

# Busyness Leads to God Hiding Himself? Ask Pastor Tim

by Tim Conway

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's presence in our lives and seeking Him continuously to avoid the problem of hiddenness.*

**Duration:** 1:07:04

**Scripture:** Hosea 5:15 - 6:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "Intimacy With God"

---

## Description

This sermon addresses the struggle of feeling distant from God, especially in the busyness of life, where priorities like school, work, and personal goals can overshadow seeking God's presence. The speaker emphasizes the need to acknowledge guilt, repent, and prioritize seeking God's face to experience His compassion and restoration. The importance of disciplined time in prayer, meditation on Scripture, and seeking intimacy with God is highlighted to overcome the hiddenness of God and find spiritual renewal.

---

## Transcript

This is from Edwin Rajkumar. He writes, Hi, Pastor Tim. How do I deal with the hiddenness of God? How do I deal with the hiddenness of God? I'm a college student, and I'm finding myself at a place where life is mundane, and God seems nowhere to be found.

I wake up. I go to class. Now notice what he says here.

I have to do my homework. I have to do my homework. Here he introduces the thought about what I have to do.

I have to do my homework, and I go to bed. Notice this, he's going to capitalize some words here for emphasis. There are so many things that has to be done that God is nowhere in the picture.

There are so many things that should be have, but he capitalizes that. There are so many things that have to be done that God is nowhere in the picture. I have capitalized to do good in school.

I have capitalized, all caps, to get a job. I have capitalized to make something of my life. Can you help me with this problem? Thank you.

Now hear it again. How do I deal with the hiddenness of God? I'm a college student. I'm finding myself at a place where life is mundane, and God seems nowhere to be found.

I wake up. I go to class. I have to do my homework, and I go to bed.

There are so many things that have to be done that God is nowhere in the picture. I have to do good in school. I have to get a job.

I have to make something of my life. Can you help me with this problem? Thank you. How do I deal with the hiddenness of God? Now you see, a lot of times, and you might all listen to this, and you might say, well, okay, it's obvious what the problem is right off.

The thing is, He's being honest about some things. A lot of times people will say, well, I can't find God anywhere. But then they don't go on to say the kinds of things that He says.

They just admit, I can't find God. And they maybe don't admit the things that He's willing to admit. Well, I don't know that He thinks He's admitting anything, but He really does, especially not only that He says what He says, but the words that He capitalizes, He capitalizes the verb have, one, two, three, four times.

So, how do I deal with the hiddenness of God? And quite honestly, that's a place I don't want to be. I don't want to be in a place where God is hidden. I don't want that kind of Christianity.

I don't want the kind of Christianity where I can't find Him. I don't want the kind of Christianity that is mundane. That's the kind of word that He uses here.

I don't want that kind. I don't want the kind where He says that God seems nowhere to be found. Anybody want to make a stab at what kind of counsel that you would give to this guy? Is he reading his Bible? I mean, that might be something to ask him.

He says, I wake up, I go to class, I have to do my homework, and I go to bed. There's so many things that have to be done, and I'm changing his has to have, have to be done that God is nowhere in the picture. See, he recognizes there's so many things that have to be done that God is nowhere in the picture.

He's admitting that he's not allowing God in the picture. He's not bringing God into the picture. And so he says, can you help me with this problem? Well, I most certainly can.

I mean, the thing that we have to ask right off is what is God's will for this guy? What's God's will for his life? Isn't that what we're supposed to do? Somebody read Romans 12, 1 and 2. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Good and acceptable and perfect.

That's how it describes what the will of God is. Good and acceptable. Acceptable to God.

Good to God. Perfect in God's sight. How do we renew our minds? By figuring out what it is that God wants for my life.

You see, that's really where our Christian life meets the road. We're living our life and we're constantly looking at our lives and we're evaluating what pleases God. You remember how Paul lived.

Do you remember what Paul said about his conscience? Anybody remember what Paul said about his conscience? I always take pains. He always takes pains to do what? To have a clear conscience both before God and before man. Before God and before man.

People that are watching are going to think you're a plant in the crowd. I preached on that. Acts 24, 16.

One of my favorite verses in the world. I love it. Anyways, having a conscience.

A conscience that's what? Clear. And see, how is it that you live with a clear conscience before God? Or you remember how he says it in 1 Corinthians 4. Remember that he doesn't know anything against himself? If you don't know anything against yourself, that means that you have a clear conscience. I don't know anything against myself.

