

Seeking My King & His Kingdom

Lesson #1 Choose To Seek God First

Consider: God the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit desire to establish a one-on-one, intimate, personal relationship with each person He has created.

This truth shouts from the roof tops two very powerful words - Open Invitation!

God Is Looking For Seekers

Acts 17:26-27 "He made from one man every nation of mankind that they should seek God in the hope that they might feel their way toward Him, and find Him."

Ps. 14:2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

II Chron. 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect [seeking] toward Him.

When I was born again 61 years ago, I received Jesus Christ as my Savior and eternal life.

John 5:24 He that hears my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

I John 5:11-12 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

John 17:3 This is eternal life, That They May Know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."

"Seeking after God" = seeking to develop an intimate relationship with God

Seek = "to go in search or quest of; to make inquiry; to try to find or discover by searching or questions."

Truth: If I am not willing to make it a PRIORITY to SEEK AFTER GOD, and allow Him to conform me to the image of Jesus Christ, I will not have the relationship with Him that He desires me to have.

A. Time To Seek The Lord

1. To seek something, to seek the Lord, implies Recognition Of A Need.

You don't seek for something you don't need or lack. My soul NEEDS the relationship.

2. To seek the Lord means to prize Him so much that we proactively set out to know Him and to walk with Him.

3. We recognize a relationship with Him has incredible value and He is worth dropping other things to seek after Him.

4. To seek the Lord means to incline our hearts toward Him; to live in a conscious awareness of His presence with our hearts tuned to listen to Him.

Ps. 119:36-37, 133 Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness.

³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, *and* revive me in Your way.

Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.

5. To seek the Lord means to inquire of Him; to seek His direction, His wisdom, His understanding, His perspective.

Although King David was a brilliant military strategist, leader and authority, he inquired of the Lord. Time after time, he lifted his eyes heavenward and said, "Lord, what should I do?"

6. To seek the Lord means to set our hearts and our hope on that which is eternal rather than that which is temporal.

II Cor. 4:16-18 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Truth: We seek after those things that matter most to us.

Questions: Who or what am I seeking? What am I pursuing? What do I prize?
Where do I look for answers? What do I desire? Am I seeking Him?

B. How Do We Seek The Lord?

1. Seek Him Intentionally - Done on purpose; conscious purpose; performed with purpose
Col. 3:1-2 If then you have been raised with Christ, SEEK [keep seeking] the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. SET Your Mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

I Chron. 22:19a "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God."

- Seeking God is NOT an emotion.
- It is a conscious, deliberate choice to set our affections, mind, heart and attention on Him.
- It is an intentional focused effort; it is proactive, not passive

2. Seek Him Earnestly; Whole-heartedly

a. How do you seek for a precious possession that you have lost?

Deut. 4:29 But if from thence thou shall seek the LORD thy God, thou shall find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

- A concerted, focused effort - Not a casual glance in God's direction every once in a while.
- The earnestness with which we seek anything reveals the value we place on it.

3. Seek Him Continually

- In every season of life, - good times and the bad - seek the Lord continually.
- Prosperity is not a friend of grace in our lives; we tend to become complacent.
- Circumstances do not change our NEED to seek Him.
- Don't permit adversity to turn you away from the Lord.

Allow adversity to push you to seek Him in the midst of your pain.

Ps. 77:2a In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord:

- Desperation can be the trigger to seek the Lord.

f. Our troubles can be a blessing, a gift, to motivate us to seek God more intentionally, more earnestly and more desperately.

C. What Prevents Me From Seeking The Lord?

1. Self-sufficiency - I have no sense of need or desperation.

a. Church of Laodicea - Rev. 3:17a Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;...

I would not intentionally say that, but are there times I live that way?

2. Distractions

a. Especially when you are in your quiet time [Ex. "Burden to clean the house."]

b. Noise & clutter

3. Substitutes: competing desires, appetites and passions; Things I desire and long for more than I desire Him - Drawn toward temporal rather than eternal

Things that can be felt and seen, rather than things that are invisible

Questions: How do we identify the substitutes for God in our lives? Ask yourself:

What do I long for? What do I crave? What do I invest my time in? What do I pursue?

On what do I meditate? What will I go to great lengths to obtain or avoid?

To what do I devote my time, energy, and efforts? Stuff, possessions; Money; Physical beauty;

Pursue a great figure; Comfort; Relief; Escape from pressure

Many people turn to entertainment, shopping, food or alcohol. They are substitutes.

Seeking after approval; acceptance; praise; a relationship; longing for a mate.

Truth: We seek to fill the empty places of our hearts with things, with substitutes for God.

The Word calls these substitutes - Idols

Problem: If you fill up with junk food, you lose your appetite for the real feast.

Ps. 81:10 I am the LORD thy God, ...open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

4. Fear: fear of intimacy, fear of getting too close, bitterness, disappointment with God or others.

5. You have no relationship with Him.

You don't have a heart for Him, an appetite for Him. You don't desire Him.

Seeking The Lord Above Everything - A Whole-Hearted Seeker

The Song of Solomon is a love story of a bride, her beloved and their love relationship.

