

# Seeking God

by Jim Cymbala

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God through humility, trust, and continuous prayer, and highlights the rewards of seeking God, including peace, joy, guidance, strength, and power.*

**Duration:** 30:26

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 16:12, Psalm 86:5, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Seeking God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking God for strength and power. He highlights how often people neglect to seek God for what they need, living with weakness, confusion, and frustration as a result. The speaker encourages the audience to come to Jesus and seek Him diligently, trusting Him to provide help and rest. He emphasizes the need to draw near to God and not just attend church on Sundays, but to have a personal relationship with Him. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer and a reminder that it is better to spend one hour in God's presence than thousands of days anywhere else.

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## Transcript

It's so nice to be in the house of the Lord today, isn't it? I want to talk about something now, so foundational, so basic, but it's for everyone in the building because it's constantly applying to us and we constantly are in danger of forgetting this, you would almost call it cardinal ABC truth from the Bible. So let's go back into the Old Testament time and let's study one of the kings. He's about third or fourth after Solomon, after David, then came Solomon.

This man's king is named Asa, Jewish king. He reigned in Jerusalem. Let's read a little bit about him from 2 Chronicles.

It takes up three chapters, but we're just spotlighting a few verses. And Abijah reigned, that's the former king, with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David, that's Jerusalem. Asa, his son, succeeded him as king, and in his days the country was at peace for 10 years.

Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord, his God. Notice, not what people thought was right, but what God said was right. He removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles.

That all had to do with the pagan worship of the Canaanite people who Israel had conquered. He commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his laws and commands. He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him.

He built up the fortified cities of Judah since the land was at peace. No one was at war with him during those years, for the Lord gave him rest. "Let us build up these towns," he said to Judah, "and put walls around them "with towers and gates and bars.

"The land is still ours "because we have sought the Lord, our God. "We sought him, and he has given us rest on every side." "So they built and prospered." And now, that's at the beginning of his reign, and then what happens is decades go by of some of the greatest victories that Israel ever had. Asa and the people, after those years of peace, were attacked by the Kushites, that's i.e. Ethiopia, and a vast army, way outnumbering them, attacked them, but God came through.

As they're coming back from that battle, the prophet speaks to him and encourages him, and all kinds of good things are happening, but decades go by. You know, not everything that starts well finishes well, and what happens with Asa is, I don't know what happened, but somehow he lost confidence in God, and when he's being attacked by his cousins in the north, Israel, the kingdom is divided, so there's Israel and Judah, and when the 10 tribes are tightening the screws on him, instead of trusting God, he makes a treaty with the king of Syria, and he takes money out of the temple, and gold and silver, and he pays them off, and he says, attack my enemy, Israel, so that they'll be pulled away, and sure enough, it works. He pays them gold and silver from the temple.

It's clever, it's geopolitically very wise, but not to God. Lots of things work in life, but God isn't happy with it. Syria attacks Israel, Israel then has to stop attacking Judah, everyone's high-fiving in Jerusalem, and saying, Asa, you're the man, until a prophet comes and says, what did you do? I would've given, God would've given you victory.

Didn't he give you victory in the past? Why didn't you trust him? Why didn't you seek him? Why'd you get clever? Why'd you take money from the temple to buy off people? And then, Asa, now, toward the end of his life, he goes off the trail, off the rails. Let's look. Asa was angry with the seer, the prophet, because of this.

He was so enraged that he put him in prison. Here's a man that God so blessed, and now, when a prophet tells him something he doesn't want to hear, he goes, you're going to jail. At the same time, Asa brutally oppressed some of the people.

The events of Asa's reign from beginning to end are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. In the 39th year of his reign, Asa was afflicted with the disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness, he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians.

And then, to make a full circle with the New Testament, look, Hebrews 11, verse six, and without faith, it's impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who earnestly, what? Seek him. So listen, the first game I ever played on Parkside Avenue when I was a kid, between Bedford and Flappish, the first games I can ever remember playing in kindergarten, or even before that, was hide and seek. How many ever played hide and seek when you were little? I remember a comedian saying his childhood was traumatic because he never got any breaks,

and everything went wrong for him.

Even when he played hide and go seek, he would go hide, and nobody would go look for him. It was, you go hide, and you go like that, remember, one, two, three, four, five, and you go hide, and then people go seek you. Why do they have to seek you? Because you're hiding.

