

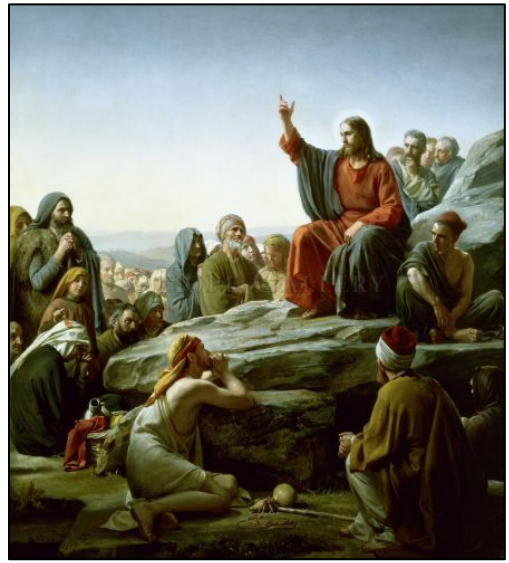


CHRISTIAN  
UNION

# Seven Keys to Kingdom Advancement

**KEY THREE: SEEKING GOD LIFESTYLE: OVERVIEW**

# May God's Kingdom Come



**Matthew 6:9-10** - Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

*Sermon on the Mount, 1877*  
**Carl H. Bloch**



*We live in the church age, and it's our role to hasten the day of Christ's return by deepening and expanding the kingdom of God.*

*A culture of Christians seeking the Lord wholeheartedly pleases God and is the means established by Him to attract His presence for power and success in deepening and expanding the kingdom of God. Seeking Him as He requires is the highest aim of humanity.*



## Seven Keys to Kingdom Advancement

1. Aspiration
2. Theological Foundations
3. **Seeking God Wholeheartedly**
4. Spiritual Practices
5. Supernatural Aspects
6. Impacting the Three Spheres
7. Leadership



## Seeking God Introduction

*Why were you created, and how can all the blessings of the Gospel be released in one's life, family and larger society?*

*These questions are answered as humanity understands and practices its responsibility to seek the Lord wholeheartedly, and God responds by pouring out His Holy Spirit, blessing individuals, communities and nations.*



## Benefits of Understanding the Seeking God Lifestyle

- **Pleasing to God** - You will be able to make changes in your own life to be more pleasing to God.
- **Fulfilling Your Destiny** - You will fulfill the purposes for which He has created you.
- **Deep Understanding** - You will have deep knowledge of the ways of God and what He is like.
- **Leadership Opportunity** - You will be able to give leadership and create a movement of Christians seeking the Lord and experiencing fillings of the Spirit.

## Benefits of Understanding the Seeking God Lifestyle



“If we seek God with a pure heart, we will find Him. He will guide us on the path of righteousness and reveal His love and grace to us.”

**Richard Allen (1760-1831)**  
**Founding Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church**



## Overview of Seeking God Lifestyle

1. Nature
2. Contrast with the Authentic Self
3. History of Seeking God
4. Seven Principles
5. Taking Action





## Overview of Seeking God Lifestyle

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## Seeking God Referenced Over 130 Times in the Bible

- **Prevalent Biblical Concept** - 130 times in the Scriptures believers are commanded to seek God with the language of “seeking” God. There are other phrases that encourage the same practice.
- **Seeking God is for Christians** - Virtually every instance in the Bible of the phrase, “seeking God,” refers to believers seeking God and not unbelievers. In some ways the whole idea of a “seeker service” church service is a misnomer, since the Scriptural passages about seeking God refer to believers. Becoming a Christian is the first step in seeking God, not the last step!



## What is Seeking God?

*Seeking God is the heartfelt practice of Christians expending effort to pursue God wholeheartedly according to the attitudes and practices He requires, believing He will respond with His presence and blessings as promised. It's another way of expressing the idea of loving God with all of one's heart, soul, mind and strength.*



## Why “Seeking God” and Not “Loving God” Phraseology?

- **Prevalence** - Phraseology of “seeking” God is used more often than “loving” God in the Scriptures.
- **Behavior-Focused** - The emphasis is on the needed behavior whereas “loving” God in modern-day English places emphasis primarily on one’s feelings.
- **Greater Scriptural Explication** - Because of the prevalence of the phrase in the Bible, it gives more opportunity to identify the needed mindsets and behaviors.



## We are Made to Feast on God Himself

**Psalm 42:1-2** - As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. <sup>2</sup>

**My soul thirsts for God**, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

**Psalm 81:10-11** - “I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. **Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.** <sup>11</sup> But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me.”

## We are Made to Feast on God Himself



**Isaiah 55:1-2** - **Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;** and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. <sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

*Isaiah*, 19th Century  
Ernest Meissonier



## We are Made to Feast on God Himself

**John 7:37-39** - On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, **let him come to me and drink.**”<sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”<sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.



