

Seek Him Where He Likes to be Found (Part 1)

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[0:00] Kind of by way of review, I don't think I've put this in your notes, not really review, as it is kind of again fortifying the theme of this study, seeking and finding God.

We have considered quite a number of those throughout our study. Some of these I think I have alluded to, and others I have not, but they again fortify this theme, this wonderful, very practical truth, and promise that if we will seek God the right way, then we will find Him.

And when we find Him, we will know Him and know Him more. And the more we know Him, the more we love Him. And as I've said a number of times, and loving Him is the whole show.

That's what it's all about. That's what our life as a believer is all about. Loving God. And we might as well love Him here, because we're going to love Him for all eternity.

That's kind of a strange way to put it. But we better learn how to love Him here, and to desire to love Him more and more in our journey as a believer.

[1:32] Let me have you just consider a few passages. You can jot these down. I'm not going to take the time to let you turn to all of them, unless you can turn to them quickly. But the first one is Deuteronomy 4.29.

And it's kind of interesting. It's in a particular text where Moses is warning God's people, and he's even prophesying about some ways they're going to go as they depart from God and get into idolatry.

But he says this in verse 29. He says, but from there, this place of disobedience, you will seek the Lord, your God, and you will find Him.

Now, that's exactly what we're talking about. And here's a restatement of this promise. You will seek the Lord, your God, and you will find Him. But then he adds this conditional clause, if, he says, you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

And we have already studied that concept. We've seen that stated similarly in a number of other places in the Bible. Let me give you another one.

[2:46] 2 Chronicles, and this one ought to be familiar to you, but again, in this very famous passage, we have this principle taught. In 2 Chronicles 7.14, that famous kind of revival verse, here is what God's Word says.

If my people who are called by my name, we could almost quote this, couldn't we? We've heard it so often. I've preached on it a number of times. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and who knows what comes next?

Seek my face. Seek my face. That's one of the principles that we've already dealt with, covered. Seeking His face. If they will seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Or the implication is, they'll find me. And I will act in a gracious and very positive way. Alright, so, here's the principle.

Seeking. But there's also a condition. Seeking the right way. And in this particular passage, you humble yourself. Turn from your wicked ways.

[3:58] And seek His face and you will find Him. Proverbs 8.17, if you're jotting these down, Proverbs 8.17 reads like this. I love those who love me.

And those who seek me diligently will find me. There's the principle again. Seeking, finding. If you will seek me the right way, in this case it's defined by the word diligently.

Diligently. That's the same as what Moses wrote when he said, Seek with all of your heart. That's seeking Him diligently. What's the promise?

You will find me. You will find me. Here's another one. Isaiah 55, verse 6. Really, this theme just runs throughout the Scripture. Isaiah 55, verse 6.

Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Seek Him. Alright, there's the principle again. Hosea 10.12.

[5:05] Hosea 10.12. Sow for yourselves righteousness. That's not it. What did I say? Hosea 10.12. Oh yeah, here it is.

Sow for yourselves righteousness. Reap in mercy. Break up your fallow ground. For it is time to seek the Lord till He comes and rains righteousness on you.

It's time to seek the Lord. Break up the fallow ground. What's fallow ground, by the way? Anybody know? Ground that hasn't been tilled, hasn't been worked.

It gets overgrown with weeds and even bigger stuff. I mean, if you let your yard go without mowing it, one of these days, very shortly, well, not these days because there's not enough ground to grow, the ground will become unusable.

It's fallow ground. And so the Scripture is applying that to your life, to your heart. And you let your life go, your heart go, without being tilled with God's Word and your fellowship with Him, communion with Him, then your life, your soul, very soul, becomes fallow.

[6:24] And He says, till it up. Break it up. And do what? It's time to seek the Lord. So there's the principle again. One in the New Testament that comes from a familiar passage, one of my favorite ones in Acts, Acts 17, verse 27, where, if you will recall, the Apostle Paul is preaching to the Athenians.

And, you know, they're not Jews. They're Greeks. And I guess we could call them the intelligentsia of the Greeks in Athens.

And He's preaching to them. And this is what He says in verse 27. So that they should seek...

