**EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE**

1. **Samuel 6:1-23**
* **We can be successful by the world’s standards and still be far away from the presence of God.**
* **We can never become all that the LORD wants us to be without the presence of the LORD in our lives.**
* **The ark was a visible symbol of the presence and power of the Lord.**
* ***Ichabod =* Literally means “the glory of the LORD has departed.” (1 Samuel 4:21-22)**
* **David understood that Israel could never be all the LORD intended for them to be until the ark of God was restored at the centerpiece of worship in Israel.**
* **One of our strongest desires should be to experience the presence and power of the Lord in our lives every day.**
* ***“How do we experience God’s presence in our lives?”***

***EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE REQUIRES:***

**CHANGING OUR PERSPECTIVE**

* *“Then David again gathered all the elite troops in Israel, 30,000 in all. He led them to Baalah of Judah to bring back the ark of God, which bears the name of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim.* (2 Samuel 6:1-2 NLT)
* **We cannot be content to live without God’s profound presence in our lives, so we must be willing to do whatever is necessary to fully experience His presence.**
* *“As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God.”* (Psalm 42:1)
* *“I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, 11 so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!”* (Philippians 3:10-11 NLT)
* **We must be willing to give God the best of what we have if we are to experience His presence in our lives.**

***EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE REQUIRES:***

**REVERENCING THE LORD**

* *“When they came to Nacon’s threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to the ark of God and took hold of it because the oxen had stumbled. 7 Then the Lord’s anger burned against Uzzah, and God struck him dead on the spot for his irreverence, and he died there next to the ark of God.”* (2 Samuel 6:6-7)
* **If we want the Lord’s blessings instead of His judgment, we must give Him the honor and reverence He deserves.**
* **“*Those who have failed miserably are often the first to see God’s formula for success.”* – Erwin Lutzer**
* **The best thing we can do as Christians is align ourselves with the Word of God and walk in humble obedience.**
* *“Mankind, He has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.”* (Micah 6:8)

***EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE REQUIRES:***

**OVERCOMING SETBACKS**

* *“David feared the Lord that day and said, ‘How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?’”* (2 Samuel 6:8)
* **“Setbacks” are a part of every person’s life, even those who love the Lord and are pursuing His presence and power.**
* *“So he was not willing to bring the ark of the Lord to the city of David; instead, he diverted it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. 11 The ark of the Lord remained in his house three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and his whole family.”* (2 Samuel 6:10-11)
* **Often times we miss out on God blessing us because of setbacks in our lives.**
* *“****What happens to you is not nearly as important as how you perceive what happens to you.”* – Kent Crockett**
* “*The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy.”*  (John 10:10)
* **We must never allow the devil to cause us to abort our mission, because doing so allows him to steal our blessings.**

***EXPERIENCING GOD’S PRESENCE REQUIRES:***

**GOING ALL IN**

* *“David was dancing with all his might before the Lord wearing a linen ephod. 15 He and the whole house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of the ram’s horn. 16 As the ark of the Lord was entering the city of David, Saul’s daughter Michal looked down from the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart.”* (2 Samuel 6:14-16)
* **We must worship the LORD and pursue His presence and power even when we face opposition from others.**
* *“As the ark of the Lord was entering the city of David, Saul’s daughter Michal looked down from the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart.”* (2 Samuel 6:14-16)
* *“But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him.”* (John 4:23)
* ***“A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word, 'darkness' on the walls of his cell.”* – C.S. Lewis**
* **We must understand that worship is not just an experience, but it is also a lifestyle.**
* *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.”* (Romans 12:1)
* **If you truly want to experience the presence and power of the Lord in your life you not only have to go all in when you sing in church on Sunday, but you have to go all in by how you live your life as a Christian.**
* **How we act even when we think nobody is watching is a reflection of how we view our relationship with God.**

**\*\*CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION ON BACK\*\***

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Icebreaker: What’s one of the funniest church experiences you’ve seen?**

**Read 2 Samuel 6:1-23**

**UNDERSTANDING**

1. What is the significance of the ark of God?
2. How did the Philistines end up with the ark of God?
3. Why did David decide to bring the Lord’s Ark back from the Philistines?
4. How could David (and Uzzah) have avoided the tragedy of Uzzah dying for touching the ark? (Think about instructions for transporting the ark.)
5. Look at 2 Samuel 14-16. What do you think was going through David’s mind as he “danced before the Lord,” and why do you think that Michal was so upset with him?

**DIGGING DEEPER**

* Why is “experiencing God’s presence” so important for us?
* What principles from this passage would help us to better “experience God’s presence” in our lives?
* What does it mean to you to “go all in” for God?
1. Thinking of this study, what are some steps that you need to take to better “experience God’s presence” on a daily basis?
2. How can we pray for you and for others?

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?