



Daily Reflection & Prayer

9.16.09 by **Mark D. Roberts**

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Face to Face with God

[READ Exodus 33:7-11](#)

Inside the Tent of Meeting, the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting. [Exodus 33:11]

In earlier chapters of Exodus, the Lord revealed to Moses the plans for the Tabernacle, the place where he would dwell among his people, in which sacrifices would be offered by the priests. After the Tabernacle was constructed, it could be called the “tabernacle of the tent of meeting” (translating the Hebrew literally from, for example, Ex. 40:2, though the NLT translates simply as “Tabernacle”).

Yet this is not the Tent of Meeting in Exodus 33. Before the Tabernacle was constructed, Moses erected another tent some distance from the Israelite encampment. He would go to this tent in order to meet with God. In this aptly named Tent of Meeting, “the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (33:11). The phrase “face to face” shouldn’t be understood literally, as if Moses and God actually looked at each other in the Tent of Meeting. Rather, “face to face” highlights the intimate communication between Moses and God, who spoke as friends speak.

What a striking image of prayer! Don’t you yearn to have the kind of relationship with God that Moses had? Indeed, Scripture promises that we will someday. First Corinthians 13 observes that we see God “imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror” (13:12). But the time will come when “we will see everything with perfect clarity.” The Greek reads literally, “face to face,” perhaps alluding to Moses’ own open communication with God. In the day of God’s new creation, we will know God without cloudiness or imperfection.

In the meanwhile, we do have the privilege of speaking to God as our friend. We who believe in Jesus are truly his friends (see John 15:14-15). Though our perception of him isn’t as clear as it will someday be, we nevertheless hear from the Lord as he speaks through Scripture and silence, through preaching and prayer. Because the Holy Spirit dwells within us, we can begin even now to know God as Moses did.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION: Have you ever experienced communication with God that felt like an intimate friendship? When? What facilitated such openness? If God was truly your friend, what would you talk with him about?

PRAYER: Dear Lord, as I read about Moses in the Tent of Meeting, I must confess to a bit of envy. How I wish you would speak to me face to face, as one speaks to a friend! As you know, there have been times like this. But, for the most part, I don’t sense the kind of intimacy with you that Moses had, and that my heart desires.

Perhaps, for your own reasons, you’re choosing not to speak so clearly to me. Perhaps you’d love for us to have a closer relationship, but I’m not holding up my end. Perhaps you’d like me to be with you more in quiet, so I might listen, attentively. Perhaps you are speaking to me more than I realize, but my mind and heart are too filled with others voices to hear yours.

Help me, Lord, to find my “Tent of Meeting,” a place of regular conversation with you. Perhaps it needs to be away from my “camp,” a place of quiet where I can listen to you.

I do long for the day, Lord, when I will see you face to face. What a glorious day that will be! Thank you for such an encouraging promise. I pray in the name of Jesus, who calls me his friend. *Amen.*