I don't know anything that's wrong. I don't know anything in my life that God would disapprove of. See, that's what it is to work at having a mind that's renewed where you are at a place where you're discerning the will of God.

You know, in this whole series that we're dealing with, with the Christian self-cleansing, we have way too many professing Christians that set the bar too low. The bar of Scripture is that you're not letting anything into your life that you would assume is against the will of God. And what would we say to a young man like this? Well, what is God's will? Is it God's will? Brethren, let me tell you something.

When you're counseling with people, when people come to you with problems, people can often ask questions that are really invalid. You want to listen to what question people pose to you, because some questions are not even good questions. Some, you have to tear apart the presuppositions that people lay down.

Like, I've had people come to me and say this, Well, I know I'm a Christian, but I don't love the brethren. You see the faulty, you know, help me. Or, I know I'm a Christian, but I'm a slave to sexual immorality.

Okay, you have a problem with the way that you're expressing this to me. It would be better off to say, I'm a slave to sexual immorality. Do you think I'm a Christian? I don't like the brethren.

I don't love the brethren. Do you think I'm a Christian? You see, they make these assumptions. Well, what are these assumptions based on? Their own thinking.

You see, they make the assumption first, and then it's like, Okay, well, I don't care really that the Bible says that true Christians can't hate the brethren. I hate the brethren. You remember, we had an APT like that a long time ago.

About a guy who assumed he was a Christian, and yet he hated the brethren. Well, wait, Scripture says that if you hate the brethren, you're not a Christian. And so, that's faulty logic.

That's a faulty presupposition. You're presupposing something, but you didn't get that presupposing from God's Word. You got it just from some other place.

You got it just because you think it, but it's not right. Well, here comes a young man who's in college. Now, I'll tell you this.

I thank the Lord that I never went through college as a Christian. Now, I wish I would have been a Christian when I went through college. I wish I would have been.

But, at the same time, I'm thankful that I never had to be, because, I'll tell you, it'd be rough. Prior to me pastoring, going through engineering school was the toughest thing that I did. And what it requires from you is intense.

And I know it's got to be really difficult to go through some of these intense college programs and at the same time be a Christian. Now, that doesn't mean it's impossible, but you've got to keep your priorities straight. And you see, what this young man does is he pre-assumes, his presupposed ideas here are, listen to him again, there's so many things that have to be done that God is nowhere in the picture.

I have to do good in school. I have to get a job. I have to make something of my life.

Now, here's the thing that I would say. He's saying these statements dogmatically as though they're absolutely true. He has to do this.

But I would say this. Let me ask you this. Are there so many things that have to be done in my life that would leave God out of the picture? Is that a true statement? Can you back that up in here? Can you back up in God's Word anywhere that there's so much that you have to do? Well, here's the thing.

Who is saying you have to do this? Is God saying it? You see, if we're going to figure out what God's will is, if we're going to figure out what's good according to God, what's acceptable according to God, what's perfect according to God, we need to ask, what is it that God says? Does God say that you have to do so many things that leave Him out of the picture? Or would God actually say, no, you better do all the things that leave Him in the center of the picture, and if you can't, if there are other things that encroach upon that, you better get rid of them. You see, I actually find that that's what Scripture teaches. To make this assumption that I have to live a life that leaves God out of the picture, that's a suicidal assumption.

I have to do good in school. Let me ask you this, is that a commandment given to us by God in His Word? Is it a commandment that we have to do good in school? I mean, I would say that Scripture says this, whatever your hand finds to do, you should do it with all your might. But, do I have to do good in school? Not at the sacrifice of your spiritual life.

No way, not at the sacrifice of my soul. I have to get a job. Now, does Scripture say that I ought to work? Does Scripture say that I ought to redeem the time? Yes, it does.

I have to make something of my life. Well, what are you making of your life, if you actually have a life that God isn't central to? What are you making of your life when you're putting everything else as primary in your life and not God? You're making the kind of life that looks like it's pretty much headed towards total emptiness on judgment day. What are you going to say to God? Well, Lord, you see, I really wanted to make something of my life because I wanted to be able to stand before You on this day.

I mean, this sounds like the servant that buried everything in the ground. I knew You were this kind of man, and I did this and I did that anyway. In the end, it's not going to be worth anything.

Basically, what those servants did that got commended is what they did for the sake of their Master. Here's a guy that isn't living for Christ. He's living to make something out of his life that seems to be Christless.