Let me back up a little bit so we kind of get the concept. All right. He's speaking of God. By the way, here Paul, when he's witnessing to the Athenians, he doesn't start with Jesus.

He starts with God and the creation because they had no framework, no foundation for Christianity whatsoever, not even Judaism. And so he goes all the way back and so he's kind of, you know, laying it out for them.

[7:46] And he comes to this point where it says, and He has made, this God has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries for their dwelling.

Translation, God is sovereign over all. So that they, people He's created, should seek the Lord in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him.

Though, and I love this addition, though He is not far from each one of us. So, you know, God's not playing cat and mouse.

He's not hard to find. He wants to be found. But you must seek Him. Seek Him and seek Him with all of your heart and He will be found. And so here, again, is the principle over and over and over again.

There is this concept that runs throughout Scripture. Seeking and finding God. You know, God's not, doesn't play cat and mouse with us.

[8:46] It may seem that way because He wants us to diligently seek after Him. But God wants to be found. And He will be found. If you seek Him, you will find Him.

And then there's one final truth in this series. Let me go back over the truth that we have seen so far. And you can fill in the blank if you don't remember them.

Seek His face and not His hands only. That was principle number one. If you're going to seek God so you can find Him and know Him and love Him, then seek His hands, or seek His face and not His hands only.

Secondly, seek Him with an obedient spirit. Second, it's ludicrous, absurd, to expect to find God if you don't approach Him with a spirit that says, Yes, Lord.

With an obedient spirit. Third, seek Him with a pure heart. A heart that wants one thing, remember? And that one thing is God. I just want Him.

[9:49] And if I were to lose everything and I just have God, that would be enough. And really, throughout our journey as believers, we are approaching that, moving toward that type of spirit, that type of contentment, that God is all I need.

And if you're going to find Him, you must seek Him with that type of spirit, a pure heart. Seek Him, fourthly, with the language of praise. Because He inhabits the praises of His people.

And then, seek Him filled with the Holy Spirit. And we dealt with that. Took a couple of Wednesdays to talk about that. We could maybe categorize all of those under this heading.

That's how to seek God. How to seek Him. There's one more. And we might put it in a category all its own.

And that is, not how to seek Him, but where to seek Him. Where to seek Him. And so, here's the final truth. Seek God where He likes to be found.

[11:03] Maybe a strange way of putting it. Not trying to humanize God. He's not human. flesh and blood as we are. He's a sovereign God.

But, He condescends to relate to His people. And there are places where God likes to be found.

Now, I'm also not suggesting that God is, you know, confined to a place.

in the sense that He is in one place, maybe not in another. God is omnipresent. I believe in the omnipresence of God.

God is everywhere present. And He's nowhere absent. I've said it that way a number of times.

Borrowed that from someone else. I like the way that encapsulates this whole principle, this whole truth of the nature of God is omnipresence.

He is everywhere present. Nowhere absent. And so, that's true of God. But, there are some places, certain places, where it pleases Him to be found.

[12:11] And we need to learn those places. And, we need to incorporate that into our lives. And we're going to, when I get to it here, we'll see three particular places.

I've never been a deer hunter. I think one time, over the last, throughout the series, I used fishing as an illustration. And I've never been a fisherman either. I've never been a hunter.

But if you're going to be a deer hunter, if you're going to go, anybody ever been deer hunting? All right, quite a few in here. All right. Have you been recently? I mean, is this something you've done occasionally, or you just enjoy doing it all the time?

That's one thing, you know, I have never gotten into. I'm not against it. I'm not an anti-gun activist, or anything like that. I don't own a gun. But, but I would fight for the right, for anyone to own guns, and, and to go hunting.

But, if you're going to go deer hunting, you can have all the equipment. And I guess, you know, in our day, kind of like any kind of hunting or fishing, there's a lot of equipment that's available out there, and all this new technology.

[13:22] And I'm sure it's no different with deer hunting. And, you know, certain kind of guns, and sights, and clothing, and, you know, I don't know. What else is involved in that?