## Faith Instead of Fatalism

**Hebrews 11:6** - And without **faith** it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who **seek him**.

**God's Responsiveness to Faith** - Seeking God in faith, believing that He will be found, is the opposite of fatalism which says that human actions make no difference to God's actions, which is a misunderstanding of God's sovereignty. God is a responsive God.

**Some Mistake God's Sovereignty for Deism** - God is alive, involved and active with human affairs. His sovereignty does not mean he's uninvolved with human affairs.





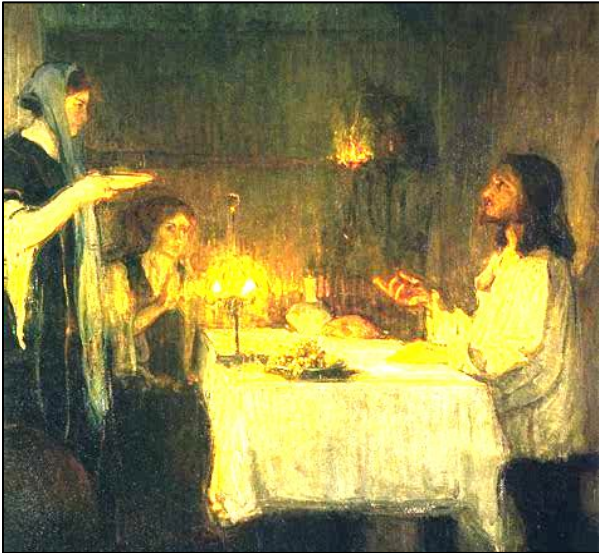
## Centered on God Himself

**Not Blessings Alone** - Christians are not to seek His blessings apart from His presence (no such thing). Wanting his blessings apart from the rest of Him is wicked. His Lordship is always essential. Some want God's blessings more than Him. Some want His Gospel or the Bible more than they want Him.

**Not God Alone** - Not for God's presence alone (no such thing), because with God's presence comes His blessing. No such thing as "wanting the giver, and not the gift."

**Together** - God and His blessings come as a package deal.

## Choosing the Good Portion

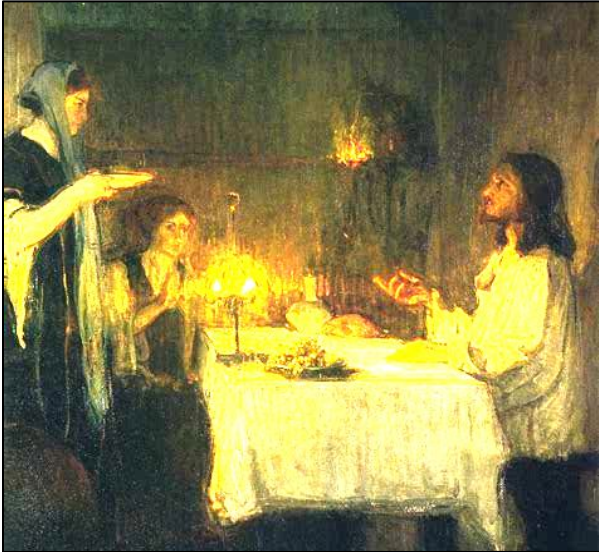


**Luke 10:38-42** - Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

*Christ at the Home of Mary and Martha, c. 1905*

Henry Ossawa Tanner

## Choosing the Good Portion



**Luke 10:38-42 (cont'd)** - <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> **but one thing is necessary.<sup>5</sup>** **Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”**

*Christ at the Home of Mary and Martha, c. 1905*  
Henry Ossawa Tanner



## Dangers of Complacency

*Lack of diligence and faithfulness in seeking the Lord arouses His judgment and brings afflictions to our lives and communities instead of blessings. It's imperative that we understand fully what He expects from us.*



## Dangers of Complacency

**Isaiah 32:9-11** - Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; **you complacent daughters**, give ear to my speech. <sup>10</sup> In little more than a year you will shudder, **you complacent women**; for the grape harvest fails, the fruit harvest will not come. <sup>11</sup> **Tremble, you women who are at ease, shudder, you complacent ones**; strip, and make yourselves bare, and tie sackcloth around your waist.



## Dangers of Complacency

**Hosea 13:6-8** - “It was I who knew you in the wilderness, in the land of drought; but when they had grazed, they became full, they were filled, and **their heart was lifted up; therefore they forgot me.** <sup>7</sup> So I am to them like a lion; like a leopard I will lurk beside the way. <sup>8</sup> I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs; I will tear open their breast, and there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild beast would rip them open.”



## Dangers of Complacency

**Amos 6:1** - “**Woe to those who are ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure** on the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes!”

**Amos 6:4-6** - “Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music, who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, **but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!**”



## Dangers of Complacency

**Zephaniah 1:12-14** - “At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and **I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, ‘The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.’**<sup>13</sup> Their goods shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.”<sup>14</sup> The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.”



