

## Encounter

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### Sermon Synopsis

In this episode of World Impact, Dr. Billy Wilson reflects on the importance of genuine encounters with God, drawing on biblical teaching, student testimonies, and personal stories from Oral Roberts University. Joined by Augustine and Allie Mendoza, campus spiritual leaders, he highlights the spiritual hunger rising among Gen Z and beyond, as young people seek truth, direction, and renewal through prayer, worship, and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Mendozas share experiences from students whose lives have been deeply changed, showing how encounters with God shape not only individuals but also families and communities.

At the center of the message is the story of Jacob at the Jabbok River (Genesis 32:22–31), where Jacob wrestled with God through the night. This turning point in Jacob's life changed his name, his identity, and even his walk, symbolized by his limp. Dr. Wilson uses this moment to illustrate how meeting God brings lasting transformation—redirecting character, purpose, and faith. The sermon also includes the testimony of Srikanth Srinivasan, an Indian student who once rejected Christ but came to faith after a supernatural encounter. His story stands as a reminder that God's presence can break through doubt and resistance in ways that human reasoning cannot.

The program weaves together these biblical and personal examples to stress that God still meets His people today, no matter their background or age. From moments of revival on the ORU campus to testimonies of prophecy, provision, and renewed purpose, the message calls believers to pursue God earnestly, expecting Him to meet them in ways that redefine who they are. Dr. Wilson and the Mendozas emphasize that encounters with God are not ends in themselves but beginnings—sparking new identity, deeper worship, and outward witness in the world.

## Sermon Highlights

- An authentic encounter with God transforms your identity, as seen in Jacob's experience where God renamed him Israel, signifying a new character and purpose.
- Encountering God changes how you walk through life, symbolized by Jacob's limp, reflecting a tangible, lasting transformation after meeting God.
- God desires to meet each person personally; just as Jacob wrestled with God through the night, we must actively seek Him with persistence, asking, seeking, and knocking.
- True encounters with God bring spiritual hunger and authentic worship, especially among young believers who crave a personal and genuine connection with the Holy Spirit.
- An encounter with God leads to wholehearted transformation impacting not only the individual but also their family, community, and beyond—just like the testimonies of ORU students whose lives were radically changed.

## Scripture Verses

### Genesis 32:22-31

That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man, then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he answered. Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.' Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.' The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

### John 4:24

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.

### Matthew 7:7

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

### John 1:12-13

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

### 2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

## Quotes

- Authentic worship is something Gen Z craves; they want to encounter God for themselves in spirit and in truth. - Augustine Mendoza
- If you really encounter the Lord, it's impossible for your family or your workspace to be the same because you're so different. - Allie Mendoza
- God wants to meet you and do something in and through you—all you have to do is ask. Ask, seek, knock and the door will be opened. - Augustine Mendoza
- When you have a real encounter with God, your walk will be changed; just as Jacob walked with a limp after wrestling with God, so do we walk changed. - Dr. Billy Wilson
- One encounter can change your life, and one fully surrendered life can change the world. - Srikanth Srinivasan

# Bible Study

## Objectives

- Understand the transformative power of an encounter with God.
- Explore the story of Jacob's encounter with God in Genesis 32:22-31.
- Recognize how authentic worship connects us to God in spirit and truth.
- Learn how personal encounters with God change identity, walk, and source.
- Encourage believers to seek their own personal encounter with the living God.
- Equip believers with practical steps to foster such encounters in daily life.

## Reading and Reflections

- Genesis 32:22-31 – Jacob wrestles with God and is renamed Israel.
- John 4:24 – Jesus teaches about worshiping in spirit and in truth.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 – Becoming a new creation in Christ after encountering God.
- Romans 12:2 – Transformation by the renewing of the mind following an encounter with God.
- Ephesians 2:10 – We are God's workmanship, created for good works after transformation.
- Psalm 34:18 – God is near to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit.

## Key Observations

- Jacob's identity changed from 'Jacob' (supplanter) to 'Israel' (Prince of God), signifying a new spiritual identity.
- His physical walk was altered, symbolized by his limp, representing lasting change and dependence on God.
- Jacob's source of blessing shifted from earthly blessings to divine blessing from God.
- Authentic worship is a gateway to encountering the Holy Spirit and experiencing transformation.
- Today's generation shows a great hunger for personal encounters with God, seeking direction and purpose.
- Encountering God results in life transformation that affects personal behavior, relationships, and life purpose.

## Personal Reflections

- Reflect on how your own identity has been shaped or needs reshaping through encountering God.
- Consider the ways your daily walk – your habits, actions, and attitudes – reveal the impact of God in your life.

- Ponder how you seek God's blessing as your ultimate source, beyond earthly approval or achievements.
- Recall moments in your life when God met you personally – how did that impact your faith journey?
- Evaluate your heart's hunger for God – is it growing or has it grown cold in busy or challenging seasons?
- Ask yourself if you are worshiping authentically, in spirit and truth, and how that affects your relationship with the Lord.