Well, what would that have to do with God? Because the Bible says he's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. I misunderstood this for a good part of my life. Like God was hiding, and he was beckoning us, you know, you come seek me, but I'm gonna try to stay away from you, but you come and seek me.

So the story of Asa is amazing. I wanna cut to the chase here. Asa becomes king, and he commands the people to seek God, whatever that means.

He commands them to seek God, and as they seek God, God brings blessing upon the country, because as Hebrews tells us, he's a rewarder of everyone who seeks him. This is why more people don't have more blessing on their life and more breakthroughs and answers, because they don't seek him. We'll get to that in a moment.

And then, as long as they seek him, and Asa seeks the Lord, there's blessing, there's answers, there's difficulties. This is not fantasy. Life has difficulties.

But when a church seeks God, God breaks through, somehow, someway. Money's provided, the church grows, converts are made, people get baptized, and Jesus is glorified. But somehow, in that time, Asa goes off the rails, as I said, and now he tries to use cleverness instead of trusting God, instead of seeking God.

He seeks a human answer. Notice, it's not wrong to do human things. God leads us to do all kinds of things.

When you seek God for your meal in the morning, you just don't sit in your house. If he's giving you money, you go out and buy your breakfast, right? God is the one who gives us our breakfast, but it doesn't mean we just sit there and it's dropped down by birds every single morning. We go and do things and we buy things, but we know that God is providing everything.

How many say amen? And then, the prophet comes and tells him, what'd you do that for? Why'd you get clever? Why'd you stop seeking God? And then, he must have really fallen away in his heart from God, because he locks up the prophet. This goes to show that we need encouragement every day, because anybody can go off the rails. Don't you know people in your family or friends who started tender before the Lord, seeking God, and then decades later, years later, they don't wanna know about it, right? They do not wanna know about it.

Get out of my face with that. Then, on top of that, the Bible says at the end of his life, he not only brutally oppresses the people, he gets sick, and even at the end of his life, a severe disease in his feet. He makes a point.

It says, the chronicler, he would not seek help from God. When he sought God, blessing, problems, but answers. And then, at the end, he didn't wanna hear about it.

He got tired of seeking God. So, what does that mean? Well, it's a very simple thing. It's revealed in that last sentence that we read about him.

Even in his disease, he wouldn't seek help from God. To seek God is to seek help from God. It's to go to God and say, God, I humble myself.

I need you. I can't do this without you. I'm asking you for the things that you have promised you would do.

I need you. It's a humble position. It's, I can't make it on my own.

It's not Frank Sinatra's song, I did it my way. It's, God, I wanna do it your way. That's seeking God.

God, I need your help. I need your assistance. But let's go further.

Help, there's an army way bigger than mine. I need your help. The situation that you're in today, possibly, you can't make it.

You've been trying to make it. But you need some kind of intervention from heaven. You need something supernatural.

You need something to happen that you cannot manufacture. That's what it means to seek God. It means to go to God and ask him and keep on asking him.

Because as Jesus said in the continuous present tense in the Greek, not just ask and you shall receive, it's ask and keep on asking and you will receive. Seek and keep on seeking and you'll find. Knock and keep on knocking and it will be open to you.

So it means to go to God and say, God, this thing facing me today is bigger than me. And that sounds simplistic and very elementary. But it's amazing how many times we get overwhelmed, overloaded, and we give up and we've never really gone to God for his help.

God becomes a distant, not living God, not here in the present God. He's just a God that we think of on Sundays, a God we read about, a God who's in the Bible. But I want to tell you, God is alive today.

Jesus is alive today. And when you seek him, he will enter. Listen, if there's anything my wife and I know, anything this church, that this church is here for, it's a testimony to the fact that God enters into our lives and will help us when we ask him and when we seek him.

You could go to God and seek him for direction. In other words, what's the wisest thing? You're at a crossroads. You got to make a decision about your children, about your career, about a job change, something social, romantic, whatever it might be.

What is God's choice? What is God's wisdom? If you go to God, he will show you. Many of us just go and make a decision on what we think is right with our limited IQs, not knowing what's around the bend. We end up in a jam and then we go and seek God.