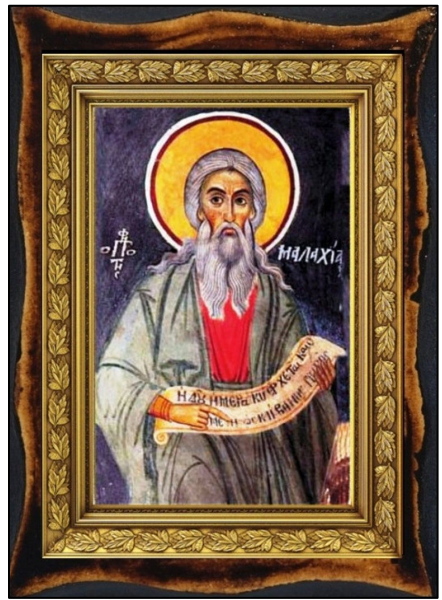


## Dangers of Complacency

**Zephaniah 2:3** - “Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the LORD.”

**Zechariah 1:13-15** - “And the LORD answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. <sup>14</sup> So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. <sup>15</sup> **And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster.**’”

# Dangers of Complacency



**Malachi 2:17- You have wearied the LORD with your words.** But you say, “How have we wearied him?” By saying, “Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them. Or by asking, “Where is the God of justice?””



## Dangers of Complacency

**Revelation 3:17-19** - For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and **I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.** <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love I reprove and I discipline **so be zealous and repent.**



## Overview of Seeking God Lifestyle

1. Nature
2. **Contrast with the Authentic Self**
3. History of Seeking God
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5. Taking Action



## Contrast with the Authentic Self

*The doctrine of seeking God wholeheartedly contrasts with the modern mindset quite significantly. The Western church has developed false theologies to preserve a way of thinking and behavior that often supports indulging the flesh instead of seeking out and obeying God's commandments.*

*Today, the term “authenticity” can be used euphemistically for a self-oriented mindset and lifestyle, justifying a drift toward being lovers of self and lovers of pleasure.*

## Authenticity as Narcissism



“The modern self is one where authenticity is achieved by acting outwardly in accordance with one’s inward feelings.”

- Carl Trueman

*The Marilyn Diptych*, 1962  
Andy Warhol

## Authenticity as Narcissism



American scholar Robert Bellah coined the term “expressive individualism” defining it as follows: Expressive individualism holds that each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that should unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized. We live in a unique time in history where millions look within themselves for discerning right and wrong instead looking to external standards.

*Narcissus*, 1599  
Caravaggio

## Authenticity as Narcissism



“We are in an epidemic of narcissism.”  
- Jordan Peterson

*Narcissus*, 1599  
Caravaggio





## Self-Centered for God to Demand His Creatures Seek Him?

**Jeremiah 18:1-6** - The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup>“Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” <sup>3</sup>So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. <sup>4</sup>And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. <sup>5</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>6</sup>“**O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.**”



## God as the Center and Not Ourselves

**Romans 9:20-21** - But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” <sup>21</sup> **Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?**



## God as the Center and Not Ourselves

**2 Timothy 3:1-5** - But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. <sup>2</sup> For people will be **lovers of self, lovers of money**, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**, <sup>5</sup> **having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power**. Avoid such people.

## Which Represents the Christian Life?

### Self-Centered Believer



God exists to make me happy and give me an “abundant life.”

### Christ-Centered Laborer



I exist to please God and fulfill His purposes.



## **Pleasing God and Not Our Own Happiness is Our Primary Aim**

**God-Centered** - God desires that we seek Him, love Him, please Him, glorify Him, obey Him, honor Him, and build His kingdom. It's about Him, and not about us. A God-centered mindset instead of a self-centered mindset is essential.

**God Blesses His Followers** - As we submit to His Lordship, and because He loves us, He rewards and blesses His children in this life and the next. Yet, along the way He has promised tribulations, trials, persecutions and hardships.



## The Modern Zeitgeist Has Overwhelmed the Church

**Modern Authenticity** - The modern zeitgeist of expressive individualism, of seeing ourselves having a moral obligation to live out our own inner desires, of being fully authentic, is so strong that the church in the West has been overwhelmed and consumed by it.

**Consumerism** - Christians have become consumers where they accept only the character qualities of God and the requirements of God that meet their interests. This has led to a form of godliness that denies the power of God.



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## Seeking God in Old Testament

**2 Chronicles 7:14** - if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and **seek my face** and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

**Isaiah 55:6** - **Seek the Lord** while he may be found; call upon him while he is near



## Seeking God in Old Testament



**Psalm 24** - The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,<sup>2</sup> for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.<sup>3</sup> Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?



## Seeking God in Old Testament

**Psalm 24 (cont'd) -** <sup>4</sup> **He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.** <sup>5</sup> He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. <sup>6</sup> **Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.** <sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. <sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! <sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. <sup>10</sup> Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!

## Seeking God in Old Testament



**Psalm 105:3, 4** - Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who **seek the LORD** rejoice! <sup>4</sup> **Seek the LORD** and his strength; seek his presence continually!

