

# ONE FROM THE HEART

## Mountain to Valley

### Mountain Top Moments

Mountain top moments are formative moments in our lives. It's on the mountain that we are close to God and His presence in a deep way. Often God leads us up the mountain for a particular reason and usually it's a glorious reason.

Moses went up the mountain to meet with God and came down shining in God's glory, holding the Ten Commandments. Later in 1 Kings 19, Elijah is found on a mountain top hearing the voice of God, not in the thunder, or the wind or the fire, but as a still small voice.

#### Lessons from the Mountain of Transfiguration:

- + Encounters with God don't have to be private.
- + Prayer is transformational.
- + The Law and the Prophets are fulfilled.
- + The mountain reveals our identity and purposes.
- + Mountain top moments are momentary

### Encounter Flows Down

God's plan, from the beginning, was to have His presence flow out and into the world through His followers. You and me! All throughout the Old Testament and history God has showed His presence through encounters or theophanies, where God reveals Himself to an individual in a powerful way.

These encounters have then shaped and transformed that person to make some incredible progress and reform in their personal lives, the Church, and the world.

## Mountain Top Moments should:

- + Lead you to worship God
- + Encourage you in your relationship with God
- + Release you to share your faith with others

## Valley of Death

Jesus Himself didn't stay on the mountain in God's glorious presence. Yes, He needed to have those mountain top moments, where He would hear the voice of God, step into an encounter with His presence and find new revelation. But He knew that life, and indeed His purpose, was not to hide away on a mountain by Himself. So, He came down.

Only a few moments later, we find Him not only walking around town, but soon enough we find Him in a valley. And it's not any old valley, it's the valley of death.

Betrayed by a friend, Jesus is confronted by a group of soldiers in the valley of death, quite literally for Him. Jesus enters a valley of death. From here, He would be taken, accused, stripped naked, whipped, mocked and would eventually hang upon a wooden cross, dying a death for the very people who hung Him there. Here we find that Jesus is very familiar with the valley.

Praise God that Jesus didn't stay in the valley, of course! After being taken, and put upon that cross, He was buried and three days later He rose in resurrection power defeating Satan, sin and death itself!

On the mountain God's presence seems close. We hear His voice clearly. Miracles happen.

In the valley, God's presence seems distant. We have doubts. Our faith is tested.

The truth is that God's presence never changes in our lives, but our awareness of Him does.

## Content in Christ

Paul had been in a fair few valleys throughout his life. So, what was His secret to remaining committed to God's vision for his life? How did he do it? Did he keep looking back to that encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus?

Paul learned from the mountain and through the valley, how to be content no matter what the circumstance! The outside world would not affect his devotion to Jesus. Why? Because the encounters that he had, on the mountain, with the person of Jesus, and then the reliance upon the Holy Spirit through his life, was enough to sustain him!

The valleys of death that he faced were swiftly turned into moments of trusting God and remembering the mountain top moments.

## God's Presence from Mountain to Valley

Our God is the God of the mountain and the valley! Jesus Himself, was fully divine (mountain) and fully human (valley). He left the glorious presence of the Father, to humble Himself to life on this earth, and travelled into the darkest valley of all as He died a death on a cross, for the forgiveness of sin.

For those in a valley, Jesus is acquainted with your grief. But He wants to take you higher!

If you are on a mountain top moment tonight, He is with you. But He wants you to surrender your entire life to Him tonight, not just your mountain top moments.

So how do you commit to following Jesus when you come down from the mountain?

- + Quiet Time
- + Prayer
- + Church

## Discussion Questions:

1. What mountain top moments have you had with God?
2. If you were on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured, how would you have responded?
3. How has an encounter you have had with God flowed down to those around you?
4. Have you experienced any valley of death moments? Where was God in that?
5. What moment in your life right now, is it hardest to remain content in Christ? Bring that to God in prayer and ask Him what He's doing.
6. Have you ever considered that Jesus was both divine and human? How did He remain close to God from mountain to valley?