And God is saying, I wish you would've come sooner and I would've saved you all that trouble because he's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. So what should you do? Counseling is good, talk to someone, but no counselor is God. God will show you what to do.

How many believe it? Say amen. Amen. If you seek him, he will answer you.

Seek him for guidance. How about seek him for mercy? Nobody gets mercy unless they seek God for mercy. You got to ask him.

Notice he's not hiding. He doesn't want to block you and I from these things, but God is saying, would you come to me because I am plenteous in mercy. I have tons of mercy, but you have to come to me and ask because I want to forgive you.

Judgment is my strange act. I delight in mercy, the Bible says about God. But you got to seek God for mercy.

You got to say, God, I've sinned against you. I might've offended him. I might've hurt him by something I said which was sinful, but it's ultimately God that has to give mercy.

God will give mercy if you seek him for it. Ask him for it. How about strength? You're at the end of the day.

And when you sit down at the end of the day, you don't know, you don't even want to see about tomorrow coming. You just, you had it. Haven't you ever had times like that? You just run out of gas.

Seek God for strength. Power belongs to the Lord, the Bible says. How many believe God gives power to the weak? Those that are limping and those that have run out of strength.

The Bible says if you will seek and wait, he will give you strength. In other words, we live below our privileges when we don't seek God for the thing that we need. And although this sounds so simplistic, it's amazing if you study church history and you study the lives of people who I've counseled or people that you know, we can go months and years without seeking God for the thing we need.

It's like we're vitamin deprived and the vitamins are right over there but we won't take them. And now we live with the weakness. We live in the confusion.

We live in the frustration. How about this? I've had to do this many times. Seek God for peace.

Don't you ever feel turmoil inside? And you feel this restlessness and this churning and you are a Christian and you do love God but there's an inner churning. God is a God of peace. He gives peace to his people.

He gives joy to his people. How many times do we try to do something to get the peace, do something to get the joy instead of just going to God and saying, God, you see me, I'm churning inside. The pressures of life, the responsibilities they have on me, they are demasiado, they are too much, I can't take it.

God, bring me your peace and he'll bring peace in the midst of the storm. He gives peace. So as long as Asa was asking God for victory and supply, as long as you and I ask for God's power, God's peace, God's joy, God's direction, he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

He will do it. This is from the beginning of Genesis all the way to the end of Revelation. People pray, God answers.

People seek, they find. People don't pray, they don't get. You have not because you ask not.

You don't have because you didn't seek it from me, God says. You looked at it from other sources like King Asa did. You got wise in your own understanding.

Be simple, be like children, just keep coming to me. Keep coming to me, you know, like a newborn baby being nursed. She's put in that position, she's crying, she's hungry.

When she comes near the mother's breast, she just has to find the supply that she needs. That's how God wants us to be. God, I can't make it.

God, I need this today. God, I'm having an interview, I need your wisdom. I don't know what to say.

Don't you feel overwhelmed by things in life? Ah, you see, there you go. It's a blessing to feel overwhelmed because then you seek. But when you got it all together or you think you do, you don't seek.

Churches that feel they can do church, they don't have prayer meetings because hey, we can do church. We got a formula. We got the music and the lights and the smoke machine and the cannons and the camels or whatever else they bring out on the stage.

You know what one of the great blessings is in life? To be able to sing and meet it. I need thee, oh, I need thee. How many feel you need a God today? Just lift up your hand.

When you think of all the complexities of life, all the complexities of life, Asa, as long as he felt needy and vulnerable, God was boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. I'll give it to you. The moment he got huffy and the minute he got puffed up in himself and he was gonna get clever, he lost out on God and then he got really sour and he got so proud that he's throwing a prophet in jail.

And imagine, how could you know God at the end of your life, still not seek God for help when your feet are diseased? Let me add two more things about this. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he exists or that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Some people have said it this way.

Again, I don't want to be oversimplistic. There are two kinds of people in the world. Forget black, white, Hispanic, Asian, forget all that.

That's not how God sees things at all. There's two kinds of people in the world. There's people who seek God and people who don't.

End of story. There's people who pray and say, God, I need you and then there's people who say, I don't need God. What are you talking about? I don't believe in him.

He doesn't exist. I can manage on my own. That's how the world can be divided, some people have said, very wise spiritual people.

