

**“Somehow, somewhere,  
God’s people need to let  
Him do something that only  
He could do so that when  
the world sees it, they have  
come face to face with Him  
and know it.”**

**—Henry Blackaby**



# **Leaving the Comfort Zone**

**Henry Blackaby practices this principle.**

**W**riting a book with sales in the millions in 50 languages was never on Dr. Henry Blackaby’s to-do list. Neither was discipling top CEOs, forming friendships with foreign ambassadors, or speaking with American presidents in the Oval Office. Nevertheless, he’s done them all. And his life exem-

plifies the truth he teaches: God can do whatever He wishes through His people when they adjust their lives to Him.

**Blackaby, 69, author of best-seller *Experiencing God* and founder of Blackaby Ministries International, was born and raised in rural British Columbia, Canada. Influenced by godly parents, he chose to follow Jesus Christ when he was nine years old. “God convinced me that He was God and I was not,” he says. “I committed my life to Christ as Lord. It’s never crossed my mind not to approach Him in any other way.”**

At age 17, Blackaby sensed God leading him into vocational Christian ministry. After he graduated from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, a church in California invited him to be its minister of music. He had no relevant experience but accepted the position anyway. The same congregation later asked him to be the minister of education and music. Again, he accepted despite having no previous experience. Then the congregation asked him to be their pastor.

“I hadn’t preached three sermons in my life before I became a pastor but my life has always been that way,” he says. “Whatever God assigns and wherever He assigns, that’s what I do. It never crosses my mind to question. To me, God is always going to take me beyond where I’ve ever been. If I’m going

COURTESY OF HENRY BLACKABY



**“God is always going to take me beyond where I’ve ever been. If I’m going to know more of Him, I’m going to have to take assignments that require Him.”—Henry Blackaby**

to know more of Him, I’m going to have to take assignments that require Him. And I don’t believe God bases assignments on my abilities or my gifts or my talents, but simply on His purposes.”

According to Blackaby, one of those purposes is for God to reveal Himself to a watching world as He accomplishes mighty things through the lives of those who walk in right relationship with Him. “God always gives assignments that, if we obey, create opportunities for Him to display Himself,” he says. He cites several Biblical examples: Esther, Daniel, Gideon, Moses, Joshua. “Everyone knows

Moses didn't deliver the children of Israel. God did. But He chose to work through Moses. That's true with Joshua, too. He didn't bring down the walls of Jericho. God did. That's the pattern throughout Scripture." It's also the pattern throughout Blackaby's life and ministry.

On one occasion, a discouraged congregation in Saskatchewan asked Blackaby to pastor. He agreed and made the necessary adjustments, which included moving his family to that community. When he arrived, only 10 church members remained. The circumstances appeared hopeless. But as Blackaby taught the people two foundational truths—how to know God's voice, and how to respond to His voice with obedience and trust—their outlook changed and their influence expanded.

Within the next 12 years, that tiny congregation saw 180 university students baptized and a theological seminary opened. It planted 38 new congregations in two provinces. It reached into more than a dozen Native American reserves and supplied Biblical training for those desiring to enter ministry. "It was astounding!" says Blackaby. "We didn't set out to do this, but God had it in mind."

Onlookers recognized God's hand at work, especially when they discovered that none of the 38 mission pastors were bi-vocational even though the denomination hadn't contributed to their salaries. "Only God could have done that!" they exclaimed. Blackaby replied, "Now you're getting the message."

On another occasion, Blackaby

spoke at a conference on the topic of knowing and doing God's will. Afterward, a man asked Blackaby if he would write a book on that subject for others to study. Blackaby chuckled. The day before, he'd sensed the Lord challenging him to write. He'd agreed, although he'd never written anything before. His obedience resulted in the book, *Experiencing God*.

During the writing process, however, Blackaby felt convinced that God's people didn't need yet another course. He wanted the material to move its readers beyond head knowledge about God into a life-changing experience with Him. Thirty prayer partners prayed for that outcome.

God has answered. As readers embrace the instruction to trust and obey God so that He can do whatever He wishes through them, lives are transformed and a ripple effect takes place. "People come to me and cry spontaneously and say, 'I thought this was just another course, but it became the deepest experience with God I've ever known,'" says Blackaby. "It's had an astounding impact on people from the top to the bottom of society."

Blackaby recently met a South African banker who told him that after applying the principles found in *Experiencing God*, he traveled across South Africa teaching the course to others. One night, after speaking in a dangerous area of Johannesburg, a man approached him and said, "I shouldn't have been here today. I had an appointment with a group of men who will finance all the arms necessary to overthrow my government. I've

been listening to you. What do you think I should do?"

The banker replied, "Take this book (*Experiencing God*) and study it for 13 weeks. Then ask God what He wants you to do."

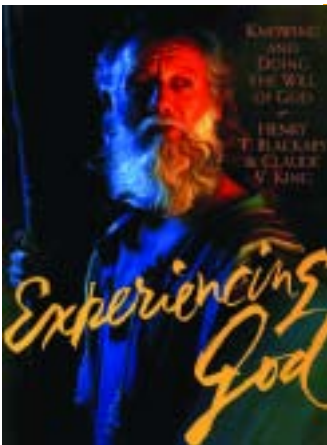
The two met again after he'd completed the study. The man told the banker that he'd received Christ and withdrawn from the arms deal. Rather than trying to overthrow his country's government, he sensed God directing him to run as opposition leader in the next election. "Experiencing God saved my country from a bloody revolution," he said. He estimated that one million people might have died if he'd pursued his plot.

Blackaby recalls a difficult experience that provided an opportunity for God to manifest Himself to numerous college students and youth groups. When his 16-year-old daughter, Carrie, underwent chemotherapy and radiation treatment for a cancerous tumor, Blackaby discovered that college students and youth groups had heard about her situa-

tion and begun praying for her recovery. Many relayed similar messages: "Our prayer ministry had grounded to a halt, but when we heard about your daughter, we began to pray."

Doctors had predicted eight months of chemotherapy. After only three months, however, they could no longer detect Carrie's cancer. Blackaby communicated the news to the youth. Many responded, saying the answered prayer triggered them to pray for other students' salvation or healing.

"George Mueller said, 'God, Your people have lost confidence that You hear and answer Your people's prayers. Let my life become the demonstration that You still clearly hear and answer prayer.' His life became that demonstration of God's faithfulness," says Blackaby. "I saw the same thing happen in my daughter's situation. It caused God's people to begin praying again and to see great and mighty things He would do through their prayers on her behalf."



## EXPERIENCING GOD

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