

Seek the Father's Face, Hear His Voice

Seek the face of God. There you will discover the voice of His Word, the breath of His Holy Spirit and the smile of His favor. Seek those things—not prestige; not wealth; not the gratification of sensual desires; not friends, food or fun. Second Chronicles 7:14 doesn't mean to amalgamate occasionally seeking His face with our crowded agendas or fleshly pursuits. Placing God on a crowded, rotating carousel of priorities and activities will never rend heaven and produce a deluge of vitality and spiritual awakening. Jeremiah 29:13 (MEV, emphasis added) is clarifying: "You shall seek Me and find Me, when you *shall search for Me with all your heart.*"

That seeking which sparks revival is an all-consuming, passionate hunger. It speaks of a desperation that makes His "face" the priority that dwarfs every other desire. There's an exclusivity to it, an outright abandonment—a desire experienced by a drowning man for a breath of air. It's knowing that if we don't receive the fresh wind, the holy air or the sacred breath of an outpouring, we will die.

Nevertheless, in the current state of church normalcy in our fallen, broken world, there is the ever-present danger of being seduced by three things that drew Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, off the course: money, sex and power. In the end, he found it all empty and meaningless. "I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and indeed, all is vanity and like chasing the wind" (Eccl. 1:14). "Everything under the sun" covers a lot of ground.

Solomon had vast wealth, unrivaled power, authority and a thousand wives. "All is vanity and like chasing the wind," he wrote. Those slithery seductions remain today. They are deadly roadblocks to revival. God has so blessed our nation that what

once only kings enjoyed is now available to every working-class American. These counterfeit pleasures and false gods are clogging the spiritual arteries by occupying the thoughts, dreams, goals and energies of God's people. Solomon would warn, "All is vanity and like chasing the wind." Indeed, he could speak to them, but Ecclesiastes is right there in the heart of their dusty, neglected Bibles!

How do you seek God's face? By thirsting for it like a parched deer in the desert. By creating spiritual hunger because we are no longer full of the husks that the swine eat. By Him becoming everything we want, need and hope for. But this leads us to another question.

When? When do we seek Him?

The Dawn's Firstfruits

In one sense the answer is an obvious one: always. David sang, "Morning, noon, and night I cry out in my distress, and the Lord hears my voice" (Ps. 55:17, NLT). The God who never sleeps nor slumbers commands us to "seek His face continually" (1 Chron. 16:11b, MEV). True, but not actually what I am getting at when I question, "When?"

Another accurate answer would be at the prompting of the Holy Ghost. Certainly there is no dissatisfactory moment in time to pursue God's presence, but not all times of day are as productive as others. Very often one particular time of day appears in God's Word as exceptionally powerful and fruitful for divine encounters; it is the morning. This could be because we have been still and quiet, or because it is the offering of the firstfruits of a new day. It's morning.

"O Lord, in the morning You will hear my voice; in the morning I will direct my prayer to You, and I will watch expectantly" (Ps. 5:3).

"Awake, my glory! Awake, psaltery and harp! I will awake the

dawn" (Ps. 57:8).

"O God, You are my God; early will I seek You" (Ps. 63:1a).

"I arose before the dawn of the morning and cried for help" (Ps. 119:147a).

"Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning; for in You I have my trust; cause me to know the way I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto You" (Ps. 143:8).

Clearly, at least for David and the other psalmists, morning was the prime time for encounters with the King of glory. Consider as well the example of the Lord Jesus. Mark 1:35 is revealing: "In the morning, rising up a great while before sunrise, He went out and departed to a solitary place. And there He prayed."

Do we need any greater example? Do we often or ever follow the footsteps of the Master? Do our eyes view the vast horizon as the black sky mixes with the radiance of first light and the kaleidoscope of color announces that we are greeted with a new day? In those first moments, do our spirits and our souls find themselves longing, aching for Him before all else? Do we reach first for the cell phone or remote control? Are we thirsty after the long night for living water or Starbucks? Are we hungry for the bread of heaven or breakfast? Do we seek first our reflection in the mirror or the looking glass of His Word?

His Voice in My Ear

I was in my office at World Harvest Church, signing letters after an exceptionally long and taxing day. I wasn't doing anything particularly "spiritual." I wasn't coming off a 21-day fast. I hadn't spent the previous hour with hands upraised in worship.

I was just carrying out a simple, mundane task that happened

to be on my to-do list for the day. As I left my office and entered the familiar hallway that leads to my study, I was suddenly overwhelmed by a strong presence of the Lord. The next thing I remember was being on my hands and knees with my head under a chair, weeping as though I were heartbroken.

As indeed I was, after God asked me this question—or these questions.

“Why do you do what you do?” His voice thundered in my consciousness. “Why do you conduct services? Why do you sing songs? Why do you have a youth program, or a children’s church or a nursery?”

I knew that God never asks a question to which He does not already know the answer. I wept and waited.

After some time, He gently spoke these words: “The apex of all Christian endeavor must become to place the jewel of a soul in the crown of our Savior, so that the Lamb of God slain may receive the reward of His suffering.”

