

*The Pursuit of God*, by A.W. Tozer  
Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 - Following Hard After God. (pursuing God with intention and passion)

- 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 natural bent to follow our own will continues to pull us to back to focus on self rather than God. We must make an effort to pursue God above self. If we would find God among all the religious activity, we must first determine to find Him, and then simplify our approach to Him. When religion has said its last word, there is little that we need other than God Himself.

Chapter 2 - The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing. (overcoming our possessive natures)

- Created things were meant to be external to man and subservient to him. Sin introduced complications and has made these very gifts of God a potential source of ruin to the soul. There is an enemy within each of us – our natural man, or self. Its chief characteristic is its possessiveness. Our possessive clinging to things is so natural, it is rarely recognized for the evil it is. Everything we have is on loan to us by God – including our most love ones and our gifts and talents.
- To repudiate it and give up all for Christ’s sake is to lose nothing of spiritual or eternal value, but to preserve everything for eternity. The only way to destroy this enemy is by The Cross. The blessed ones who possess the Kingdom are those who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing. These are the “poor in spirit”. They are no longer slaves to the tyranny of “things”. They have broken the yoke of the oppressor, not by fighting but by surrendering.

Chapter 3 - Removing the Veil. (overcoming our selfish nature)

- God intended that we would live always in communion with Him. But we have all revolted and broken with God, and have fled as far as possible from His presence. Sin broke our relationship and fellowship with Him. The whole work of God in redemption is to undo the tragic effects of that revolt, and to restore our right and eternal relationship with God.
- Why do we consent to abide all our days just outside the Holy of Holies and never enter at all to look upon God? It is the veil of our fleshly, fallen nature living on, unjudged within us, uncrucified and unrepudiated. It is woven of the fine threads of the self-life, the hyphenated sins of the human spirit. They are not something we *do*, they are something we *are*, and therein lays both their subtlety and their power. They dwell too deep within us and are too much a part of our natures to come to our attention till the light of God is focused upon them.
- Self is the opaque veil that hides the face of God from us. It can be removed only in *spiritual experience* - never by mere instruction. There must be a work of God in destruction before we are free. We must invite the cross to do its deadly work within us. We must bring our self-sins to the cross for judgment.

Chapter 4 - Apprehending God. (developing our spiritual senses)

- We apprehend the physical world by exercising the faculties given us for that purpose, and we possess spiritual faculties by means of which we can know God and the spiritual world if we will obey the Spirit’s urge and begin to use them.
- Faith enables our spiritual senses to function. Where faith is defective the result will be inward insensibility and numbness toward spiritual things. This eternal world will come alive to us the moment we begin to *reckon* upon its *reality*. The object of our faith is unseen reality.

#### Chapter 5 - The Universal God. (becoming receptive to God's presence)

- One of the most significant truths in Christian teaching is that of "divine immanence". God dwells in His creation and is everywhere present. Divine immanence simply means that *God is here*. He is everywhere present; there is no place where He is not.
- It is a great moment when we really begin to believe that God's promise of self-revelation is literally true. Our pursuit of God is successful just because He is forever seeking to manifest Himself to us. We must pray for an increasing degree of awareness, and for a more perfect consciousness of the divine Presence.
- Why do some persons "find" God in a way that others do not? The one vital quality which they have in common was *spiritual receptivity*. Something in them was open to heaven, something which urged them Godward. Spiritual receptivity is an affinity for, a bent toward, a sympathetic response to, a desire to have. It may be increased by exercise, or destroyed by neglect. It is a gift of God, but one which must be recognized and cultivated as any other gift if we are to realize the purpose for which it was given. We have within us the ability to know Him if we will but respond to His overtures. We will know Him in increasing degree as our receptivity becomes more perfect by faith and love and practice.

#### Chapter 6 - The Speaking Voice. (expecting God to speak to us)

- God is not silent. He has never been silent. It is the nature of God to speak. The second Person of the Holy Trinity is called the Word.
- The Bible is the written word of God. Because God never changes and His word never changes, He continues to speak to us through the Bible. God did not write a book and send it by messenger to be read at a distance by unaided minds. He spoke a Book and lives in His spoken words, constantly speaking His words and causing the power of them to persist across the years.
- We should approach the Bible with the idea that it is not only a book which was once spoken, but a book which is *now speaking*. We should come to the Bible expecting it to speak to us. It is more than a thing; it is a voice, a word, the very Word of the Living God.