What's that? Snacks? Yeah, you've got to have a lot of snacks. Pretty strong. Okay. Anyway, anyway, you can have all the equipment, but, you're not going to find deer just anywhere.

And, if you want to be successful as a deer hunter, then you need to know that there are certain places that deer like to be. Right? And, now, maybe this is not the best of the illustration, but, you know, I guess you could kill a deer on the highway.

You know, some people do. I mean, with their cars. I guess there are some, I've heard of some, who pull over on the side of the road, get their gun out, and shoot one. They just happen to see crossing the road.

That's probably illegal. But, sometimes, you know, you kill a deer with a car. Anybody ever done that? Ever run into a deer? I have a walk.

[14:35] I did a walk. Yeah. And, I have this anxiety. I've had it, in fact, this past week, because a number of times driving through the, you know, the, the foothills of Tennessee, and see deer.

And, you know, there's always more than one deer. You've noticed that. If you see one run across the road, get ready, another one's going to follow. And, sometimes, people run into deer, and they kill them.

And, so you could kill a deer, maybe anywhere, with your car. But, but that's an accident. That, hopefully it is.

But, you're never going to find God by accident. Now, He may find you, unexpectedly, but that's no accident. But, you're not going to seek, and find God, or find God, just by accident.

There, there are places where, you should seek for Him. There are places that, He likes to be found. Let me give you three. Number one, seek God, in the quiet places, of life.

[15:51] Seek God, in the quiet places of life. I mean, this is very, deliberate, premeditated, deliberate, place, that you, need to go, with the expectation, to find God.

The quiet places of life. Do you have, a quiet time? That's kind of, a popular way, I don't hear, I don't hear, maybe as much, these days, as once did.

It used to be, a very popular, way to describe, a time of prayer, with the Lord. Time to read God's word, devotionally, and pray, a quiet time.

Some have called it, a holy hour. That is, if you spend an hour, you should call it, a holy hour, if you don't spend an hour. A quiet time, a time of communion, prayer time, whatever term you might, what do you, do you have one?

A time, a quiet time, with God. In the morning, maybe early in the morning, maybe at some other time, in the day, that maybe, fits your schedule better, you know.

[17:05] Maybe, at night, before you go to bed, a lot of people have, a time with God. In different lengths of time, different kinds of activities, maybe, make up that time.

Maybe you have a, devotional book you read, that I hope, has a lot of scripture in it. I don't advocate, just reading devotional books, just, and that would be it, if it doesn't have scripture.

Reading God's word, prayer, so forth. A quiet time, a quiet place. Do you have a quiet place?

Sometimes, sometimes that's not, easy to find. Especially, you know, if you've got kids in the house, whether they're, your children, or grandchildren, or great-grandchildren, or maybe other people in the house, sometimes it's just difficult.

Maybe you have, a pretty tough schedule, work a lot of hours, and maybe, getting off by yourself at work, just won't work, you know, or, I've heard some people say, that my, quiet place is in the shower.

I don't think that's, really a great place, to have a quiet time with God. I remember, several years ago, and I cannot remember, this lady's name, she'd written a number of books, and, kind of a big name, among homeschoolers, and we had gone, to Nashville, for a conference, homeschooling conference, and, Millard, is her name, it's not Millard.

[18:32] Anyway, and, I remember that I, I went with, one of the guys, one of my friends, because, it was his job, to pick her, she was one of the keynote speakers, in the conference, to pick her up to the airport, and take her to her hotel, and pick her up to the hotel, take her to the conference, so forth.

And, I remember, I traveled with him, one morning, to pick her up, and, and, and, we picked her up, and she, sat in the back seat, we sat in the front seat, she, she said to us, you, you, men don't mind, if I have my quiet time, back here.

I thought, we said, of course, go right ahead. Yeah. But, I thought to her, I said, what a strange, place, to do that. I mean, we're driving, you know, busy highways, of Nashville, and, here we are, all the traffic around, she's presumably, having a quiet time.

I don't recommend, that you have, a quiet time, unless, it is, a quiet place. And, it's not always, easy to find, but you need to have it.

A place, where you can be, by yourself, without, distractions. Work hard, to find that place. If you have to get up, early, I get up early.

