

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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| SERMON TITLE | Attracting God's Attention |
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| SERIES | |
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| KEY SCRIPTURE | Various Scriptures |
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| SYNOPSIS | I want to be a person and a church who attracts Jesus, who will then attract people. So, how do we attract the Lord's attention? |
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| HIGHLIGHTS | |
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☞ **Attracting God's Attention**

We've been talking about knowing Jesus more and how you need a personal God experience in your life. Job had heard about God, but finally came to really see and know him. Moses had a personal encounter of the Lord's presence at the far side of the desert and found that nothing is impossible with God. You need to experience the power of his presence. Elijah was worried and weary when he heard the Lord speak at the cave on Mount Horeb, finding that God was his strength. You need your own God encounter, getting to know him more personally for yourself. Today I want to talk about how we can attract the Lord so that we can have a personal encounter with him. I've seen and heard this quote several times recently:

☞ ***"Instead of designing a church service to attract people, let's have a service that attracts God, and He will draw the people."***

In Matthew 4, the story of Andrew and Simon, two brothers were standing in a small boat on a really big lake, tossing nets into the water, hoping to catch enough fish not only to feed their family, but enough to sell too. But then, the story goes, a man came strolling along the lakeside. And the man calls out to them, loud enough so that they can hear him across the water and the sound of the waves, "Come! Follow me! And I will send you out to fish for people."

And, the story goes, the brothers dropped their nets and followed him. There doesn't seem to be any delay. They just dropped everything and joined him. And, then the story continues. There were two more brothers a little further down the way. James and John were mending their nets in their boat with their father when this man called out to them. And, it says they immediately left their nets and their father to follow him. (Matt. 4:18-22). Can you imagine the father left standing there? ... "What just happened?"

That story – the story of Jesus walking along the sea of Galilee and calling the first four of his disciples to follow him – is so brief. It's literally five Bible verses long. And it's missing so many details that we're left to wonder along with their father: What happened? What was it about this man, walking along the lakeshore, that was enough for them to leave their family, their job, the village they grew up in... their whole lives – and just go, follow him into a mysterious future?

What attracted people to Jesus so powerfully? Because it's not just two sets of brothers, right? It's 8 more guys who left their homes behind to wander around the Israeli countryside with Jesus. And it's a group of women who gave their own money to support Jesus and his merry men (Luke 8:1-3). It's huge crowds of people that followed him out into a field and stayed there so long they realized that they should have packed a dinner (Matt. 14:13-21). It's a despised tax collector who climbed up a tree so he can just catch a glimpse of Jesus (Luke 19:1-9). It's religious leaders who wanted to know more about what he was saying, who sneaked off to see Jesus at night (John 3) or who invited him home for dinner (Luke 7:36-50). It's a Roman soldier who sent his servant out to find Jesus (Luke 7:1-9). It's strangers who stop Jesus on the street and ask for just a second of his time, who reach out in a crowd just to brush their fingers along the fringe of his robe (Matt. 9:20-22).



Jesus attracted people. They were drawn to him. I think it was his **compassion** for them - loving them in spite of their flaws. It was his **charisma**, with supernatural manifestations which healed and restored people. It was his **calling** from God, the Father, which was so attractive.

We could apply some insights right here to ourselves. The more we are like Jesus, with compassion, charisma and calling, the more people will be drawn to us. But I don't just want to draw people to me, I want people to be drawn to Jesus.

☞ **I want to be a person and a church who attracts Jesus, who will then attract people.** So, how can we attract the Lord to us?

The following is adapted from **"Ways You Can Attract God's Full Attention,"** posted by Ben Godwin.

There are certain attitudes and actions which attract God and others that repel Him. We want to create an atmosphere that is inviting to God's presence.

What attracts romance with your spouse? You spruce up in nice outfits, spray on perfume or cologne, play soft music and have a candle-light dinner. We create the right atmosphere and set the mood. Likewise, there are at least **eight specific things which set the atmosphere and attract God's attention:**

☞ **1. Praise** – Sincere praise is irresistible to God for **He "inhabits the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3).** Paul and Silas were beaten and bound in the Philippian Jail. At midnight, they started singing praises to God who sent an earthquake to shake the prison and "all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed" (Ac. 16:26). Notice praise not only opened their prison door; it opened ALL the prison doors! If we learn the secret of getting free in praise, it will not only deliver us but those around us too. Praise grabs God's attention.