## Seeking God in Old Testament



*The Prophet Zechariah*, 1512  
Michelangelo

**Zechariah 8:20-23** - Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. <sup>21</sup> The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, “Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the Lord and to **seek the Lord** of hosts; I myself am going.” Many peoples and strong nations shall come to **seek the Lord** of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”



## Seeking God in New Testament

**Luke 12:29-31** - And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, **seek his kingdom**, and these things will be added to you.

**Colossians 3:1** - If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.



## Seeking God in New Testament

**Philippians 3:13-19** - But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **straining forward** to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I **press on** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us hold true to what we have attained. <sup>17</sup> Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as **enemies of the cross of Christ.** <sup>19</sup> **Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.**



## Seeking God in New Testament

**Hebrews 11:6** - And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would **draw near** to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who **seek him**.

**James 4:8-10** - **Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.



## Seeking God: New Testament Changes

**Greater Access and Grace** - By the blood of Jesus Christ, Christians have greater access than ever. Before, the presence of God was restricted to the Holy of Holies, and now because of the Gospel, the presence of the Holy Spirit is available everywhere. There is more grace when Christians seek God than under the old covenant.

**Doesn't Remove the Need to Seek God** - The New Covenant doesn't remove the need to seek God wholeheartedly, but makes more grace available than under the old covenant.



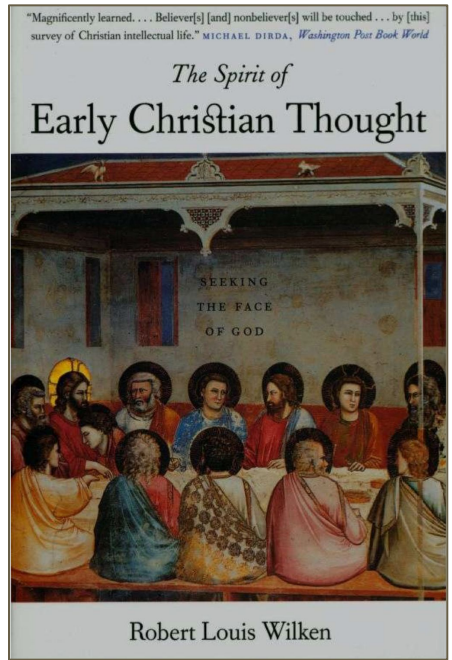


## Rapid Growth of the Early Church

What caused the rapid growth of the early church?

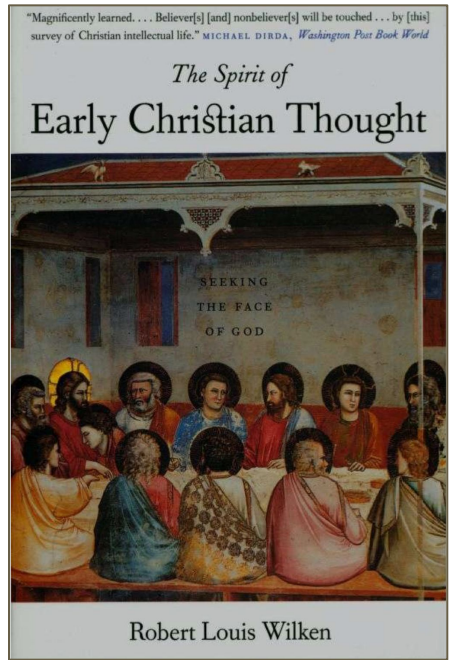
- Martyrs
- Self-Sacrificial Compassion, or
- Healings and Miracles?

## Rapid Growth of the Early Church



Robert Louis Wilken, Professor of the History of Christianity Emeritus at the University of Virginia, in the introduction to his book, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*, identifies the spirit of early Christian thinking: Seeking God was the number one pursuit.

## Rapid Growth of the Early Church



“The subtitle *Seeking the Face of God* is based on Psalm 105:4 in the Latin version, “Seek his face always” (Quaerite faciem eius semper). This verse is cited four times by Saint Augustine in his work *The Trinity*. More than any other passage in the Bible it captures the spirit of early Christian thinking.”

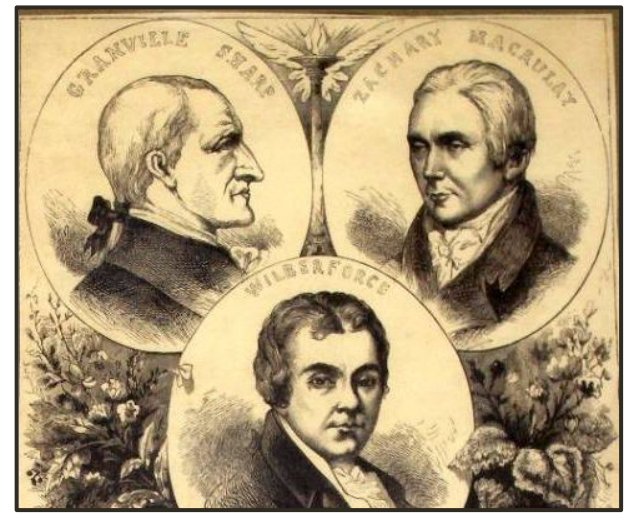
## Augustine Reflecting the Emphasis of the Early Church



