

There are moments when we meet God in a new way. After these moments, we exchange a concept for an encounter. When God shows up, it's not to show us what He looks like, but to show us what He is like. In the Old Testament, God shows up to young and old, to men and women. Let's look at these encounters and ask Him to continuing showing up in our lives.

**These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.**

**1 Read Isaiah 6:1.** King Uzziah reigned for 52 years and his death marked a time of uncertainty for the people of Judah. What was a time of national or global uncertainty or tragedy in your life? What brought comfort to you during that time?

**2** When the earthly king died off, the heavenly king shows up. Isaiah sees God on the throne, and the image tells us something important: **God is sovereign.** Is His authority more a point of comfort or tension for you?

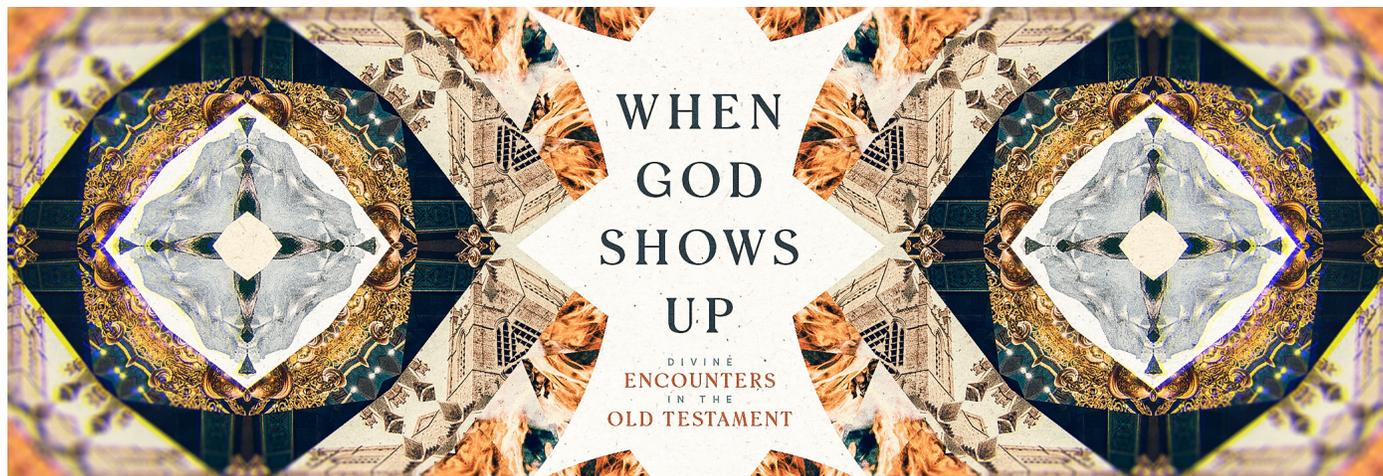
**3 Read Isaiah 6:2-4.** The heavenly beings around God can't help but worship him based on a defining attribute: **God is holy.** What is significant about their praise? Why do they point to creation as a display of God's glory?

**4 Read Isaiah 6:5.** The prophet Isaiah is undone in the presence of a holy God. God doesn't just create what is good, right, or true - He embodies all of those attributes. Why does seeing God for who He is highlight our imperfections? Is there anything in Isaiah's despair that you find hard to relate to? If so, why?

**5 Read Isaiah 6:6-7.** God initiates a cleansing for Isaiah that the prophet hadn't earned or expected. In this, we see that **God shows sinners mercy.** How does this point to Jesus? How does it mirror our own spiritual transformation?

**6 Read Isaiah 6:8.** Only after Isaiah has experienced judgment and mercy for himself is he ready and willing to be sent on God's behalf. What part of the good news do you have a harder time sharing with people? God's holiness? Our sin? Divine mercy? Finish by praying the Holy Spirit makes your group bold to share the only message that can bring real hope to sinners in the presence of a holy god.