[19:50] I like to sit outside. Sometimes, that could be, a distraction. Quite honestly, this past week, you know, being in the, smoky mountains, and, going outside, it's just such, a beautiful place.

The beauty itself, is a distraction, from the, that quiet time, with God, in his word, and in prayer. But, you need to have, a quiet time, a quiet place.

And, when you, retreat, to this quiet place, on a regular, basis, don't get in a hurry. Now, everybody, is constrained, by time, you know, to one degree, or another.

And, God knows that. You can't just say, well, you know, I just feel like, spending the whole day, with the Lord, in prayer. You have responsibility, and God knows that. You have work, you have family, you have other things.

But, still, if you have a certain period of time, don't get in a hurry. Spend some time. Isaiah 40, verse 31, says, But they, that wait, upon the Lord, shall renew their strength.

[21:06] They shall mount up, with wings as eagles. This is a very familiar passage. They shall run, and not be weary. And they shall walk, and not faint. But the idea there is, to wait, upon the Lord.

In fact, you'll find that word, wait, a number of places in Scripture, it's rather interesting. And not every place, where, in our English Bibles, is the word, wait, a translation of the same word, in the Hebrew.

They're different words. And so, the meanings are different. They mean different things. And so, let me just give you some, for instance. And when you put all these together, I think they help, help us understand, you know, what this quiet time, is to be like.

And really, it's defined by, waiting upon the Lord. He likes to be found there, in these quiet places. So, wait upon Him. Here, let me give you a few examples. Psalm 62, verse 1.

Truly my soul, and this is the, New King James translation. Truly my soul, silently, waits. And that really is a good translation.

[22 : 17] Quietly, waits, upon God. From Him, comes my salvation. Alright, but the word, wait is here. It's translated, kind of expanded, in the New King James, to silently, wait, upon the Lord.

But the word itself, the word, wait there, carries this connotation. Literally, it means to long for God. To long for Him. Now, think about that next time you spend your, quote, quiet time.

However long it might be for you. A quiet time, hopefully in a quiet place, where you can get along with God. Think about this idea of longing for Him.

In fact, really, this kind of thought, this kind of heart, ought to be, you ought to experience this, even before you get to the quiet time, quiet place, to long for Him.

And, and that's what the word, wait means. So, long for God. Proverbs 8, 34. Blessed is the man, who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting, waiting at the post of my door.

[23 : 33] Now, there's the word, wait again, but it's a different word in the Hebrew text. And, the idea there is, to, listen. So, we not only, when we get to the quiet time, quiet place, not only should we long for Him, but we ought to listen to Him.

Now, this is pretty important to me. And, this one really, is quite convicting to me. That's why I ask you the question. Do you listen to God? Or, listen for Him?

In your quiet time, in your quiet place? Do you listen for God, or do you do all the talking? Think about that, man. You say, well, am I expecting to hear Him speak?

You know, is that what you're suggesting? No. Not in an audible voice. If you do, then I'd, I'd be kind of concerned there. If God were to speak to you audibly, you better write it down, because it should be part of Scripture.

But, He's not going to do that. Scripture's complete. But, He does speak, to our hearts. And, our problem is, we, we're not quiet.

[24 : 50] Next time you have a quiet time, quiet place, just spend some time in silence. Try not to think about your own agenda, and just think about God, read Scripture, and just be silent.

Pause. Listen for God. That's what it means to wait for God. You ever know anybody, who just talks all the time?

Don't, don't name them. Might be someone in our church, we wouldn't. No, I mean, I've, I've met people like that over the years, where, you know, you get together, and they do all the talking.

You can't get a word in edgewise. Tom, be quiet now. You're about to make a mistake. Say something you shouldn't say. I was mentioning Griselda.

Yeah. All right. Yeah. I know that Jonathan has that problem. All the time. You know, his wife just does. No. But you know, sometimes, there are people like that.

[25 : 56] They just talk, and talk, and they never listen. And maybe you've worked for someone, who's your boss, and that boss never listens to you. You come, and you want to say something, or you have a, you know, a request, or, you know, or a complaint, or whatever, maybe, and they don't listen.

