

WHOM DO YOU SEEK? preached at Mt. Zion on 6/19/11 by Rocky Coffin

There is a passage in **John 18**, which describes how Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane. As Judas leads the soldiers and officers into the garden, Jesus asks, “*Whom do you seek?*” The question is a timeless one, addressed to us today as well. The Lord comes forth to meet us and says, “Whom do you seek?” What are you looking for? What is your goal in life?

Throughout scripture, we are commanded to seek the Lord, as in “seek His face” or “seek first His kingdom and righteousness.” Jesus promised that those who seek, will find. It is an integral part of faith, as in **Hebrews 11:6**, “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*”

Isaiah 55:6 adds a note of urgency with the admonition to “*Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*”

Our English word “seek” comes from a Latin root meaning “to perceive keenly.” To look sharply. To be focused on with a laser-like gaze. It is defined by dictionary phrases like, “go in search of,” and “try to discover, acquire, or gain.”

I define it as, to look with longing or intense desire for something. I think this fits well with the Hebrew word for seek, which can also be translated as desire, request, require, or demand. Saying, in a sense, “I must have it!”

It is this intensity we must understand when we read **Psalms 27:8**, *When You said, “Seek My face,” My heart said to You, “Your face, LORD, I will seek.”* The Lord spoke something to David (I always imagine in the middle of the night), and David’s response was immediate, positive, and determined.

What does it mean to seek the Lord? You don’t seek a person without a reason. Such as to seek an audience, get attention, obtain answers, acquire knowledge, gain understanding, receive favor, have a relationship, develop intimacy. The object of seeking the Lord is to know Him personally, obtain His blessing, have a relationship with Him.

Is He the object of your seeking, is He the focus of your life? Are you intensely desiring to know Him? Do you consider it worthwhile to pursue Him above all other things? Do you believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him – that His reward is worth the effort of seeking? Effort is certainly implied. He rewards those who *diligently* seek Him. It is those who *seek and keep on seeking* who find.

A relationship is not just looking for someone, finding them, asking a few questions, then going separate ways. It's a long-term process and commitment. What if, as soon as couples got married, they separated? (Of course, some do these days!) Chase over, objective achieved, cross that off the list! No, the wedding is just the beginning of marriage. Then comes the part when you really have to seek the other person: pay attention to them, get to know them, try to please them. It's a lifelong pursuit, or it's supposed to be, *till death do us part*.

To seek the Lord, then, is to commit to a life journey of getting to know Him, and learning to please Him. Are these the driving motivations of your life? "I love Him so much, I just want to know Him more and more, and anything I can do to please Him is what makes me happiest."

I think of 2 people in scripture who illustrate this motivation to seek after someone else: Ruth, and Elisha.

Ruth loved her mother-in-law, Naomi. When Naomi was moving back to her home country, Ruth was determined to come with her. Naomi tried to persuade her to stay with her own people, but Ruth insisted: "Your people will be my people, your God will be my God."

Elisha wanted the double portion of the Spirit. Elijah said, IF you see me when I am taken up. Believe me, Elisha followed as if he was the man's own shadow, kept his eyes absolutely fixed, didn't look here or there. Elijah may have said things in the course of conversation that would naturally make one look this way or that – oh, so-and-so built a new house, or that orchard is really blooming – but he stared at the back of Elijah's head hardly daring to blink, until he saw that fiery chariot come swingin' low.

SEEK MY FACE! More than once in scripture, God promises His people, *you will find me, WHEN YOU SEEK WITH ALL YOUR HEART.*

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

Jeremiah 29:13, *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

That "when" is the big IF of the equation. All your heart! Nothing held back, nothing in reserve, nothing left for yourself. All, everything, every bit! All set on Him, nothing set on this world.

Philippians 3: ¹² *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.* ¹³ *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do...* ¹⁴ *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Have you been laid ahold of? Have you felt the divine imperative upon your soul? The still, small voice calling to you in the dark of the night? The hook of God tugging on your heart? The pressure of the upward call? When Jesus walks by and says “FOLLOW ME,” do you drop everything, the nets, boat, fish; the booth, papers, coins; and run to catch up?!

Everyone who went to Sunday school as a child knows what the disciples did: immediately left everything and followed Him. They didn't dilly-dally or say “some other time” or even “let me think about it.” Jesus was on the move NOW and they didn't dare miss the chance to be with Him. To anyone who said “let me go take care of some other business first,” He said, “*No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God,*” **Luke 9:62.**

I mentioned **Isaiah 55:6** and the urgency to “*Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*” Seeking the Lord is serious business, for a number of reasons, but this is one aspect we must take seriously: this opportunity is for a limited time only. Unlike some advertising pitches, “act now” really is the appropriate response. Do you know what will happen to you tomorrow? Do you know the Lord won't return before tomorrow? “*Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts,*” **Heb. 4:7.**

How many times will He give you the opportunity? I don't know. The one time you're hearing right now is the only one guaranteed, I suppose. Samuel heard the voice several times without understanding, but as soon as he was properly instructed, he responded, “*Here am I, Lord, speak, your servant is listening.*”

Are you listening? When God speaks to your heart, “Seek My face,” what is your answer? Whom do you seek?