Can you help me with this problem? See, I don't know if this is a guy who really had some true walk with God and God was there in his life, but now there's a hiddenness. You know what's interesting? When somebody says, how do I deal with the hiddenness of God? Do you know what it makes me think? That maybe God revealed Himself to him at one time. Because, you know, just lost people, I would have never had that concept when I was lost.

How do I deal with the hiddenness of God? That would have been a foreign concept to me. The hiddenness of God. In my estimation, God was who I created Him to be.

He was always around. I could call upon that God whenever I wanted. He was God of my own imagination.

The true God, I wanted Him at a distance. I was not pleased when that God came anywhere too close. This idea of hiddenness with God almost makes me feel like maybe what has happened is God has revealed Himself to this young man and he got into a place in life where his priorities are wrong and God has withdrawn.

And so, what do we say to somebody? What do you say to somebody? And you know what the likelihood is? That every one of us, every true Christian, I suspect, at some point in their life, and maybe multiple times, you get to a point where there isn't a closeness to God as you once had. Something happens. Something... You get to the place where things were not as they once were.

Isn't that the kind of thing that we find with the Ephesian church? That's not just an individual all by himself. You know, you can think through Scripture. David got to a place where suddenly his relationship with God wasn't like it had been.

Who else? Who else? Peter got to a place where his relationship suddenly wasn't like it had been. I mean, Jesus says to him, when you reconvert, basically, when you're converted again... Converted again? Satan wanted to sift him. He needed to be converted again.

When it's understood rightly. When he was restored. But he needed to be restored.

You remember Jesus saying to him, do you love Me? Why would he challenge his love? Because he denied Him three times. You think that will make the sun go down on God's presence when you deny Him three times? Who else? We've got the Ephesian church. Any other examples? You see, we can get to places... We have the truth in Scripture about grieving the Spirit or quenching the Spirit.

We definitely can get to places where something changes. The sweetness we once had isn't there anymore. For him to even talk about the hiddenness of God, see, that resonates with me.

Which makes me wonder, it makes me think, maybe this isn't just a lost guy who's just deceived and he has his priorities all wrong in life. Maybe this is a guy that really does know the Lord. And you know what? That can happen.

You know what? My life was pretty simple when I was single. I didn't want to be single. I desperately desired to have a wife and to have children.

But you know what? I had time. You know how Paul says it in 1 Corinthians 7? He talks about when you're single, you're worried about pleasing the Lord. And that's all I was worried about.

And I had time. I had time to pray. I had time to be in the Word.

I mean, too much time I felt. There was a definite loneliness in that season. But I'll tell you, there was a loneliness on the human level, but not with my relationship with the Lord.

And then you know what? You get married. Okay. Life was still fairly simple.

But then I had four children. And it's getting more complex. And then they start to grow up.

And your involvement in their life has to go more. And then I became a pastor. And then the involvement there.

And you know what? Suddenly I can look and I can say, things got busy. And see, we can get in places like that. This is a guy whose life is busy.

You get all these things. And see, what happens is you don't prioritize right. Because you start thinking, well, certainly God wants me to do well in school.

I mean, if whatsoever my hand finds to do, I should do it with all my might. And I've found college to do. Doesn't He want me to do it well? Doesn't He want me to pour my whole... He doesn't want me to not give my best effort.

Okay, we could agree with that. We could agree He wants you to do well at what you do. Well, and certainly God wants me to get a job.

And so certainly He wants me to do well in college in order for me to get a good job. Certainly He doesn't want me to waste my life. And see, in your own estimation, you could be saying, well, you know, maybe His parents want Him to go.

It sounds like He's Indian perhaps. Maybe His parents, you know, Indians are big on education. You know, His parents want Him to do it.

So certainly God wants me to honor my parents. I mean, you can get into a lot of this thing. You can start saying, well, I can say, well, certainly as a husband, God wants me to spend time with my wife.

He wants me to communicate with my wife. He wants me to look just like Christ loves the church and gave Himself up for her. He wants me to love my wife.

And loving my wife, I've got to give time to my wife. And certainly He wants me to do that. And now I have four children.

Certainly He wants me to pour myself into being good to Father. He wants me to have devotions. He wants me to be involved in their life.

Certainly if I'm pastoring, I need to be counseling with people. I need to be studying for the preaching. You know, you can really start to justify all this.

But sometimes we have to back up and say, wait a second. Wait a second. Out of all the things God wants me to do, let's prioritize.

On the list, what should be the first thing above all other things that I know God wants me to do? What was that? Seek first the Kingdom. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and all these things shall be done unto you. One thing have I asked of the Lord, that one thing will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple.