“The God himself we are looking for will help us, I confidently hope, to get some fruit from our labors and to understand the meaning of the text in the holy psalm, *Let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice; seek the Lord and be strengthened; seek his face always* (Ps 105:3).” [Quoted from *The Trinity*]

**Augustine (354 - 430 A.D.), Bishop of Hippo Regius in Numidia, Roman North Africa (now Annaba, Algeria)**

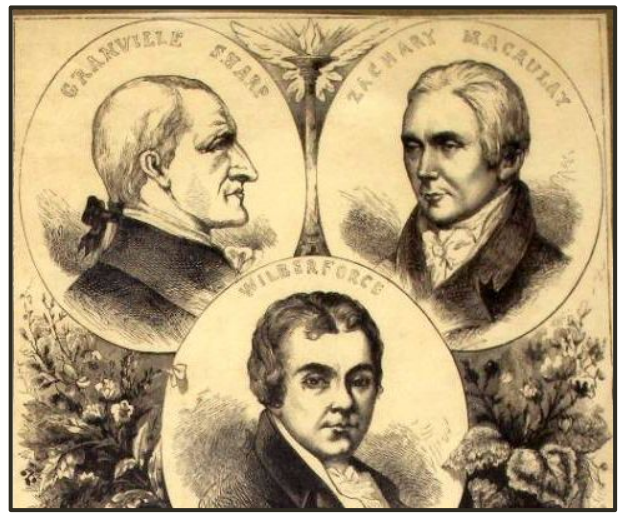
## Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect



**Members of the Clapham Sect**

Clapham was a neighborhood near the Houses of Parliament in London in the early 1800's where a group of powerful, influential, and devout Christians lived. The group became known as the "Clapham Sect" and led the charge to abolish the slave trade. The prominent historian G. R. Balleine gives a short description of these Christian friends, describing their disciplined three-times-a-day pattern of seeking God in prayer.

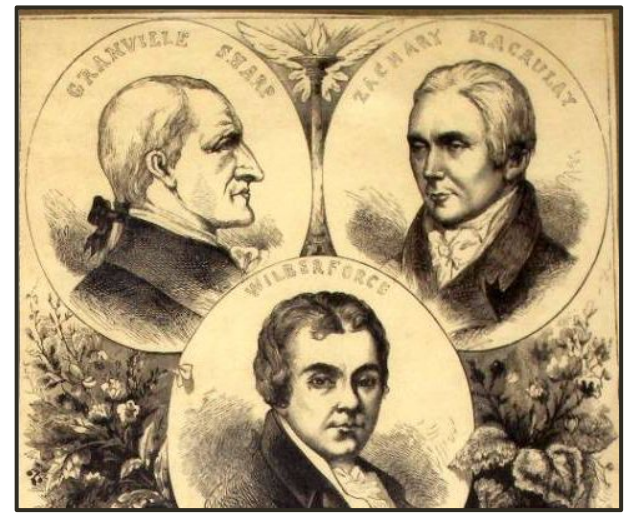
## Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect



“But little did the critics guess the almost monastic self-discipline by which these well-to-do Christians ordered each day of their lives. They moved in Society, they were given to hospitality, because they believed it a duty. ‘My business is in the world,’ wrote Wilberforce, ‘and I must mix in the assemblies of men, or quit the part which Providence seems to have assigned to me’ but every temptation to self-indulgence was rigidly held in check.

**Members of the Clapham Sect**

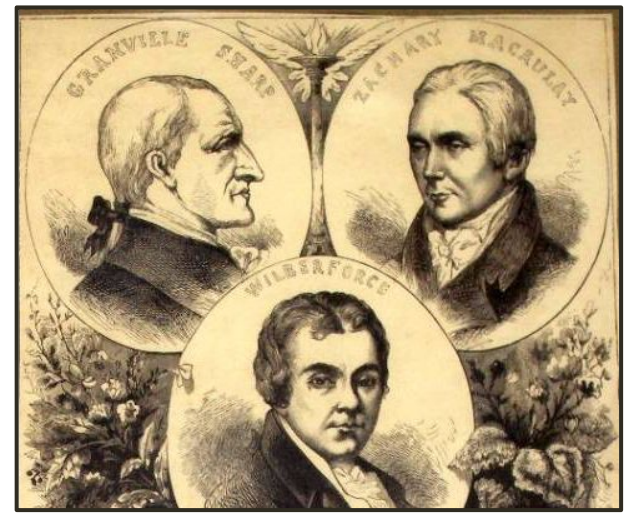
## Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect



“Like all Evangelicals in those days, they were very early risers, for they realized intensely the value of time. Every hour was mapped out beforehand; some of Wilberforce’s time-tables were discovered after his death – so many hours for prayer, so many for study, so many for business, so many for rest, and a column at the end in which to enter all the time that had been squandered.