#### Chapter 7 - The Gaze of the Soul. (directing our attention/focus toward God)

- High on the list of things the Bible teaches is the doctrine of *faith*. Faith is all-important in the life of the soul, indispensable in our pursuit of God. Faith is not a once-done act, but a continuous gaze of the heart at the Triune God. Believing, then, is directing the heart's attention to Jesus. It is lifting the mind to "behold the Lamb of God," and never ceasing that beholding for the rest of our lives.
- Like the eye which sees everything in front of it and never sees itself, faith is occupied with the Object upon which it rests and pays no attention to itself at all. Faith is a re-directing of our sight, getting *self* out of the focus of our vision and getting God into focus. While we are looking at God we do not see ourselves. Sin has twisted our vision inward and made it self-regarding. Faith looks *out* instead of *in*.

#### Chapter 8 - Restoring the Creator-Creature Relation. (being in the right position in relation to God (fearing God))

- For whatever else the Fall may have been, it was certainly a total change in man's relation to his Creator. He had destroyed the proper Creator-creature relation in which, unknown to him, his true happiness lay. When we take for ourselves the place that is His, the whole course of our lives is out of joint.
- We get our moral bearings by looking at God. He is the fixed center against which everything else is measured, where the law of relativity does not enter and we can say, "IS" and make no allowances. "I am that I am," says God, "I change not." We must begin with God. We are right

when, and only when, we stand in a right position relative to God, and we are wrong so far and so long as we stand in any other position.

- Much of our difficulty stems from our unwillingness to take God as He is and adjust our lives accordingly. Instead, we want to modify Him and bring Him nearer to our own image.
- So let us begin with God. Back of all, above all, before all is God; first in sequential order, above in rank and station, exalted in dignity and honor. He gave being to all things, and all things exist out of Him and for Him. The pursuit of God will embrace the labor of bringing our total personality into conformity to His – a **voluntary exalting** of God to His proper station over us, and a **willing surrender** of our whole being to a place of **worshipful submission** before Him.
- “Be thou exalted” is the language of victorious spiritual experience. It is a little key to unlock the door to great treasures of grace. It is central in the life of God in the soul. Let the seeking man reach a place where life and lips join to say continually, “Be thou exalted.”

#### Chapter 9 – Meekness and Rest. (finding rest in God)

- Jesus spoke directly to the issue of burden and rest. The burden He was referring to was not of political oppression or poverty or hard work. What is the source of our burdens? Our own pride (self-love), pretense, jealousy, envy, and artificiality. As a result, we are never relaxed. Our culture is continually playing on these desires to appear what we are not.
- Jesus calls us to rest, and meekness is His method. In His meekness is our rest. The meek man doesn’t care who is greater than himself, for he has decided that the esteem of the world is not his desire. The meek man has stopped being fooled about himself. He knows that he is as weak and helpless as God has declared him to be, but he also knows the great value and the esteemed place God has provided for him. The meek man’s motto is, “In myself, nothing; in God, everything. The meek man rests, perfectly content to allow God to place His own values on him.

#### Chapter 10 - The Sacrament of Living. (living a life that is continuously pleasing to God)

- One of the greatest hindrances to internal peace for the Christian is the dividing of our lives into two areas – the sacred and the secular. As Christians, we do inhabit two worlds at once – the spiritual and the natural. The conflict within us it provokes (the sacred-secular antithesis), catches most of us in its trap. We try to walk a tightrope between two kingdoms and find no peace in either.
- The Lord Jesus Christ is our perfect example, as He knew no divided life. “I always do the things that please Him,” was His brief summary of His own life as it related to the Father (John 8:29).
- Paul’s exhortation to “do all to the glory of God” is an integral part of the sacred revelation and is to be accepted as the very Word of Truth. It opens before us the possibility of making every act of our lives contribute to the glory of God. Paul specifically mentions “eating and drinking”; if these everyday acts can be so performed as to honor God, then it becomes difficult to conceive of one that cannot.
- It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular; it is why he does it. The motive is everything. Let a man sanctify the Lord God in his heart and he can thereafter do no common act. All he does is good and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For such a man, living itself will be sacramental and the whole world a sanctuary. His entire life will be a priestly ministration.