1. They have a passionate relationship during the honeymoon.

2. Chapters 3 & 5 relate 2 accounts of a breach in the relationship.

SS 3:1-4a By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loves: I sought him, but I found him not. ² I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loves: I sought him, but I found him not. ³ The watchmen who go about the city found me: to whom I said, Have you seen the One whom my soul loves? ⁴ It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loves: I held him, and would not let him go...

Note: The progression: Missing, Seeking, Finding

a. By night = plural = night after night after night, over a period of time

b. Lost intimacy that she once experienced with her beloved

Truth: You can be involved in spiritual activities but not experience the reality of His presence in your life. You can be "working for God" but have a heart that is cold, distant, and separated from my Lord and Savior.

c. Not content, she begins to Pursue The Restoration Of Intimacy with her beloved.

d. Starts the search right where she is. "By night on my bed I sought."

- It's convenient, easy, not great effort required. Not yet really desperate!

e. Searching from her bed, doesn't bring the restoration she is seeking. She doesn't give up.

f. She seeks more earnestly: v. 2 = "I will rise now."

Doesn't wait until morning; resolved to do whatever it takes to find him. Intentional steps

Consider: How many times has God wanted to be found by me, but I just rolled over and went back to sleep?

Truth: I am not likely to find Him as long as I am unwilling to rise up out of my current circumstances and take intentional steps to seek Him.

g. She pursues an intensified search. She begins a full-scale, all-out search, for the missing person. She wants to check in every possible place he could be.

This is a thorough and focused search. She is not going to be deterred in her search.

Truth: This kind of focus and intensity is required if I want to experience restored intimacy with the Lord Jesus.

It doesn't just happen. We have to be willing to turn our attention away from other competing desires and distractions so that we can turn our eyes upon Jesus, focus on Him.

Truth: We can't seek the one we love while we are loving and seeking after other things that compete with His place in our lives.

h. She inquires of others [watchmen]: Have you seen Him whom I love? She's not ashamed.

As it turns out, not even they can solve her problem.

Truth: Spiritual leaders can be helpful, but they cannot restore our relationship with Christ.

i. She is determined to find him. So she perseveres and presses on beyond those watchmen.

3:4 The Joy Of Finding: "Scarcely had I passed by them when I found the one I love."

Deut. 4:29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

Consider: "It's just a little bit after I passed by them."

How many times do we give up just short of finding Him, the one we love?

Rom. 5:3-4a ...but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces

PERSEVERANCE; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Truth: It's not enough to find sound doctrine to know more about Him.

Nothing can take the place of finding Him and enjoying personal communion with Him.

j. She says, having found him, "I held him, and I would not let him go."

She doesn't ever want to lose him again, so she clings more tightly and with greater fervor than she had previously.

Note: Two chapters later, once again, there's a breach, a brokenness in the relationship.

Truth: So having found him, clinging to him tightly doesn't mean that you can stop pursuing.

Luke 10:38-41 As they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. A woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching. But Martha was Distracted with much serving. She said, "Lord, do you not care my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me." The Lord answered her, "Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things." But one thing is necessary. "Mary has chosen the good portion which will not be taken away from her." (v. 42)

Note: Martha, by modern standards, would be considered a godly woman. She was hospitable and serving the Lord. But self-sufficiency, busyness, distractions kept her from seeking the Lord while she was serving Him. As a result, she was left frazzled, frayed, and frustrated.

Consider: Am I serving the Lord, but not seeking Him?

Truth: Spiritual fruitfulness does not begin with frenzied activity.

It begins with a heart for God.

By contrast: Mary had her sights fixed on Christ.

Nothing mattered more to Mary than seeking the Lord. Everything else could wait.

Consider: She didn't drift into that posture. She was intentional; she chose the good portion.

Mary said "no" to distractions, "no" to her iPhone, no to Facebook, etc.

She said "no" to other good things to sit at His feet and listen to the Lord.

Truth: According to God's Word, we are either seeking Him, or we are forsaking Him.

There is no middle ground.

Consider: Make sure your serving and doing flow from your time spent at His feet rather than your serving and doing crowding out your relationship with Him.

You may have experienced what it means to seek the Lord in the past. You may have had a heart to seek Him, but maybe in this season of your life your heart has become barren, dry and cold. Are you desperate to experience restoration of His presence in your life? Ask Him to give you a heart to seek Him. Are you willing to say to Him, "I will rise now. I'm ready to get up from my bed. I'm willing to take whatever steps are necessary to be restored to intimacy with You. I don't want to stay in this place of separation. I want to live in union and communion with You, Lord. Please make Yourself known to me. Nothing else matters."

Ps. 27:8 God says, "Seek my face."

Original language: this a plural command to all of us. The response: personal & singular one
My heart says to you, your face, Lord, do I seek."

Will you be one who will respond? Personally, "Oh Lord, I will seek Your face.

If nobody else in my family does, if nobody else in my church does, if nobody else in my row does, oh, Lord, I will seek Your face."

It's real easy to sit in here and say I will seek the Lord.

But when you go home, you have TV, Facebook, Friends, phones, laundry, etc.

Question: when you have a choice, will you seek Him, or seek other things?"