## Lessons for Daily Life

- A genuine encounter with God will change your self-perception and identity positively in Christ.
- Transformation may involve struggle and discomfort, but God's purposes are to shape us into His likeness.
- Seek God earnestly through worship, prayer, and the Word – the Spirit meets us in those moments.
- God's blessings are relational and spiritual, not merely material or earthly success.
- Your transformed life is a testimony to those around you; God's encounter in you impacts families and communities.
- Like Jacob, be persistent in pursuing God's blessing; do not let go until you receive it.

## Practical Applications

- Commit to regular, authentic worship sessions—both corporately and personally—to invite God's presence.
- Start or deepen a daily habit of reading and meditating on Scripture, seeking God's voice quietly and attentively.
- Set a specific time weekly to 'wrestle' with God in prayer—express your struggles, doubts, and desires honestly.
- Engage in fellowship with spiritual mentors or fellow believers to help discern and nurture your spiritual growth.
- Reflect on your life identity—ask God to reveal areas needing transformation and embrace your new identity in Christ.
- Serve others with the transformative love of Christ, demonstrating the fruits of an authentic encounter with God.

## Challenges for the Week

- Ask God daily for a fresh encounter with His Spirit, being open to His movement in your life.
- Identify and confess any areas where you resist God's transformative work; surrender these to Him in prayer.

- Practice worship with intention for at least 15 minutes each day—sing, pray, or reflect on God's nature.
- Seek to bless someone else through encouragement, prayer, or practical help, reflecting God's blessing in you.
- Write down one testimony of how God has transformed you, and share it with someone else by week's end.
- Be aware of how your walk—actions, words, attitude—reflects your relationship with God, and adjust where needed.

## Further Study

- Study the lives of biblical figures who encountered God: Moses (Exodus 3), Elijah (1 Kings 19), Paul (Acts 9).
- Explore John 4 for the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman—an encounter that changed her life and community.
- Examine Psalm 51 for heartfelt repentance and the transformation God brings through encounter.
- Read Ephesians 3:14-21 to understand the depth of God's love revealed through encounter.
- Research contemporary testimonies of transformation in ministries, such as Oral Roberts University stories.
- Reflect on the Holy Spirit's work in your life guided by the book of Acts and Paul's letters.

## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your desire to meet us intimately and transform our lives. Like Jacob, may we never let go until we receive Your blessing. Reach into our hearts and renew our identity in Christ, causing our walk to reflect Your glory. Fill us afresh with Your Spirit and lead us to authentic worship in spirit and truth. Help us to hunger continually for You, to seek You with childlike faith, and to trust Your guidance. May our lives be a testimony of Your power and love, drawing others to the saving knowledge of Jesus. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

# Daily Devotionals

## Day 1

### Scripture Verse

Genesis 32:24-30 (NIV) - "That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man, then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he answered. Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.' Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.' The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip."

### Reflection

In the quiet solitude of the night, as Jacob wrestled with God, we see a powerful symbol of the believer's journey toward transformation. Jacob, a man whose life had been marked by struggle—from the womb where he and Esau contended, to deceiving his father Isaac for a blessing—found himself grappled not by a man but by the presence of God Himself. This battle was not just physical; it was spiritual and deeply personal. Jacob clung to God, refusing to release Him until he received a blessing. That refusal shows us a powerful principle: true change begins when we are willing to hold on to God through the wrestling, through the unanswered prayers, and the long nights, until He blesses us with His presence and purpose for our lives. Jacob's identity was changed forever that night — from Jacob, the supplanter, the deceiver, to Israel, the prince who has prevailed with God. This renaming is not only about a new title but a redefinition of who he was at his core. Have you ever felt chained by a reputation that does not reflect the person God created you to be? Maybe like Jacob, you have wrestled with past mistakes, broken relationships, or a sense of unworthiness that threatens to define you. God does not see you merely as the world does; He sees you with eyes of grace and calls you by a new name, inviting you into a new identity as His child. His walk changed as well — he literally walked with a limp afterward. This is a reminder that authentic encounters with God leave an imprint; they change our posture, the way we journey through life. There is no going back to the old normal. When we meet God in a life-altering way, our steps carry the marks of the divine struggle endured, and those marks can be a testimony to others of God's power to change and redeem. Finally, Jacob's source changed. Previously focused on earthly blessings, he now recognizes that the blessing from God is what truly sustains. His encounter with the divine made him realize that God's blessing surpasses human approval and earthly possessions. This spiritual truth invites us to examine where we draw our strength and

hope. When our source is God's favor, our foundation is unshakable, regardless of worldly circumstances. Consider your own life—where are you wrestling with God today? Are you embracing the struggle as the place where transformation happens? Like Jacob, don't let go, because what you seek—God's blessing and His presence—will reshape your identity, transform your walk, and renew your source of strength. Our God delights in meeting us where we are, willing to change us into His likeness when we hold on tightly with faith.

