

SEEKING

STUDY NO. 4

We have learned so far that praying is talking to God, and that He always hears and answers our prayers. We pray to thank God for something, to ask Him for something we need, to ask for His blessing over our work, etc. All this is good, necessary and biblical but it's not enough. The Scriptures tell us of another way of talking to God which is called "seeking". The dictionary describes it as "making an effort to find a person or thing".

But seek... what? Whom? Why? How? When? Who should do it? In this study we will try to find an answer to all these questions.

What do we seek?

"The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men, to see if there are any who seek God". Psalm 14:2

In the context of this Psalm we see that the Scriptures speak about corrupt men who do abominable works or evil deeds. We also see that God was trying to find if there was anyone willing to seek Him.

Explain what we should seek for according to the following verses: **1 Chronicles 16:11; Amos 5:4; Isaiah 55:6; Psalm 69:32**

God is the only thing we should seek. He invites us to have an intimate relationship with Him. This kind of relationship indicates the exchange of something; a mutual thing. Here we see that prayer is not a monologue but a dialogue with the Lord. We will not be talking to Him and focusing on ourselves but we will be looking at Him, focusing only on Him and quietening our hearts to be able to hear him speak to us. Seeking Him is not an intended action from some people, rather God's own will and purpose. It's not an option but a commandment.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing". Matthew 23:37

What a tender way to express the kind of relationship that God wants to have with us. He wants us to feel his warmth, his care and protection. He wants to reveal himself to us. This is why a formal prayer, which is a little distant, is not enough to a God who is up in heaven. He is in us, but we need to learn to open our hearts, our minds and even our senses in His presence to be able to experience the precious closeness to which He is calling us. The Word compares the relationship between God and His church to that of a husband and wife in marriage.

"After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church". Ephesians 5:29

Prayer doesn't necessarily include or imply seeking, but seeking does imply prayer.

Why do we seek?

Primarily, we seek to get to know Him more and develop a relationship with Him. The dictionary describes the meaning of these words like this:

Know: to be aware or sure of something, to recognize somebody

Fellowship: Mutual identification of ideas and purpose. State of being on equal terms. Friendship

Jesus came to restore our broken relationship with God. When He accepts us as His sons we experience a close contact with the Lord for the first time. But this doesn't mean that we already know Him closely. The moment of our new birth is only the beginning of a relationship that needs to keep on growing. God himself urges us to get to know Him more, to draw near to Him and to develop a relationship with Him.

"God, who has called you into fellowship with his son Jesus Christ, is faithful". 1 Corinthians 1:9

"I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord." Jeremiah 24:7

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ". Ephesians 2:13

These three activities feed from each other; the more I know God, the closer I want to get to him, which in turn produces a more intimate fellowship with Him. This then makes me want to get closer to Him again to know Him more, so on and so on. This cycle leads us into a close relationship with our Father.

God wants to reveal Himself to us

"You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he." Isaiah 43:10

"But let him who boasts, boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord..." Jeremiah 9:24

The importance of the knowledge of God

It was very important for the apostle Paul to get to know God that he says that everything he ever did was just with the purpose of knowing God better. (*"...I want to know Christ..." Philippians 3:10*).

The following verses illustrate other aspects of the importance of knowing God:

"Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of understanding..." Isaiah 5:13

"...my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge." Hosea 4:6

"For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings..." Hosea 6:6

We can therefore say that: The lack of knowledge produces _____

The knowledge of God is more important than _____

How do we seek Him?

- **With all of our hearts.**

“Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.” Psalm 119:2 *“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13* *“...you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Deuteronomy 4:29*

Seeking God with all your heart means:

- **With longing.**

“My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you...” Isaiah 26:9

- **With perseverance**

“He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success.” 2 Chronicles 26:5

“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unploughed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.” Hosea 10:12

Seeking God with perseverance means:

- **In prayer, fasting and supplication.**

“So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with Him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.” Daniel 9:3

When should we seek Him?