This statement did not come from my mind. It was not something I’d recently read. The only explanation was that it was directly downloaded from heaven and that my overly busy mind had to be momentarily taken “offline” in order for the download to take place. This 35-word sentence is not a question. Nor is it framed as a suggestion. This is not God offering some food for thought. It is a plain statement of fact. A declaration. A clarifying, focusing mission statement. Embracing and absorbing this truth into your innermost being and everyday consciousness will keep you ever connected to the heart of God. It will keep you in revival.

We really don’t comprehend the value of a soul in the eyes of God. We simply don’t. Jesus sought the downcast and the outcast. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He was speaking of Himself when He told those stories about the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. He was revealing

His heart. People are not sinners because they sin; they sin because they're sinners. The answer is not to talk to them about their sin.

Every sinner knows all too well about their sin. Instead, talk to them about your sin, and about how He met you just as you were, loved you, lavished His grace upon you, forgave you and resurrected you as a new person. Cleansed. Restored. Made whole. Tell them, as the anointed reverent psalmist of Israel did, that He heard your cry and lifted you out of the shame and depravity and bondage and pain and filth of your own sin. Tell them how He set your feet upon a solid rock and gave you a new song of praise to sing (Ps. 40:1–3).

Seeing Others as Our Father Sees Them

At times, I wonder what we are growing—egos or the kingdom of God's Christ. God, give us the passion of Christ for all men and women, for boys and girls, the hurting, bruised and battered, the abandoned and shut-in. Send us first to those You would seek first. May we lead them to Your cross.

May we see them get washed in the blood and filled with the Holy Ghost. The power of Jesus to transform sinners is the most glorious miracle witnessed by humanity, and yet it is the most underappreciated, least-marketed and rarely preached message in Christendom.

Lots of preachers and believers seem eager to minister to celebrities, the wealthy, the lovely and the “influencers” of our social media age. But God is looking for individuals who are willing to see the people the world overlooks. People with no influence. People who can do nothing for you. I mean actually see them through the lens of Calvary as God does.

We're never more like our Savior than when we search for that lost “one” whom Christ Jesus longs to recover to Himself. Equally important, you are a “one” He loved, sought out and by the sacrifice of His Christ, redeemed. His great desire is to

fill you with His purpose and power. In other words, His quest is to pour Himself out upon you in individual, personal, radical revival.

Are you ready to become immersed in profound personal revival? Are you ready to have your dry soul revived with an outpouring of Holy Ghost rain? My hope is that I have stirred in you a desire to experience this glory not only for a brief, fleeting season, but that it will become your lifestyle.

We saw that when King Hezekiah restored the Passover celebration and ushered renaissance and revolutionary revival throughout the nation, he “clung to the Lord” (2 Kings 18:6). At this pivotal moment, what are you “clinging” to?

Small children cling to their parents when they require comfort or protection.

Extreme rock climbers cling for dear life to every crevice and outcrop of a mountain for survival.

Oh, that we might cling to the solid rock, the unfailing and unspoken Word of God with such desperation! What a difference we would see were we to hold to those living, life-giving, victory-sustaining words as if our very lives depended on it—because in actuality, they do! God, grant us the strength to, in humility, submit even our intellects to the wisdom of Your inerrant Word, for human wisdom is corrupted (1 Cor. 1:18–21), but the Word of the Lord is incorruptible seed (see 1 Pet. 1:23, KJV).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6, MEV).

The Model of Christ

Jesus modeled humility and self-abasement throughout His earthly ministry, declaring that He only did those things He

saw the Father doing (John 5:19) and only spoke what He heard the Father saying (John 12:49). He spoke in human terms, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me" (John 4:34b). He carried this posture of humble submission to the Father's plan right through the Garden of Gethsemane—see Him there under the full light of a Passover moon against a rock, praying until His facial capillaries burst and spill sinless blood upon His tortured brow; hear Him as He cries out, "Father, not My will but Yours be done!"—and all the way up Calvary's cruel and craggy, rough and ragged hill. There He willingly lay down upon a cross and gave His healing hands to the nailer when, but for His humbling and submission to the Father's will, He could have called 10,000 angels to destroy the world and set Him free.

Oh, that today we would cry to our Father for the strength of character and willingness of spirit to pray that powerful prayer of consecration, yea of submission, to the will of our Father. If ... only if! Proverbs 14:12 convicts and convinces us, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Our will, as well intentioned, well founded and prudent as it may seem to us, can lead only to destruction if it is not directed by and rooted in the will of our Father and God. We must die daily and intentionally choose God's will over our will. His ways over our own. His values over our preferences. His laws over our desires, His kingdom over our possessions, His sacredness over our status.

This is a type of humility that qualifies you and positions you for a raging storm of Holy Ghost refreshing to wash you clean and propel you into the splendor of personal revival.

For more information on *Revival If...* visit *MyCharismaS*.

Rod Parsley is the author of over 70 books, including his New York Times bestseller, *Culturally Incorrect*. He is an

international speaker, and the host of the daily television broadcast Breakthrough With Rod Parsley. He is the founder and senior pastor of World Harvest Church, in Columbus, Ohio.