

No One Seeks God, But Two Seekers Are Looking for You

We don't find God by searching harder. He came searching for us.

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

LUKE 19:10

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Left to ourselves, no one truly seeks God. But the Bible shows two Seekers who never stop looking: Jesus seeking sinners to save them, and the Father seeking worshipers to love Him.
SCRIPTURE	Romans 3:10-12 · Genesis 3:8-9 · Luke 19:1-10 · Luke 15:1-7 · John 4:1-26
LENGTH	About 20 minutes
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school; great for an outreach night
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles. Optional: play a quick round of hide-and-seek or hide an object before the talk.

Start here: who's looking for whom?

People often talk about "searching for God" or being "spiritual seekers." It sounds noble, like we're the ones on a quest to find Him. But the Bible says something surprising:

"There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God." **ROMANS 3:10-11**

On our own, we don't really seek God. We seek comfort, happiness, approval, and answers on our terms. Isaiah says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). Sheep don't go looking for the shepherd; they wander.

So is that the end of the story? No! Because from the very first pages of the Bible, God has been the One doing the seeking. After Adam and Eve sinned and hid, God came walking in the garden calling, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). He's been calling ever since. And the Bible shows us two Seekers.

1 Jesus seeks sinners

In Jericho lived a man named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and very rich (Luke 19:2). Tax collectors worked for Rome, collected extra for themselves, and were hated by their own people as traitors and cheats. Zacchaeus was short, so when Jesus came through town he climbed a sycamore tree to see over the crowd.

Jesus stopped right under that tree, looked up, and called him by name: "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house" (19:5). The crowd grumbled that Jesus was going to be the guest of a sinner. But Zacchaeus was changed. He gave half his goods to the poor and repaid four times anyone he had cheated. Then Jesus explained why He had come:

"Today salvation has come to this house... for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." **LUKE 19:9-10**

Zacchaeus thought he was looking for Jesus. It turned out Jesus was looking for him. In Luke 15, Jesus told three stories that make the same point: a shepherd who leaves 99 sheep to find one, a woman who sweeps her whole house for one lost coin, and a father who runs to welcome home his lost son. Each one ends with a party. "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:7).

ILLUSTRATION

When a child gets lost in a store, the child doesn't usually find the parent. The parent, frantic and determined, searches every aisle until they find their child. That's the heart of Jesus toward you.

2 The Father seeks worshipers

In John 4, Jesus stopped at a well in Samaria at noon. A woman came alone to draw water, probably to avoid the other women, because she had a painful past: five husbands, and now living with a man who wasn't her husband. Jews and Samaritans didn't even talk to each other. But Jesus asked her for a drink and offered her "living water."

When she tried to change the subject to a religious argument about where to worship, Jesus told her something amazing:

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." **JOHN 4:23**

The Father is seeking worshipers. Not perfect people. Not religious experts. He sought out a broken, rejected woman and made her His worshiper, and she ran back to town telling everyone, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did" (John 4:29). Many believed because of her.

BACKGROUND FOR THE LEADER

Jews and Samaritans had been divided for centuries over race, history, and where to worship (Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem). Many Jews traveling between Judea and Galilee went around Samaria. John says Jesus "needed to go through Samaria" (John 4:4). He was on a mission to find one woman.

So how should we respond?

If God is the One seeking, our part is to stop hiding and let ourselves be found. God promises, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). And here is the beautiful truth: any desire you have for God is already evidence that He is seeking you. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Like Zacchaeus, come down from the tree. Like the woman at the well, stop changing the subject. Jesus is calling your name today.

TALK IT OVER

1. Why do you think Romans 3:11 says no one seeks God? Do you agree?
2. What do the stories of Zacchaeus and the woman at the well have in common?
3. Why did the crowd grumble when Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house? Who are the "Zacchaeuses" today?
4. What does it mean that the Father is "seeking" worshipers?
5. Is there a "tree" you're hiding in, or a subject you keep changing, instead of letting Jesus find you?

TAKE IT HOME

Read Luke 15 this week, all three stories of lost things being found. Then thank God that He came looking for you. Ask Him to show you one "lost" person you can seek out with His love, the way Jesus sought Zacchaeus.

You're not searching for God alone. He is already searching for you.

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