According to the Scriptures in **1 Chronicles 16:11, Psalm 105:2, 2 Chronicles 34:3 and Psalm 63:1;** the moment or the time to seek God is:

Does it mean we should live in a monastery in order to dedicate all of our time to seeking the Lord? No, seeking God is directly linked to the attitude of our hearts. It’s true we can say that by secluding ourselves to a lonely place we are putting ourselves into an ideal and almost purpose-built condition for seeking God. But that is not all as it must also be accompanied by our personal decisions.

An essential condition

There is one way of seeking him that doesn't please God.

"For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them". **Isaiah 58:2**

Everything related to injustice and sin separates us from God. Because of man's injustice, God has placed a condition for us to be able to find him:

"Then I will go back to my place until they admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their misery they will earnestly seek me." **Hosea 5:15**

"While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God..." **Daniel 9:20**

Please summarise this condition:

Who should seek Him?

Before Jesus came to this world, God had already asked his people (Israel) to seek him. Let's see this verse as an example:

"If my people, who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways..." **2 Chronicles 7:14**

These words are spread all over the Old Testament. In a way, at that time God only related to the Jews and maybe to a few other non-Jews who gave their lives to him. After Jesus' birth, the call to seek Him is broader and is illustrated very well in the book of Acts of the Apostles as:

"That the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the gentiles who bear my name..." **Acts 15:17**
"From one man he made every nation of men... that they would seek him..." **Acts 17:26- 27**

The great result

What would happen if we seek God according to the following verses?

Matthew 7:7 and 2 Chronicles 15:4

Additional blessings

The best thing that can happen to us while we are seeking the Lord is that we meet with Him. Nevertheless, God promises to give us more than just the blessing of his presence. In the following section we will be looking at a series of verses and a list of blessings that God gives to those who seek him. The task is to join the verse with the corresponding blessing underneath.

Verses:

- “Give ear and come to me; hear me that your soul may live”... Isaiah 55:3
- “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know...” Jeremiah 33:3
- “...anyone who comes to Him must believe that... he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Hebrews 11:6
- “...we have sought the Lord our God; we sought Him and he has given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.” 2 Chronicles 14:7
- “I sought the Lord and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.” Psalm 34:4
- “...those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.” Psalm 34:10
- “Blessed are those who, seek him with all their heart.” Psalm 119:2
- The gracious hand of God is on everyone who looks to him...” Ezra 8:22

Blessings

- God will be good to us.
- We will be blessed.
- He will provide all our needs.
- He will help us trust Him and take all fear from us.
- He will give us peace and prosperity.
- He will reward us.
- He will show us great things.
- He will give us life.

Our effort in seeking Him

- **The desire**

It is very difficult to do anything unless we have a desire to do it, “an urge”. Unfortunately, it is very common to have no desire to seek God. But God is so good that he helps us even in this.

“...The Lord our God broke out in anger against us. We did not enquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way.” 1 Chronicles 15:13

God may deal harshly with us sometimes but only to cause us to seek Him. He breaks our will so that instead of seeking our own desires we draw near to Him.

- **The Holy Spirit**

Our own natural mind doesn't know or understand God's things. We need his help in broadening our understanding.

God is aware of this and from the beginning, he helped his servants understand: *“And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, “Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision.” Daniel 8:16*

"He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding."

Daniel 9:22

The Lord Jesus left to all those who believe, a great help, essential in our seeking.

"But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." **John 14:26**

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." **John 16:13**

The Holy Spirit is our constant help. **(Romans 8:26)**

- **The Bible**

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." **2 Timothy 3:16**

The Word of God enables us to know God. Therefore, we can't expect to get to know our Father without the help of the Scriptures.

- **A Change**

"They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good." **Titus 1:16**

"The man who says, "I know him" but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him." **1 John 2:4**

According to these 2 verses: Is it possible to know God without a change in our behaviour? Why? What needs to happen to our actions?

The answer

"...Let's go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going." **Zechariah 8:21**

"Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord." **Isaiah 2:5**

"My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek." **Psalms 27:8**

These were the answers given by the people in the Old Testament to the call of seeking the Lord. We also need to make a decision with determination. It is our responsibility and nobody else can do it on our behalf.

What will your answer be?