There's talk. And we're very critical of people like that. Well, how about our relationship with God? How often do we listen to Him?

Now, we do listen to Him. You know, one of the best ways to listen to Him is to listen as you read God's Word. Let me give you a suggestion. And I've done this from time to time.

In your Bible reading, during your quiet time, get out a piece of paper and the text you're reading, write it. Just write it out. As you read it.

I'm looking here at Jeremiah 28. And it happened in the same year. You begin to write it out. What does that do? Well, number one, it slows your mind down.

[27 : 07] And sometimes we read, and we read three, four, five verses, maybe a whole chapter. And we get all the way into the chapter and it dawns on us that we weren't even listening to what it said.

You know, we're just reading it. That's why I am kind of halfway critical of these plans that lead you to read through the Bible in a year. I'm not against that.

I've done it myself. But be careful that your goal is not to read more of Scripture, but your goal is to hear from God. And so if you just read one verse, and that's all you get to in your quiet time with God, but He speaks to you in that one verse, then praise God.

You could read an entire chapter or maybe three or four chapters and some of these plans to read through the entire Bible have you reading pretty big chunks. I mean, obviously you've got to read quite a bit.

Get through it in a year. But if you don't make it that day and you only get a part of it that God speaks to you because you're listening, then how much the better?

[28:17] So, here's the idea. This quiet place is where God likes to be found. In the quiet places of life. And when you're there, don't get in a hurry. Wait on the Lord.

Long for Him. Listen to Him. And here's another one. Psalm 104.27 These all wait for you that you may give them their food in due season.

The word wait here means to look for Him. To look for Him. And the idea here in this passage, the application, the spiritual application is to look for Him in His Word.

Because it is from His Word that we get food. Alright? So, we wait for Him by looking for Him in His Word.

And when we do that, He gives us food. Spiritual food. The meat of the Word. The bread of God.

[29:28] We get His Word. Alright? Look for God in His Word. He'll give you food. And then one more. Proverbs 27.18 Good heavens. What time?

That's not what the verse said. Proverbs 27.18 I just happened to look at my watch. My word. I didn't know I was getting so late. Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit.

Keep it as in cultivate it, take care of it, and so forth. We get His fruit. So, or we could even say likewise, He who waits on His Master will be honored.

Now, God is our Master and we wait for Him. Now, you put the two parallel thoughts together and the idea here behind the word wait is to labor for God.

Or you might even, this also begins with L and so it fits with my alliteration. So, you can either put live for God or labor for God. Same idea. Live for Him.

[30:31] That is to serve Him. To labor for Him. Like keeping the fig tree, you get the fruit of it, you wait on your Master, you labor for Him, you be honored.

Honored. And with God, you're honored with His presence in the quiet places. So, long for God, listen for God, look for God, labor for God, live for God if you would like.

So, you meet God daily in the quiet place. Enter into your closet. Remember, the Bible says Jesus said enter into the closet and God will hear you.

In fact, where is that passage? That's Matthew 6. I didn't read that a while ago. I meant to. Jesus said, but you, when you pray, go into your room and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place.

He's in the secret place, the quiet place. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Now, don't take this so literally that your quiet place must be in a closet somewhere.

[31:36] It can be anywhere. It means a secret place, a quiet place, a secluded place, a place that removes you from distractions. And so, you find Him there.

And when you get there, don't get in a hurry. I was trying to remember this and Jonathan and I did finally remember it. Ken Meadham, a blind musician, songwriter.

I don't know if Ken Meadham is still, is he still writing music? Anyway, he wrote a song a number of years ago and this is very characteristic of some of his songwriting.

And it was entitled, You'd Better Hurry Up and Talk to Me, Lord. I've Only Got Ten Minutes. And that's the name of the song. That's sometimes how we approach God. We put Him on our time schedule.

You know, we've only got ten minutes so God, you better do something during this time, you better speak to me. Because when ten minutes is up, that's it. I've got to go on. And we just can't do that.

[32:38] Well, I'm going to have to give you the other two next time. All right? All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right.