☞ **2. Worship** – The difference between praise and worship is like the difference between chit chat and a serious conversation. Praise is more **about** God, while worship is directly **to** God. Praise tends to be louder, more exuberant and vocal. Worship tends to be deeper, quieter and more heartfelt. Jesus told the woman at the well, "...a time is coming and has now come when ☞ the **true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.**" (John 4:23). God is actively seeking certain people – worshippers. When we sincerely and earnestly worship God, heaven takes notice. It is like a sweet-smelling incense that ascends before His throne. They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Well, the way to God's heart is through the portal of worship.

☞ **3. Prayer** – History proves that God moves when His people pray! **Psalm 145:18 declares, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth."** Psalm 34:17 adds, "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles." Israel's desperate cry in Egyptian slavery got God's attention and He raised up Moses to deliver them (Ex. 2:23-25). When blind Bartimaeus desperately cried out to Jesus, He stopped dead in



His tracks and healed him (Mark 10:46-52). I'm not talking about a wimpy, mealy-mouthed, half-hearted prayer. Don't expect a \$100 answer to a 10-cent prayer! When our kids call us, we might come at our convenience; but when they cry, we come running to them. You see, it takes more than a need to get God's attention. There are plenty of people in need who don't get a response from heaven. There is a spiritual principle that works — "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7) Prayer is the key that unlocks the door to all the resources of heaven. Prayer attracts God's attention.

☞ **4. Humility** – Pride is first on the list of things God hates (Prov. 6:16-19). **"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (James 4:6, 10)**. Ahab was the most wicked king in Israel's history (1 Kings 21:25). Elijah prophesied that the dogs would lick his blood, devour his wife, Jezebel, and every male in his family would be killed. How did Ahab respond? He tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, fasted, walked meekly, and it captured God's attention. "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days" (1 Kings 21:29). If God showed mercy and postponed judgment on wicked Ahab because he humbled himself, He will certainly do the same for us.

☞ **5. Repentance** – Genuine repentance—a godly sorrow for sin, hating and forsaking sin—gains God's attention. Psalm 34:8 says, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Why did God forgive and restore King David when he failed so miserably? Because he was a true worshipper who humbled himself in real repentance (Ps. 51:9-17). What's true for an individual is also true of a nation —

☞ **"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14)**. True repentance is like shooting up a spiritual flare. God notices and rushes to our rescue.

☞ **6. Faith** – God gravitates toward faith while doubt repels Him. The Israelites "limited the Holy One of Israel" with their chronic unbelief (Ps. 78:41 KJV). Paul warned, "everything that does not come from faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23). Unbelief sort of handcuffs God. Notice how in Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, "He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:5-6).

☞ **Faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:6)** and is a catalyst that releases miracles. God gravitates toward people who walk in faith and believe His Word.

☞ **7. Obedience** – Cornelius, a Gentile, Roman Centurion, got God's attention by his kindness and generosity. God even sent Peter, who was prejudiced against Gentiles, to his house where Cornelius' entire family was filled with the Holy Spirit.

☞ God told Cornelius, **"Your prayers and charities have not gone unnoticed by God" (Acts 10:4, TLB)**. His obedience attracted God's attention, who then poured out spiritual blessings on his whole household.



☞ **8. Unity** – God doesn't bless strife; He blesses unity. What produced Pentecost? One hundred and twenty disciples tarried together for more than a week in prayer "with one accord" (Acts 2:1). Their unity attracted God's attention and He poured out His Spirit in a phenomenal way.

There's power in unity. One can put 1,000 to flight, but two can put 10,000 to flight (Deut. 32:30). David compared unity to the holy anointing oil that was poured on Aaron when he was consecrated as the high priest, and to the refreshing dew that descends on the mountains of Zion **☞ where God bestows His blessing (Psalm 133:1-3)**. Unity attracts God's presence like a heat seeking missile which explodes with His power and glory.

All of these, and more set the atmosphere to attract God's attention. We don't necessarily need a better production on Sunday mornings.

☞ **We need more of Jesus every day of our lives. Jesus attracts people. So, let's attract Jesus first!** He is drawn to Praise, Worship, and Prayer; Humility and Repentance; and, He blesses Faith, Obedience, and Unity.

Maybe you're in a situation and need God to step in and rescue you – you need to attract his attention. Then, begin applying these principals today and see what God will do. Praise, Worship and Pray. Humble yourself and Repent of your sins. Stretch your Faith with extravagant Obedience, and make sure your relationships are clean so that you are in Unity with other believers.

Now, imagine being stranded on a deserted island and a plane flies over. What would you do to get the pilot's attention? Would you be casual, calm, and quiet? Or would you run, jump up and down, wave, and yell "HELP?" Perhaps we need a greater sense of urgency to get God's attention (Ps. 42:1-2). Attracting God's attention is vital because He can do what no other power can do! So, let's attract God's attention.

Song: Here for You