

# FAQ about a New Life Encounter Weekend

## Why do I need to go on an Encounter Weekend?

When we get saved Jesus' death pays for us to be free from the PENALTY of our sin! That's why, if you've bowed your knee to Jesus as Savior, you don't worry about going to Hell anymore! But the Bible ALSO says that Jesus' death paid for you to be free from sin's POWER. Few Christians feel like they're living free from sin's power. Why is that?

It's because the devil has gained LEGAL GROUND in your life. This can be passed to us, but most often it is from our own choices (either due to repeated sin or from choices brought about when we've been hurt or wounded). You must claim the freedom that is rightfully yours in Christ. The result is power to live in victory like many of us have never experienced before.

## What happens on an Encounter?

The weekend is a series of teaching times where we worship and are taught principles right out of the Bible about these areas. After each teaching time, you'll spend time together in a group of 3-5 others. Your role is to be there for each other as you interact with what you are hearing. You ask for God to reveal the truth about things hidden in your life and as those things are brought into the light you'll be helped to confess it, claim your freedom and then another member of your group will pray to cut you free from the enemy's power in this area of your life.

On Friday night we'll ask you to fill out a profile of ways the devil may have gained legal ground in your life. On Saturday evening we'll burn those inventories and you'll be given the chance to tell how you've gained freedom through the weekend. Sunday morning will be about staying free now that you've gained freedom.

## Will it be weird?

No! Often people have strange ideas of what an experience like this will be like. Truthfully it's pretty simple! We hear God's truths proclaimed and act on them in the context of community with other brothers or sisters. That's it. Between sessions there's a lot of time hanging out, talking, eating, doing fun stuff, etc.

## Why does it cost money?

We do Encounters at a local campground. Everything builds on each other, so you'll benefit most by getting there before it begins Friday evening and staying through its completion Sunday morning. There are meals involved and campgrounds charge for lodging, meeting space, etc. Because an Encounter requires 2 nights, the costs add up, but we strive to do it as inexpensive as possible. *(Hey, you'd spend some money to eat or do things if you stayed home that weekend, wouldn't you?)*

## Encounter testimony

I went to the Ladies' Encounter hoping for relief. I went doubting that God would show up for me. I went with no other options. I was in need and desperate. I knew I needed freedom from the past.

I had kept my past hidden and it was poisoning me. I was ashamed. I told no one. I believed a lie early on in my development that I had no advocate, no protector. If people found out the ugliness, I believed I would be labeled as damaged, weak, stupid, diminished in their eyes. The fact that my Lord would allow evil in my life was a source of great shame. So I told no one. Shame was my *cross to bear*. It was a wicked, twisted misrepresentation of the cross that I believed early on. The cross took on a negative connotation and I have carried that with me for most of my life.

I didn't really see the significance of the words "bring it to the cross".

I spent time at the cross when I was saved. I took my sins there on a regular basis. I *cried* in confession and repentance. I *cried* for the sacrifice that was made and *cried* for the grace that was offered. *The cross for me was a place of tears.*

I was forgiven there, but I didn't go there *to* forgive.

I was only able to get so far to the cross. I believed I would find even more grief -there. I would be too exposed -there. I would find Christ -there, and I was mad at Him.

I was willing to help others get to that place in their lives. I believed God would meet *them* there. But somehow it didn't apply to *me*. I thought that if I arrived, He would not show up. Then I would have nothing- void of hope.

So there I sat, at the Encounter. And the Holy Spirit moved. In an intimate setting, four ladies began to ask specific questions. In order to answer, it was necessary to open up that garbage bag. Shame came oozing out for all four women to see. Instead of recoiling, they moved in closer. Instead of judging, they wept with me. They began to pray. As we had done previously for all four of them, they did for me- *they walked with me and brought me to the cross*. They stayed at the cross and prayed with me as the Holy Spirit worked. You know what they prayed? They prayed scripture. That's it for the most part. It wasn't pretty. It wasn't easy. It wasn't all pink lace and rose petals. It was garbage we were dealing with. Those four women were engaged in a spiritual battle on my behalf. It was beautiful and agonizing at the same time. Lies, oppression, shame laid bare- yeah, I felt totally over-exposed.

The Holy Spirit showed me that the disconnect I had expressed earlier (between what I knew and what I felt) was caused by **my** sin. I made the short circuit when I began to judge God for all He did, didn't do, or allowed in my life. I ridiculed His refining- even though I had prayed for it. I didn't like His methods. I thought I knew better. I judged God and found Him lacking! That was my sin. Yes, I had been wronged by sinful people. I ended up, however, blaming God. That was MY sin. That was my blockage to healing. So I confessed it in the presence of the fabulous four. I apologized to God for my arrogance. I asked Him to please forgive me. We prayed and wept some more. Then we rested at the foot of the cross.

We symbolically threw all of our garbage in the fire at the foot of a wooden cross. I stood there and watched it burn.

I am now forgiven and free to continue pursuing all that is God. I am free to forgive those who sinned against me. My encounter was with Jesus- He really did show up- and He taught me about the cross.

The cross for me is death, but it is life. It's sin, but it's forgiveness. It really is ugly, but it is utterly gorgeous. It is symbolic as well as a state of being. It is an object, an expression and a place. It is a place of tears, yet my absolute joy. Yes, I will pick it up, carry it, surf on it, use it, wrap myself up in it. I don't want to use the cross as just a "drop off" site. I went to the cross last on the Encounter, and I'm still there.