Members of the Clapham Sect

## Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect



They made a point of setting apart three hours a day for prayer – from five to six in the morning, from twelve to one at noon, and from five to six in the evening.”

G. R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), 148-9.

**Members of the Clapham Sect**





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*Modern-Day American Christian Mindset*

*But we ARE seeking God!!*



## Seeking God Wholeheartedly

**Deuteronomy 4:29** - But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him **with all your heart and with all your soul.**

**1 Chronicles 28:9** - “And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him **with a whole heart and with a willing mind**, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.

**2 Chronicles 25:2** - And he [King Amaziah] did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet **not with a whole heart.**



## Seeking God Wholeheartedly

**Jeremiah 29:11-14** - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me, **when you seek me with *all your heart***. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

**Luke 10:27** - And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with ***all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind***, and your neighbor as yourself.”



## Seeking God Wholeheartedly As He Requires

- **Wholeheartedly** - Christians are to Seek God Wholeheartedly, as He Requires
- **Not a Worldly Approach** - As is Convenient, As is Customary, As is Comfortable
- **Historical and Int'l Church as Contrasts** - The current Western approach is in sharp contrast to the historical approach and the current international church in most of the world (e.g. China, Korea, Fiji, Vanuatu, Columbia, Argentina, Chile, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc.).
- **Persevering Culture** - We don't speak of a "spark" starting revival, but a persevering culture of Christians seeking God wholeheartedly as He requires.

## Seeking God Wholeheartedly



*Christians are to seek God wholeheartedly as He requires, and not as is convenient, customary, or comfortable.*

*Otherwise we are displeasing to Him, and will continue to see a rising tide of chaos, division, immorality, and rebellion.*

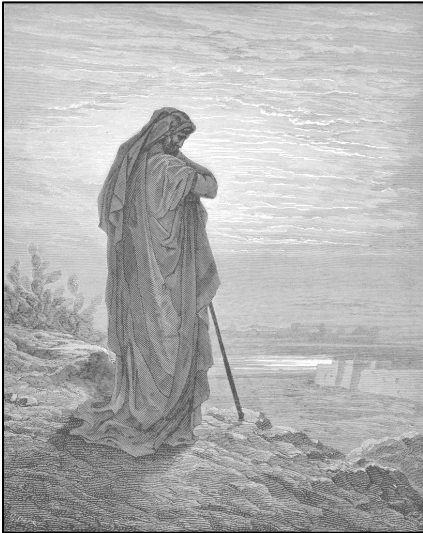


## Inquiring of God

**Zephaniah 1:6** - “those who have turned back from following the Lord, **who do not seek the Lord or inquire of him.**”

**Jeremiah 10:31** - For the shepherds are stupid and **do not inquire of the LORD**; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered.

## Inquiring of God



**Amos 8:12** - They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to **seek the word of the Lord**, but they shall not find it.

*The Prophet Amos, 1883*  
Engraving by Gustave Doré





## Inquiring of God

**2 Chronicles 34:22-28 (NLT)** - <sup>22</sup> So Hilkiah and the other men went to the New Quarter of Jerusalem to consult with the prophet Huldah. She was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, the keeper of the Temple wardrobe.

<sup>23</sup> She said to them, “The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken! Go back and tell the man who sent you,

<sup>24</sup> “This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this city and its people. All the curses written in the scroll that was read to the king of Judah will come true.

<sup>25</sup> For my people have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to pagan gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they have done. My anger will be poured out on this place, and it will not be quenched.’



## Inquiring of God

**2 Chronicles 34:22-28 (NLT)** - <sup>26</sup> “But go to the **king of Judah who sent you to seek the LORD** and tell him: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the message you have just heard:

<sup>27</sup> You were sorry and humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this city and its people. You humbled yourself and tore your clothing in despair and wept before me in repentance. And I have indeed heard you, says the LORD .

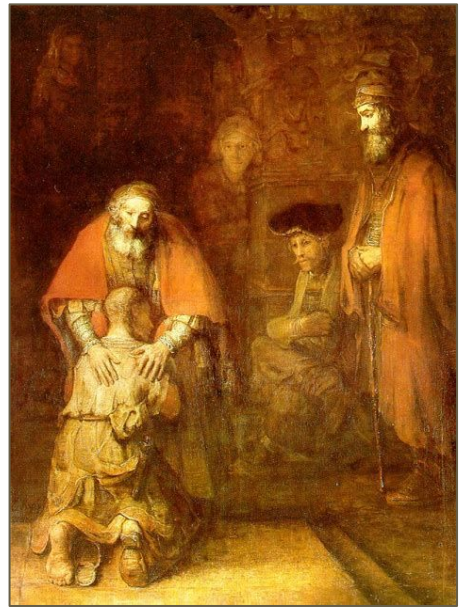
<sup>28</sup> So I will not send the promised disaster until after you have died and been buried in peace. You yourself will not see the disaster I am going to bring on this city and its people.’” So they took her message back to the king.