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**1** Kick off your discussion with these two icebreakers - if someone wakes you up in the middle of the night, can you be alert pretty quickly or are you in a fog for a while? In the morning, do you get out of bed at the first alarm, or do you use the snooze button?

**2 Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10.** In this scene, we see that **God is patient and persistent.** How has God been patient and persistent with you? How does Samuel's stumbling start as a prophet encourage you?

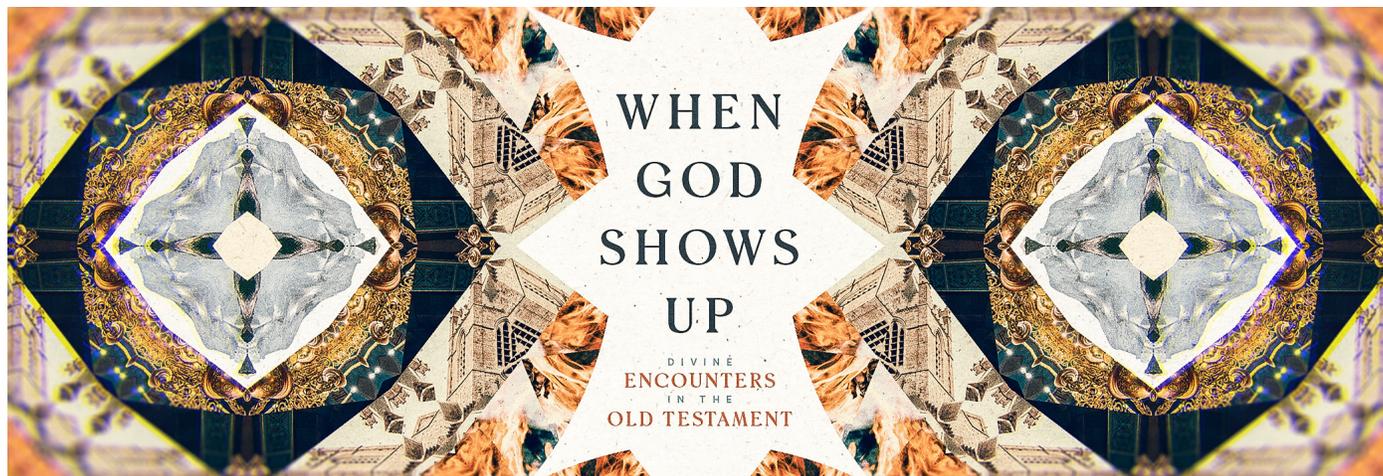
**3** Verse 7 says that Samuel didn't know the Lord. In this scene, he matures in faith because he is no longer dependent on Eli. How do we balance learning from others without growing dependent on them? What makes it difficult to choose direct dependence on God?

**4 Read 1 Samuel 3:11-18.** We want God to speak, but sometimes we're uncomfortable with what He has to say. We see here that **God's word will not be broken.** How do we wrestle with God's patience alongside His perfect and unfailing Word? How can we trust Him in how we receive hard truths?

**5 Read 1 Samuel 3:19-21.** Samuel's success as a prophet is totally depended upon God. The same is true for us as Christians and as His church. In what ways are Samuel's experience of God's Word different from ours? In what ways are they the same?

**6 Read John 1:14. God reveals himself through His Word** - and the Word made flesh is Jesus. How did Jesus come in grace and truth? How can we remain dependent upon Him and attentive to His Spirit in our lives?





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**1 Read Genesis 16:1-6.** This part of God's story seems to go from bad to worse. Barrenness leads to abuse, hurt upon hurt. Abram and Sarai are the people God chose, but here they are making a mess of things. What does this say about God? What does it say about us?

**2 Read Genesis 16:7-8. God finds us when we're lost.** How do you interpret Hagar's answers to the angel's questions? How does this part of the story reflect our own journey from "lost" to "found"? Share with the group ways in your own life God sought you.

