatians 1:15-16
- It is His will that His people **confess** our sins and receive cleansing. 1 John 1:9
- It is His will that we live **pure and holy lives** in reverence of God. 2 Corinthians 7:1
- It is His will that His people **grow spiritually** – in grace and knowledge. 2 Peter 3:18
- It is His will that His people **pray** without ceasing. Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- It is His will that His people are **not anxious**, but look to Him for His peace.  
Philippians 4:6-7
- It is His will that His people **love one another** as He has loved us. John 13:34; 1 John 3:23
- It is His will that His people **forgive others** as He has forgiven us. Colossians 3:12-13
- It is His will that His people give **thanks** in everything. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- It is His will that His body care for one another **without division**. 1 Corinthians 12:25
- It is His will that we are **like minded, complete**, and live in peace. 2 Corinthians 13:11
- It is His will that we **live by faith** and not by sight. Galatians 2:20
- It is His will that we **proclaim His praises**. 1 Peter 2:9
- It is His will that we **walk worthy** of His calling. Ephesians 4:1

*“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”* Jeremiah 29:13



The *Experiencing God Weekend* exposes the church to the seven realities of how God works through His people to accomplish His purposes. Participants have the opportunity to examine their lives and seek the Lord's leadership in making necessary adjustments so that they are able to know His will and join God where He is working.

Our prayer is that **you** will have a meaningful encounter with God during this  
*Experiencing God Weekend.*

We also pray you will be encouraged to complete the 12-week study of *Experiencing God* in a small group with others in your church family.

For more information on **BLACKABY MINISTRIES, INTERNATIONAL**

Visit our website: [www.blackaby.org](http://www.blackaby.org)

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OAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

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January 16-18, 2020