## Seeking God Lifestyle Has Seven Principles

1. Humility with Help of Fasting
2. Fervent and Frequent Prayer
3. Massive Intake of Scripture
4. Deep and Ongoing Repentance
5. Faithful Obedience
6. Strong Community
7. Relentless Perseverance

## 1. Humility with Help of Fasting



**1 Peter 5:5, 6** - Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for **“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”** <sup>6</sup> **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,**

*There’s extraordinary spiritual power in humility.*

*The Return of the Prodigal Son, 1669*  
Rembrandt



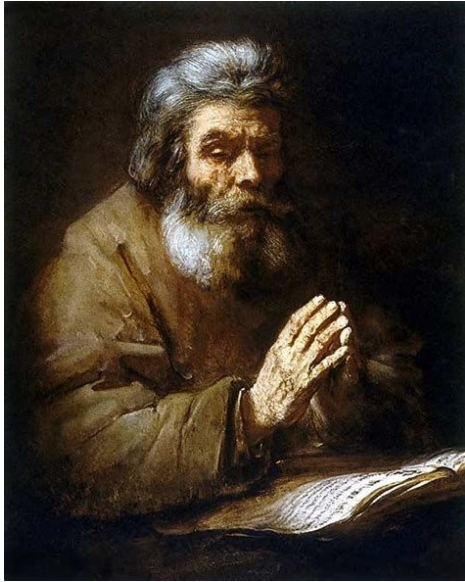
### 3. Seeking God Lifestyle: Overview

## 1. Humility with Help of Fasting

**Ezra 8:21** - “Then I proclaimed a **fast** there, at the river Ahava, that we might **humble** ourselves before our God, to **seek** from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods.”

*Humbling oneself before God brings spiritual strength, which is aided by the practice of fasting. Fasting is going without food for a period of time for spiritual purposes, and is expected of Christians to help deepen humility.*

## 2. Fervent and Frequent Prayer



**Daniel 9:3** - “Then I turned my face to the Lord God, **seeking** him by **prayer** and pleas for mercy with **fasting** and sackcloth and ashes.”

*Fervent and frequent prayer is part of what it means to be Christian. God expects to hear from us and for us to listen to Him as we walk with Him.*

*Old Man Praying*, c. 1665  
Rembrandt



## 2. Fervent and Frequent Prayer

**Jeremiah 29:12** - “Then you will **call upon me and come and pray to me**, and I will hear you.”

**Jeremiah 33:3** - “**Call to me and I will answer you**, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.”

**Colossians 4:2** - “**Continue steadfastly in prayer**, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”

### 3. Massive Intake of Scripture



**2 Chronicles 31:21** - “And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the **law and the commandments, seeking** his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.”

*Reading, listening to, memorizing and studying the Bible builds knowledge of God and His ways. It's the most influential book ever written, and is the very word of God.*

***St. Augustine in His Study, 1480***  
**Sandro Botticelli**





### 3. Massive Intake of Scripture

**Deuteronomy 17:18-20** - “And when he [the king] sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests.<sup>19</sup> And it shall be with him, and **he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,**<sup>20</sup> that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.”

## 4. Deep and Ongoing Repentance



**Psalm 78:34** - “When he killed them, they **sought** him; they **repented** and **sought** God earnestly.”

*Repenting of one's sins and putting faith in God begins a relationship with Him, but also maintains and develops one's on-going relationship. Examining oneself daily ensures there's nothing in one's life displeasing to Him. If there is, then one is to repent, and He will forgive.*



## 4. Deep and Ongoing Repentance

**1 John 1:8, 9** - If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.<sup>9</sup>  
**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Revelation 3:19** - Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, **so be zealous and repent.**

## 5. Faithful Obedience



**Isaiah 51:1** - “Listen to me, you who **pursue righteousness**, you who **seek** the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.”

*The intention of God’s gospel has always been to bring people into faithful obedience to Him, therefore the Christian seeks out God’s commandments, not finding them burdensome, but a joy to fulfill.*

***The Prophet Isaiah, 1512***  
**Raphael**



## 5. Faithful Obedience

**John 14:15** - “If you love me, you will **keep my commandments.**”

**Romans 1:5** - through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations,

**1 John 2:4** - Whoever says “I know him” but does not **keep his commandments** is a liar, and the truth is not in him,

*Obedience entails keeping the commandments in the Scriptures as well as the leading of the Holy Spirit.*

## 6. Strong Community



*A Sunday on La Grande Jatte, 1884*  
Georges Seurat

**2 Chronicles 11:16** - “And those who had set their hearts to **seek** the Lord God of Israel came after them from all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord, the God of their fathers.”

