

The Pursuit of God

by A. W. Tozer

Chapter 1 – Following Hard after God

“It is a solemn thing, and no small scandal in the Kingdom, to see God's children starving while actually seated at the Father's table. ... For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself, and unless the hearers find God in personal experience they are not the better for having heard the truth. The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.”
--- A.W. Tozer – June 16, 1948

“My whole being follows hard after You and clings closely to You; Your right hand upholds me.” - **Psalm 63:8** (Amplified)

1. Christian theology teaches the doctrine of *prevenient grace*, which means that before someone can seek God, God must first have sought them.

- We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit. **John 6:44; John 6:65**
- It is this prevenient drawing from God that takes from us any credit on our part. God is always previous.

2. While God *holds us* (“Your hand upholds me.”), it is our responsibility to *follow* (“My whole being follows hard..”).

- The impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is our following “hard” after Him. All the time we are pursuing Him, we are already in His hand.
- Our response - on our part there must be a positive reciprocation to God’s drawing us. **Psalm 42:1-2**

3. The modern scientist has lost God amid the wonders of His world; we Christians are in real danger of losing God amid the wonders of His Word. We have almost forgotten that God is a Person, and true knowledge of a personality cannot be achieved in one encounter. **John 5:39-40**

- Religion, so far as it is genuine, is in essence the response of created personalities to the Creating Personality - God. **John 17:3**
- The continuous and unembarrassed interchange of love and thought between God and the soul of the redeemed person is the throbbing heart of New Testament religion.
- This exchange between God and the soul is known to us in conscious, personal awareness. It does not come through the body of believers, as such, but is known to the individual, and to the body of individuals which compose it.

4. Being made in God’s image, we have the capacity to know Him.

- In our regeneration, the Spirit quickens our hearts toward God. We cannot see the kingdom of God without this heavenly birth (salvation). However, it is only the beginning, for now begins the glorious pursuit, the heart’s happy exploration of the infinite riches of the Godhead. Where we stop no man has yet discovered, for the depths of the knowledge of the Triune God has neither limit nor end.

5. Holy men and women desired Him greatly; they prayed and wrestled and sought Him day and night.
- Moses used the fact that he knew God as an argument for knowing Him better.
Exodus 33:13-23
 - David's life was a torrent of spiritual desire, and his psalms ring out with the cry of the seeker and the glad shout of the finder.
 - Paul confessed that the mainspring of his life was his burning desire after Christ.
Philippians 3:8.
6. Complacency, or lack of holy desire, is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth.
- It is a tragic fact that many Christians have left our seeking of Him to our teachers. We have come to believe the faulty logic which says that if we have found Him (at salvation), we need no more seek Him.
 - Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted.
7. We are in an age of religious complexity. The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. Instead, we have programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities which occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing of the heart. As a result, we know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God scarcely at all.
8. If we would find God among all the religious activity, we must first determine to find Him, and then simplify our approach to Him. God reveals Himself to "babes" and hides Himself from the "wise". We must strip down to essentials (which are few!), put away all effort to impress, and come to Him with childlike candor. **Matthew 18:1-5; 11:25-26**
9. When religion has said its last word, there is little that we need other than God Himself.
- The evil habit of seeking God-*and* effectively prevents us from finding God in full revelation.
 - If we omit the "**and**" we shall soon find God and, in Him, we shall find that for which we have been secretly longing all our lives.
 - We don't need to fear that in seeking God only we may narrow or restrict our lives or our hearts. The opposite is true. God is ENOUGH. The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One. **Numbers 18:20**

O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, that so I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away". Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus' name. Amen.