#### Prayer

Lord, help me to hold on to You with unwavering faith until I receive Your blessing and transformation. Change my identity, my walk, and my source, and help me to walk boldly as Your beloved child. Amen.



## Day 2

### Scripture Verse

John 4:23-24 (NIV) - "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

### Reflection

The heart of a genuine encounter with God is worship—worship that springs from Spirit and truth. Today we live in a world filled with noise, distractions, and competing voices clamoring for our attention. Yet deep inside, there is a spiritual hunger—a craving to connect with the Living God authentically and intimately. The students at Oral Roberts University exemplify this hunger. They are a generation on fire, eager not just to hear about God but to encounter Him personally through heartfelt worship. Authentic worship is more than singing songs or attending church events. It's an encounter—a meeting place where heaven touches earth via your surrendered spirit. It comes when you worship 'in Spirit and truth,' meaning your worship is inspired by the Holy Spirit and grounded in God's unchanging Word. Think about the last time you truly opened your heart before God. Were you just going through the motions, or did you really meet God there? Worship changes things—it ushers the presence of God into your life, renewing your soul and redirecting your purpose. Take the story of Augustine and Allie Mendoza, young leaders passionate about discipling others to encounter God. They have witnessed first-hand how worship unlocks transformation, turning confusion into clarity, despair into hope, and weakness into strength. What if your worship was a portal to God's power? Imagine the daily possibility of walking into God's presence with expectant hearts, not just as duty but as delight. Like the Indian graduate student Srikanth Srinivasan, whose life changed utterly after hearing the voice of Jesus saying, 'Jesus loves you,' we are all invited into moments where heaven impresses upon our hearts, breaking chains and setting us free. We live at a moment ripe with opportunity—God is inviting every person to encounter Him in a fresh, vibrant way. Consider how your worship life might transform if you approached God 'in spirit and truth,' unafraid to bring your real self, your struggles, and your hopes before Him. Allow the Holy Spirit to inspire you and shape your worship. This spirit-led engagement is the lifeblood of spiritual transformation; it's where you meet a living God who changes your present and shapes your future. As you reflect today, ask yourself: Am I hungry for an encounter with God? Do I seek Him authentically, or do I settle for routine religion? God desires a relationship, not rituals. He calls you—as He called Jacob—to wrestle through the uncertainties and hold on to Him with all your heart. In worship, you don't just sing—you align your heart with God's and allow His Spirit to breathe new life into your soul.

### Prayer

Holy Spirit, move in me today that my worship may be true and alive, flowing from my spirit and grounded in Your truth. Draw me into a personal encounter with You that transforms my heart and life. Amen.

## Day 3

### Scripture Verse

James 4:8 (NIV) - "Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

### Reflection

"Come near to God and He will come near to you." What a simple, breathtaking promise! Sometimes approaching God feels intimidating, especially when scars from past failures or a wandering heart cloud our vision. But the invitation stands clearly: draw close, and God draws closer. The story of Jacob wrestling through the night illuminates this truth profoundly. He came near in fierce determination, and God met him in that proximity, changing his life forever. Have you ever experienced a moment when God felt distant? You prayed, yet silence seemed to answer. Those are the wrestling moments—not unlike Jacob's struggle at Jabbok—when faith is tested but also refined. Like a diamond subjected to pressure, your spirit is shaped into something more brilliant. Augustine and Allie share how many today, especially young people, hunger for clarity, purpose, and true connection to God. This desire is a spark God uses to ignite revival within the heart. To genuinely come near, James urges us to purify our hearts and cleanse from double-mindedness. We live in a culture that pushes us to split our loyalties—between God, career, opinions, and worldly desires. But God's encounter requires singular focus and surrender. When you remove distractions and lay open your heart, God's presence floods in like sunshine breaking through a stormy sky. There is also beauty in the testimony of transformation we hear from students who encountered God. Their stories remind us that no one is beyond reach. Srikanth was a mocking skeptic who came to faith through persistent witness and a divine encounter with the love of Jesus. His experience challenges us: maybe your testimony of God's grace is yet to be written, and today is the moment that encounter begins. This devotional moment calls you to evaluate your own nearness to God today. Are you willing to come close, let go of distractions, and wrestle through the struggle until you meet Him? Remember, when you step forward, God steps toward you, embracing you with His love, shifting your identity, and offering His blessing. That closeness changes everything—your outlook, your relationships, and your eternal destiny. In practical terms, how will you come near today? Perhaps it's a quiet moment in prayer, reading Scripture with expectancy, or simply opening your heart honestly before God. Each step of nearness fuels deeper encounter and transformation. Trust that God is eager to meet you, just as you are, to reveal Himself in new and powerful ways.

### Prayer

Father, today I choose to come near to You with a pure heart and focused mind. Draw close to me, meet me in my wrestling and my seeking, and transform me by Your love and presence. Amen.

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