*Seeking God with family and friends adds richness and enjoyment to the Christian life.*



## 6. Strong Community

**Hebrews 10:24-25** - And let us consider how to **stir up one another** to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Galatians 6:2** - “**Bear one another’s burdens**, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

See also plural context of 2 Chronicles 7:14, and Zechariah 8:20-23

*Whether participating in spiritual practices, developing Christian friendships for mutual encouragement, or benefiting from the spiritual gifts of others, God provides many of His most consequential blessings through other people.*

## 7. Relentless Perseverance



**Proverbs 8:17** - "I love those who love me, and those who **seek me diligently find me.**"

*The Builders, 1974*  
Jacob Lawrence





## 7. Relentless Perseverance

**Luke 11:9-13** - “And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; **seek**, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you...how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

*As one perseveres in seeking God, closeness to Him steadily increases. As Christians, life can have its ups and downs, and God desires that believers develop diligence in drawing close to Him.*



## Overview of Seeking God Lifestyle

1. Nature
2. Contrast with the Authentic Self
3. History of Seeking God
4. Seven Principles
5. **Taking Action**



## Obstacles to Seeking God

- Lack of Hunger for God
- Ignorance
- Confusion and False Theologies
- Misunderstanding of Legalism
- Lack of Faith
- Lack of Training
- Discouragement
- Lack of Support Structure
- Not Reinforced by Christian Leadership
- Sins of Laziness, Self Indulgence and Loving Pleasure



## **Spiritual Practices in Seeking God**

1. Morning and Evening Devotions of 30-60 Minutes Minimum
2. Weekly Morning and Evening Church Attendance Lasting One to Two Hours
3. Fasting Wednesdays and Fridays until 3pm Minimum
4. Monthly All-Day Seeking God
5. Twice a Year Conferences of Two to Seven Days Each
6. Periodic Extraordinary Efforts of Seeking God



## Distinct from Contemplative Spirituality

**Seeking God Lifestyle** - It is reflected in the Old Testament, New Testament, first-century church, American revival history and much of the current international church.

### Contemplative Spirituality

- Sourced in the desert fathers (monks) in Egypt in the third century.
- Often takes inspiration from Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Doesn't emphasize repentance and obedience.
- Often emphasizes “knowing one's true self” and being “authentic” more than knowing God.
- There's a reason revivals do not arise out of contemplative spirituality.



## Benefits of Seeking God

- Experiencing God's Presence and Power
- Revival as Has Happened in America's Past
- Fillings of Holy Spirit
- Spiritual Strength
- Learning What God is Like
- Power to Please and Glorify God
- Incredible Personal Ministry Impact Including Mass Conversions
- Rewards in this Life and the Next
- Freedom from Temporal Judgments
- Positive Feelings of Joy and Confidence

## Cost of Seeking God



**Luke 9:23-26** - And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, **let him deny himself and take up his cross daily** and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life** for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”

*Christ Carrying the Cross, 1490*  
**Sandro Botticelli**



## Cost of Seeking God

**Luke 14:33-35** - So therefore, any one of you who does not **renounce all that he has** cannot be my disciple. <sup>34</sup> “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? <sup>35</sup> It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”





## Cost of Seeking God

- Christians are to lose their lives for Christ's sake to gain their lives.
- Christians are not worthy of Jesus Christ if they do not surrender everything.
- Extraordinary effort and discipline need to be expended day after day, month after month.
- Christians are to sacrifice luxuries and opportunities.
- Christians will be rejected and mocked by others, even other Christians, and will experience loneliness.
- Christians are to die to themselves!
- Christians are to live like the sacrificial athlete, hard-working farmer, and dedicated soldier.



## Theme of Books of Chronicles: God Responds When Sought!

**2 Chronicles 7:11-15** - Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house. All that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the LORD and in his own house he successfully accomplished. <sup>12</sup> Then the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. <sup>13</sup> When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, <sup>14</sup> **if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.** <sup>15</sup> Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.



## **Overview of Seeking God Lifestyle**

- 1. Nature**
- 2. Contrast with the Authentic Self**
- 3. History of Seeking God**
- 4. Seven Principles**
- 5. Taking Action**

## Seeking God Wholeheartedly



*Christians are to seek God wholeheartedly as He requires, and not as is convenient, customary, or comfortable.*

*Otherwise we are displeasing to Him, and will continue to see a rising tide of chaos, division, immorality, and rebellion.*



*We live in the church age, and it's our role to hasten the day of Christ's return by deepening and expanding the kingdom of God.*

*A culture of Christians seeking the Lord wholeheartedly pleases God and is the means established by Him to attract His presence for power and success in deepening and expanding the kingdom of God.*



## Seeking God Wholeheartedly is our Destiny

*Can you imagine the incredible joy that will come to the heart of God, and the profound change that will come in America when large numbers of Christians return to seeking the Lord wholeheartedly?*



*We live in the church age, and it's our role to hasten the day of Christ's return by deepening and expanding the kingdom of God.*

*As Christians seek God wholeheartedly, He gives the grace, power and direction to be used as His instruments in our families, communities and nation.*

**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,  
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!**

*Psalm 33:12*



**CHRISTIAN  
UNION**