



Daily Verse and Comment

Proverbs 8:17

(17) I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

King James Version

How does a young person seek [God](#)? Some people, having grown up in certain evangelical circles, have an overly sentimental opinion of how an individual should come to God. Many Protestant churches have fostered the idea that a person must come before the altar at the front of the church and "give his heart to the Lord." This kind of emotional, altar-call conversion, many believe, is the quintessence of how [seeking God](#) works. The sad thing is that, biblically, it is not the way it works.

Seeking God is a personal, private matter between God and the individual, but the result of the person's quest will be publicly manifested in the way he lives. That is, his conduct will change, and people will notice. He will, as John the Baptist preached, "bear fruits worthy of [repentance](#)" ([Matthew 3:8](#)).

At the outset, we must realize that seeking God actually does not begin with us. God must initiate a relationship through His calling, as [John 6:44](#) says. A person may sincerely think he is looking for God, but no one will find Him unless He first extends an invitation to salvation and opens the mind to His truth. However, children of church members already have a relationship with God, as they have been sanctified—set apart or made holy—by their parents' relationships with Him (see [I Corinthians 7:14](#)). They have a kind of "automatic calling," a unique opportunity to seek God in their youth.

Once a person clears this initial stage, what should happen? In [Isaiah 51:1-2](#), 7, God says:

Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the

hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him. . . . Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law. . . .

This passage provides a short outline of what seeking God is and how we should go about doing it. In the first verse, God speaks to "you who seek the LORD," which parallels the phrase immediately before it, "you who follow after righteousness." Parallel phrases like this often define one another. Thus, one who seeks God pursues righteousness. In other words, a person who wants a relationship with Him will do what He says. When an individual practices godly living, he is seeking the Lord.

God follows this with some advice: "Look to the rock from which you were hewn," which has a double meaning. In the Bible, the Rock is often a symbol of [Jesus Christ](#) (see [I Corinthians 10:4](#)), so a primary way that we learn how to seek righteousness is by learning and following the example of Christ. The second meaning, emphasized here, comes out in His mention of Abraham and Sarah in verse 2. He counsels us to examine the lives of our righteous spiritual forebears to see how they followed God and lived out their [faith](#).

Later, in [Isaiah 51:7](#), He speaks to those who have put His law in their hearts. This occurs when a person studies God's Word and burns the truth that he finds into his character by putting it to use in the circumstances of his life. This verse contains another parallelism in which He equates knowing righteousness (that is, understanding godly conduct) with having His law written in the heart. These things are possible only within a deepening relationship with God.

Isaiah 55 contains, as the New King James Version styles it, "An Invitation to Abundant Life":

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and

your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David. . . . Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ([Isaiah 55:1-3](#), 6-7)

Once we begin following God, these are the next steps to take. Seeking the Lord requires more than just listening and learning. He says that we must call upon Him in prayer so that we can get to know Him. We need to confess our sins to Him so that we can seek forgiveness. We are also required to repent, that is, turn from our sins and turn toward His good and right way.

Notice that He says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." God targets the [sin](#) in us on two levels: our "way"—our exterior conduct and behavior—and our "thoughts"—our interior attitudes and motivations. Both must be examined and purified. God says that if we do this, He will have abundant mercy, and the relationship will leap forward.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Wisdom for the Young \(Part Five\)](#)

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