

Seeking God's heart

We live in an age that prizes the loud and the immediate. We measure our days by what we accomplish and our worth by what we produce. And then, quietly, almost unnoticed, the soul begins to thin. We become busy people who have forgotten how to be still, active people who have lost the art of intimacy. Into this rush comes an old and patient invitation: *seek my face.*

There is a difference, I have come to learn, between seeking God's hand and seeking His heart. The hand gives. The heart welcomes. We are forever bringing God our lists, our needs, our urgent petitions, and He, in His kindness, often answers them. But underneath all our asking there is a deeper door, and behind it stands not merely a Provider but a Father who longs to be known. The psalmist understood this. "You have said, 'Seek my face.' My heart says to you, 'Your face, Lord, do I seek'" (Psalm 27:8). Notice that the seeking begins with God. He speaks first. He always speaks first.

Jacob discovered this on the bank of the Jabbok, alone in the dark, with everything he owned sent on ahead and only his fears for company. There he wrestled until daybreak with a stranger who was no stranger at all. "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (Genesis 32:26). I love that Jacob would not release his grip. Seeking God's heart is rarely tidy. Sometimes it looks less like serene devotion and more like holding on through the night, refusing to settle for anything less than His blessing, His nearness, His presence. Jacob walked away limping and renamed, marked forever by the encounter. We do not seek God and remain unchanged.

But here is what we so often miss. The God we wrestle is not reluctant. We picture ourselves striving towards a distant, half-interested deity, when the whole testimony of Scripture is of a God in pursuit. The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine. The father runs down the road before the son has finished rehearsing his apology. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). We do not seek to *earn* a hearing. We seek the One who came looking for us first, who emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, who went all the way to a cross to recover the heart of His people.

So why does He bid us seek Him at all, if He has already found us? Because seeking is how the heart is reordered. We arrive wanting things from God and, slowly, often through seasons we would have skipped if we could, we begin to want God Himself. The gifts recede; the Giver fills the frame. This is the quiet forging that happens in the secret place, away from the noise. "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). All the heart. Not the leftover minutes of a tired evening. Not the half-attention we give to so much else. The whole of us, drawn to the whole of Him.

What does this look like in the ordinary week? It looks like showing up before we feel like it. It looks like opening His Word not for ammunition but for acquaintance. It looks like sitting in stillness long enough to stop being afraid of the silence, until the silence becomes the place where the Father speaks tenderly. It looks like Mary at the feet of

Jesus, choosing the one thing that will not be taken from her (Luke 10:42), while Martha rattles among the pans.

The heart that seeks God will not go away empty. That is the promise woven through the whole of Scripture. Not that every prayer is answered exactly as we wished, but that the seeker becomes the found, and the found becomes the friend of God. There is no greater inheritance, and no rush in the world worth trading for it.

So seek Him today. Not the hand. The heart. And know that even now, before you have taken a single step, He has turned His face towards you, glad that you came.

Questions

1. The psalmist responds to God's invitation with immediate longing rather than hesitation. When God says "seek my face," what is the honest response of your own heart, and what tends to hold it back? (**Psalms 27:8**)
2. Jacob refused to let go until he received a blessing, even at the cost of a limp. Where in your life are you being invited to hold on through the night rather than settle for something less than God's presence? (**Genesis 32:26**)
3. The gospel reveals a God who pursues us before we ever sought Him. How does knowing that Christ died for you "while you were still a sinner" change the way you approach Him in prayer? (**Romans 5:8**)
4. God promises to be found by those who seek Him wholeheartedly, not with leftover minutes. What would it look like this week to give God the whole of your heart rather than your divided attention? (**Jeremiah 29:13**)
5. Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet while Martha busied herself with many things. What "good things" might be crowding out the one thing that will not be taken from you? (**Luke 10:42**)