That's how the world can be divided. That's how churches can be divided. There are churches that feel their need and seek God and pray and call on God and are humbled and broken by their own need and then there are churches that get huffy and I don't need anything.

Our pastor's an orator, we got this choir and we got this and we're gonna run this thing. We don't even need God. As someone once said, for some churches, the Holy Spirit could leave and they wouldn't notice it for two or three years because they don't need him.

They can do church without the Holy Spirit. I wanna say on behalf of all the pastors and the choir and my wife and I, we can't do church without God. How many are with me? We need God, every service, we

need God.

And God came here on Tuesday night and we made a covenant with all the large crowd that was here on Tuesday night. We're coming back this Tuesday and I'm turning over my plate for the day and gonna fast that day and you could skip a meal, dinner or lunch or just dinner or don't skip any meal if you don't feel up to that but we're gonna gather here because we feel our need of more of God. Our church needs, in the midst of all this mess that's happening in our country, we don't need more of God, we don't need more love, we don't need more power from God, the Holy Spirit, we don't need more blessing from God.

If you're with me on that, say aloud amen. This is it, this is it. If there ever was a moment when churches should arise and say God, we want maximum efficiency, it's now.

But how's it gonna come? Not by sitting at home talking about it or complaining what's gonna happen in the world. Did you know what's going on? You know what ISIS could do? You know what could, what would that change? That won't change a thing but God rewards those who diligently seek him, who come to him and say God, I need more of you in my own life. I can't make it.

Now, when you pray, when you come to God, you gotta remember two other things. He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. You gotta come to him for what you need.

But you can't have a plan B. Who God answers are the folks who are at the end of themselves and say God, I have to have your answer. I have to have your peace. If it doesn't work for a half hour, I'm not gonna go out and buy some Oxycontin to get some invitation peace.

I have to have you. I have to have you. A minister has to feel, God, it's you or bust.

If you don't come and help me, I'll resign from the ministry. When we started, my wife and I, in the church, it was such terrible, tough sledding, so hard, so difficult, nothing was happening. I didn't know how to preach.

She was ahead of me because she's very gifted musically, a pastor's daughter, but I was so floundering and struggling and look, I'm just telling you what I prayed, whether you think it's melodramatic, whatever. So one day, I was just so desperate and I said to God, God, I cannot envision myself going years and decades with nothing happening, no blessing, no helping anyone, just futile, just same old box, same old level, same old rut. So God, look, if you're not gonna help me, then take my life.

I knew he would take care of Carol. I had one daughter at the time. I knew he could take care of Chrissy.

I said, God, either that or take me because we're all gonna go to heaven anyway, but just take my life, but you have to do this. It's not a question of I'd like you to, you have to. You have to.

And I would pace like this alone in the auditorium in that little building on Atlantic Avenue and I'd just walk back and forth and just say, God, what am I gonna do? But listen, he's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. If you ask and keep on asking, what's he gonna do? Turn you away? This man of God here, let's say he needs something, Kevin, he's gonna come to God and say, God, I really need something. God's gonna go, no, I don't wanna do that.

He already gave us his son. How much more will he give us everything we need if we'll just come and ask him and keep on asking and saying, God, whatever alterations you have to make in my life, let the

blessing flow. Let it come, God.

Let it come. So it's gotta be desperate. And lastly, you gotta have faith that God will answer.

You know, in football, there's a phrase, hail Mary, which is linked to the Catholic prayer, hail Mary full of grace, which is not a prayer you have to pray or need to pray or should pray. You can go right to God, you don't have to go to Mary. Amen? Amen.

But at the end of the game, when there's desperation and there's no chance it seems to win, they'll say, let's try a hail Mary pass, which is, for those of you who don't follow football, you just throw the ball as far as you can and hope your guy catches it. Eh, it's our last shot, what are you gonna do? Let's try a hail Mary. Can't have a hail Mary with God.

You gotta come to God and say, God, I not only want you, need you, you have to come through, and I believe you will. Yes, you will. I'm standing on your word.

Ask, and you shall receive. Knock, and it will be opened. Seek, and you'll find.

He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Now, this is the day we live in now. There are gonna be people who have more of God, and then there's gonna be people who run out of God in their lives, and they're gonna turn like Asa.

