



women devoted to God

Lesson 2

Pursuing God

by Mary Kraus

*This is eternal life, that they may know You,
the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*
John 17:3

“We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to that pursuit. ‘No man can come to Me,’ said our Lord, unless the Father who has sent me, draw him’ . . . The impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is our following hard after Him; and all the time we are pursuing Him, we are already in His hand: ‘Thy right hand upholds me.’”

A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, Romans 9:15-16

Tozer goes on to say that there is no contradiction in this divine upholding and human following. We are created to respond to the Divine love: *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?* (Psalm 42:2).

What if I sense that my desire is too feeble? Then keep on asking, and knocking. Even our desire to desire union with God is given by God. So He *wants* us to find Him and enjoy Him, and therefore He surely will be found.

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

We must seek God first of all for His own sake.

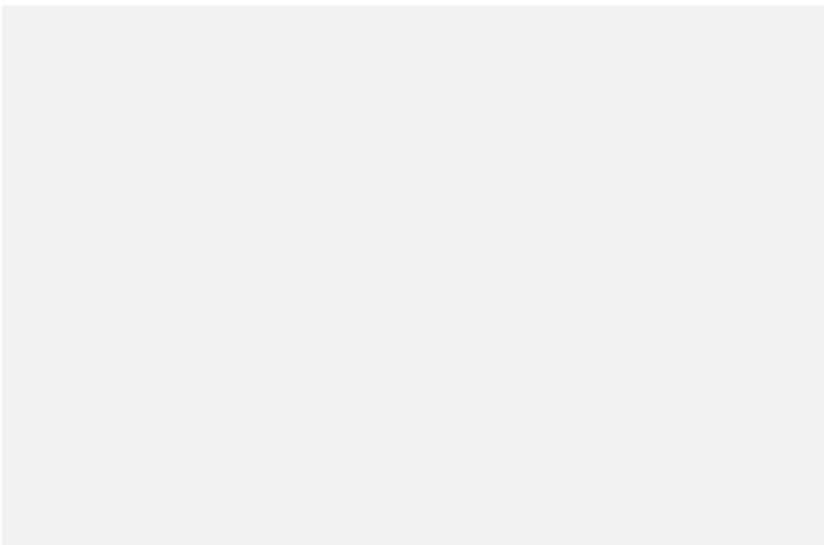
Isaiah 66:1-2 *Thus says the Lord, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may **rest**? For My hand made all these things But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite [literally crushed] of spirit, and who trembles at My word."*

Zephaniah 3:17 *The Lord your God . . . will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.*

Colossians 1:16b *All things have been created through Him and **for** Him.*

Secondly, we must seek God for our own sake.

Isaiah 26:3-4 *The steadfast [lean hard upon] of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.*



Example: Isaiah 48:17

“Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go.’”

1. Consider the key words, “your” “Redeemer” “Holy One” “profit” “teaches”
2. **Look up** the words.
3. **Rewrite the verse:** This is what my Savior, the unique and only One Who rescued me out of a horrible, hopeless, pit of frustration and unending misery says to me: “I am your Master, your Supreme Good, the One who made you and knows you perfectly, who teaches you day by day and hour by hour, how to be useful, useful to Me, useful to others and useful to yourself. I am the One who is leading you in exactly the right way that you should go.”
4. **Think** how does this apply to me? Do these words prompt me to a greater trust in and reliance upon Him, even in this difficult situation I’m in right now, or what do they suggest to me?
5. Take time to **listen**.
6. **Write** a responsive prayer. Writing clarifies thinking. (“How do I know what I think until I see what I say?”)
7. Bask in God’s presence. No need for any words at all if God gives the sense of His Presence

Another example: Matthew 25:1-13

Parable of the ten virgins

Ask *why* five of them did not take oil. What does the word “foolish” mean in this situation? Why did they not plan ahead? Maybe they forgot to get an extra supply of oil for this night. Why did they forget or think it was not important enough to plan ahead for? Does “foolish” mean “careless?”

Did they *care less* for the groom than they should have? They did ask later to get into the feast, but the groom’s words, “I do not know you” suggest that they did not have any prior relationship with Him. Jesus prayed for His disciples that they might **know** *You the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent* (John 17:3). Eternal life, Heaven = nothing more nor less than a love-**relationship** with the true God. Nothing in this life is more important to pursue than this relationship. It is the great commandment. Jesus said, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment”* (Matthew 22:37-38).

Matthew 7:21-23 *“I never **knew** you”* makes this same point again. *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”* God wants and commands our love, not merely our activity. And activity cannot substitute for love no matter how good the activity is.

Example: Nehemiah 8:10

“The joy of the Lord is your strength”

(“strength” = fortified place, defense, fortress)

(“joy of the Lord” = gladness that is caused by the Lord.)

God gives joy to those who are free of **excessive** attachment and are free of guilt. 1 John 1:9 makes this freedom immediately accessible. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* But after these obstacles to joy are cleared, then . . .

Think: What kind of joy is caused by the Lord? **All kinds** that are not contrary to His Will, all things that are not weaning my attention away from God. He enables all activities and is the source of all things. Think of things that cause us to be glad. Eg. all enjoyable material things, activities with friends, games of all kinds, good hair days etc. etc. 1 Timothy 4:4 is appropriate here: *For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude. Thank Him.* When we are thanking God for whatever we are enjoying, then that activity or thing is drawing us closer to Him, giving us more reason to praise, thank and love Him, and not distracting us from Him.

“Whenever I estrange myself from Him by sin, or despair, or sloth, then I let my Lord stand alone so far as I am concerned . . . [But] of all the things we may do for Him in our penitence, the most honoring to Him is to live gladly and gaily because of His love.”

Julian of Norwich

Matthew 7:7-9, Luke 11:9-13 *So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish, he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give **the Holy Spirit** [God Himself] to those who ask Him?!*

All our petitions for bread etc. are ultimately prayers for a closer union with the Source of all our good, God Himself.

Bread

For bread and fish and eggs, she begged her Friend
She knew He said, "Just ask and ask again."
He gives and gives till all His loved are fed,
She trusts He will not give a stone for bread.

Then Heaven's Shock – a Jolt – the Flash of Light
That splintered all self-righteous prayer and thought,
And left her on her knees before His might . . .
The promise, not of bread, but Self He brought.

Now as the sun unveils its shining lake
And shredded gauze of morning mist is chased,
His Spirit glowed, the shadowy gloom was sped
And left her not with self, but Self for Bread.

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Bread poem written by Mary Kraus.