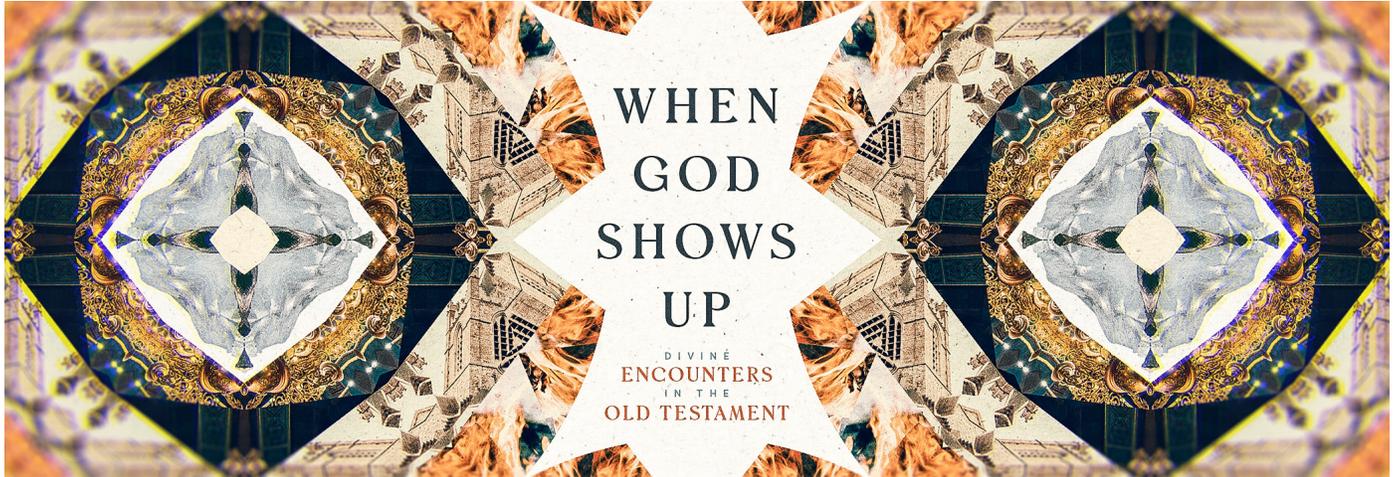
**3 Read Genesis 16:9-14.** Hagar doesn't protest to the angel's instructions, but responds with an insight about God: **God sees us when we feel invisible.** Why is this a comfort to Hagar? Why does it matter to know that God doesn't just know everything, but that He specifically knows you?

**4 Read Genesis 21:8-21.** After 13 years of relative peace, Hagar and her boy are rejected and sent away, and all hope seems lost. After Hagar's first encounter with God in chapter 16, does it surprise you at all that she doesn't cry out to him? What causes us to forget God's promises?

**5** Genesis 21:17 says that, "God heard the boy." God heard the boy whose name means, "God hears." The point is emphasized for us: **God hears us when we hurt.** What does this tell us about God's nature? How does this truth affect how we face the hardest seasons of life?

**6** How do you see Jesus foreshadowed in this story? What are other ways the story points to the hope we can have in Jesus? (For extra credit, **check out Galatians 3 & 4**).





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**1** Part of this story deals with names and their meanings. As a quick icebreaker, share the meaning of your name (if any) and the story of why your parents picked it for you?

**2** Read **Genesis 32:22-24**. This isn't the first time God shows up to Jacob. God has shown up multiple times (see **Genesis 28:10-15** and **31:3** and **32:1-2**). What do you think is significant in this encounter compared to the others?