They're gonna turn away. Even though they had a form of godliness, it's gonna disappear from off the map of their lives. So I wanna tell you today, are you here needing something from God? If Jesus were to replace me right now, don't you know his hands would be out, and he would be saying what he said back then? Listen, come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden.

I'll give you rest, I'll help you. Just come to me. Seek me, ask me, trust me, draw near to me.

Don't live far away from me and go to church on Sunday. Come to me, I'll help you. I'll help you now.

Let's all bow our heads. Everybody in need of something from God, and it's an emergency. You don't need it next week, it's time sensitive.

You need direction, you need mercy, you need forgiveness. You need strength because you don't feel you can make it. That's why the Bible says, my house shall be called a house of prayer.

Don't you get it? God is saying, I'll do it. Ask me, wait before me, trust me, I will help you. If you're here today and that's a need, a current need in your life right now.

Listen, we all have needs. I'm talking about emergency situations, either in the choir behind me. Pastor, God has to come through because my bills are now, they're gonna overwhelm me, and I've been unemployed, and I don't know what to do.

God says, come to me. Don't trust in your own understanding. Don't lean on that.

Acknowledge me that I'm a rewarder of those who diligently seek me. Those who come and ask. He's not hiding.

He's the one inviting. In fact, if you step forward today, it's God who put that in you. You can't even seek God until he touches you because God is seeking us before we seek him.

Reaching out, saying, trust me, help me, I'll help you. If you're here today and need that, get out of your seat. Come here, to the front, quickly.

Be that young King Asa. As long as he sought the Lord, there was blessing and provision. If any of you find yourself getting crusty and hard, come up and say, God, break me.

God, make it fresh again for me. Come on, come up from all over the building. We're gonna pray.

Preaching is fine, but praying is better. Music is great, but praying is better. Come on, come on down.

Pastor, that word was for me. I need God's direction. I need God in this area of my life.

I see it now. He's waiting to help me. I wanna be a seeker after God.

I wanna ask him. I wanna depend on him. I wanna trust him.

I don't wanna lean on my own understanding. Press in as much as you can. Others are coming from the balcony.

Just move these people up here to the front edge here, please. Lord, as a church, we need you. As a pastor, I need you.

There's more that you have for all of us. More that you have for our church, so we can shine bright for you. We can be salt.

Oh, Jesus, look at the mess that's happening in the world. Please, God, come. Fill us, renew us.

Revive us, spark us. Wake us up, whatever needs to happen. I bring my friends to you that are in the front here, that have come out of their seat.

By coming to the front, Lord, here, they're saying that they need you badly. They need you badly. You know what they need.

You know everything. Show yourself strong on their behalf. In the name of Jesus, Father, show yourself strong now for them.

Open the windows of heaven. Right now, start sending angels on mission or whatever, however you're gonna work this out. But God, intervene in every one of their lives.

Every one. I'm asking every one, God, that came forward, show yourself faithful. Do as you said.

When you call, I will answer. In the day of trouble, reach out to me, and I'll help you. Ask and keep on asking.

Seek and keep on seeking. Knock and keep on knocking. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you that we have such a good Father. He always wants to help us. Satan, you're a liar.

Satan, you're a liar. We're cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and God is gonna help us. Everybody stand.

It just came to me. You know what the Bible says? I want men and women everywhere to lift up hands. Look at my hands.

When you reach up your hands like that, what you're saying is, God, I humble myself. You are greater than me. But notice what else the hands mean.

It's God, I need you. I'm reaching out to you, I need you. Notice what the hands up also mean.

God, I worship you. You are worthy to be praised. Notice what else the hands mean if you just open your palms like this.

God, I'm gonna receive from you. You're gonna help me, God. You're gonna help me, God.

How many believe and say amen? You're gonna help me. Lift up your hands right now. Just tell God now what you need.

Those of you that didn't come forward, but you know what you need up in the balcony. You know. Across the street if you're in overflow, you know what you need.

Bring that sun back. Oh God, break the chains that wanna destroy my brother, Lord. Lord, grant us your peace the rest of this day.

Let a spirit of prayer come upon all of us so that as a church this Tuesday we can see what great things you're gonna do. Better one hour in your presence than 10,000 days with any other place on the face of the earth. Bless your people and make us a blessing.

We pray in Jesus' name. And everyone said. Come on, everybody hug somebody.

Hug a brother, hug a sister.

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