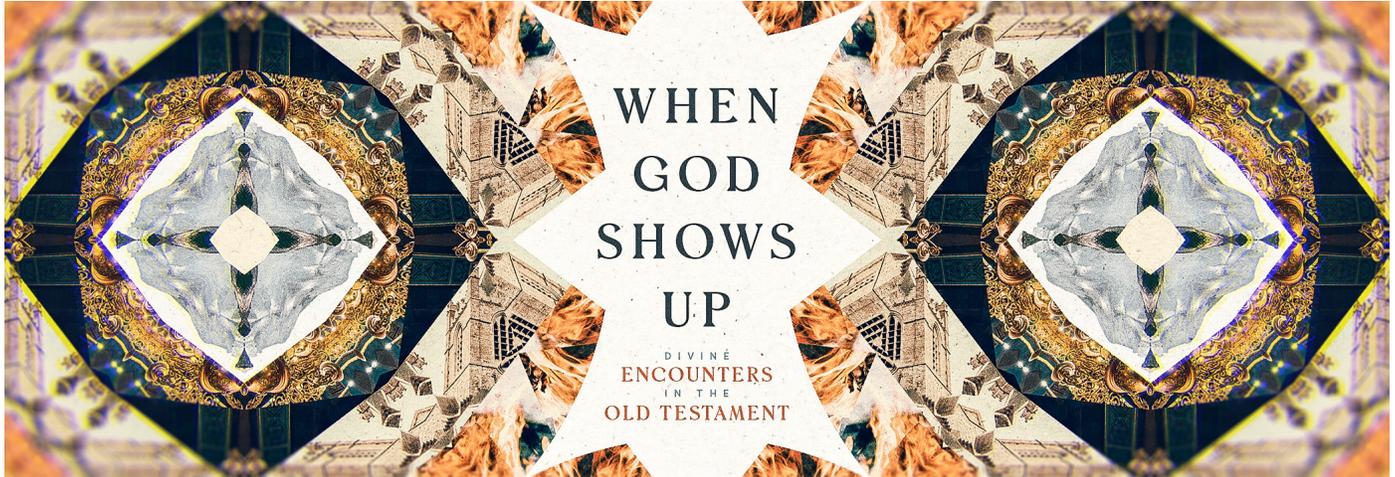
**3** Read **Genesis 32:27-28**. **God's blessing gives a new name.** Jacob goes from "Heel Grabber" and "Deceiver" to "One Who Struggles With God and Overcomes." Why did this name change matter? Similar to Jacob's new name, how does God give Christians a new identity through Jesus?

**4** Read **Genesis 32:24-25** and **Hosea 12:3-4**. **God's blessing comes with a wound.** Why do you think it took a dislocated hip for Jacob to reach a new level of desperation and dependence? How does God use desperate moments to deepen our faith?

**5** Read **Genesis 32:30-31**. **God's blessing turns defeat into victory.** Jacob clearly lost the fight, but he is named the victor. How does God turning winning and losing upside down in His kingdom?

**6** Read **Colossians 2:13-15**. In Jesus, the greatest defeat became the ultimate victory. So for Christians, what does it mean to "lose" to God in order to win? How do we live as "more than conquerors" because of Jesus' victory day to day (see **Romans 8:37**)?





There's a lot of competition for our attention. Israel was dabbling in multiple gods when Elijah squares off with the prophets of Baal. And God displays his power and presence for a purpose - to turn our hearts back to his. We see God active at the altar, and our response should be like the people of Israel - to say He is God.

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**1 Read 1 Kings 18:20-29. God shows up to shame idols.** This scene shows us ancient idols and the ways people sacrificed for them. What are modern day idols that people worship? How can we identify idols in our lives? Why do these idols eventually disappoint and even cause harm to people?

**2 Read 1 Kings 18:30-35 and 38. God shows up to show off.** Why does Elijah have the altar soaked before it's going to be lit? Why does God give us excessive demonstrations of His power? Share a time in your life or in the life of someone you know where God did something incredible in what felt like a hopeless situation?

**3 Read 1 Kings 18:21, 36-37 and 39. God shows up to change hearts.** God's people were living like they didn't belong to God. And God brings his presence and power to restore relationship with them. What does this tell us about God? How did an inward change in the people lead to an outward response? How does that inform our response to God?

**4** How does God showing up on Mount Carmel point us to God showing up on Mount Calvary? How does Elijah's altar point us to Jesus' cross? *(There's more than one right answer.)*

**5 1 Peter 1:13 (NLT)** says, "Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world." This reminds us that **God showing up is not a matter of if - it is a matter of when.** How is the hope we have for Jesus' return also motivating for today?