That community, we sang both those. Matthew 6.33 and we sang... that's 27? Yeah, 27. Yeah.

To behold the beauty... Yes, I'm sure the people watching don't want to hear that. But yes, one thing. You see, let's look at some of these psalms.

Psalms 105, verse 4. Psalm 105, verse 4. Seek the Lord and His strength. Seek His presence continually. Now, see, here's the thing.

This guy says, how do I deal with the hiddenness of God? He says, God seems nowhere to be found. Well, the thing is, we're told to seek His presence continuously. Well, let me ask you this, what does that involve? Seek His presence continuously.

This guy is admitting, I've lost His presence. Okay? How do I seek God's presence? Where is God's presence? Like, if you're going to seek a pearl of great price, you're going to seek the treasure that's buried in the ground, you might have some idea where you're going to look. Glenn seeks for these treasures, and he has an idea where to look.

But where do we look for God's presence? We're told to seek it, but where is it? How do you seek it? It's not a matter of me moving my feet back and forth enough times to get to some faraway country, and there He is, there He lives. How do I seek the Lord? Now listen, we're to seek His presence continuously. So how do I seek it? Where do I find it? Scripture talks about God being close to every one of us.

So it's not a matter of me going somewhere, it's a matter of God's right here. If I'm going to seek His presence, it's a matter of the God who is here, revealing Himself to me. And so, what we have to come to grips with is this.

Seeking God's presence doesn't mean that God's presence isn't here, it's somewhere else, and I have to go there where it is. It's not like it's there in the temple still, or there in the tabernacle, or there in the Catholic church, you know, this holy realm somewhere. It's not like that.

It's not in the Buddhist temple. It's not there in the mosque. It's not that way.

It's not like God's Shekinah glory is there at the mercy seat anymore. That's not what we're talking about. The presence of God.

And it's not just we're dealing with the doctrine of the omnipresence of God, that God is here, God is there, God is there, God is there. That's not the issue. Why would I have to seek the presence of God? His presence is everywhere.

And if His presence is everywhere, His presence is where I am. Obviously, that's not what it means. It means you want to seek His presence so that He manifests Himself to you.

That's His presence. It's the manifestation of His reality. It's Him communicating to you.

It's Him making His presence known. He can make His presence known anytime He wants to. And so when Scripture talks about me continuously seeking His presence, then we would assume that what that means is me doing the things, being about the things that please God to the point where He would manifest Himself to me.

And not doing the things that would cause God to hide Himself from me. And I would just say to this young man, you are doing exactly the things that are calculated to cause God to hide Himself from you. Which would be what? Putting other things as a priority before Him.

Yeah, Mary, she sought the good part. She sought the good thing. Do you remember what the psalmist says? Let's look at another text here.

James was looking at Psalm 27. Let's look further at Psalm 27. Psalm 27 v. 4 is the heart of David.

What is that? But if we go further in Psalm 27, look at Psalm 27 v. 8. You have said, seek My face. Again, this is the same thing. Seeking the presence of God is the same thing as seeking His face.

What is the face? The face. The face. Seek My face.

You have said, seek My face. My heart says to you, your face, Lord, do I seek. Hide not your face from Me.

See, He can't hide it. Turn not your servant away in anger. O you who have been My help, cast Me not off, forsake Me not, O God of My salvation.

But notice, you have said, seek My face. Well, we already saw over there in Psalm 105 that God does say to seek His presence continuously. And look, we have this throughout the Scriptures that we are to seek His presence, that we are to seek Him.

We are to seek Him. We are to commune with Him. Have you ever noticed? I mean, if you go to 1 John 1, it's all about fellowship with God.

That's the issue. That's what it is to seek His face. That's what it is to seek His presence.

It's to seek fellowship. You remember how Jesus said, I stand at the door and knock. What is it that He's promising if you open intimacy? I will come in and I will sup with you.

I will sit at the table and eat with you. There will be intimacy. I will engage you.

I will in some way or another reveal Myself to you. I will make My presence known to you. This is what Scripture is all about.

Look, God says, I will be your God. What did Jesus say? I'm not going to leave you or forsake you. I'm going to be with you to the end of the age.

I'm not going to leave you orphans. I mean, the promise throughout Scripture is God's presence. We are His temple.

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. God says, I am their God. God dwells with us.

That's the idea. But here's David saying, you say to seek your face. My desire is to seek it.

And that has to be the priority. See, Jesus said this, unless you forsake all that you have, you can't be My disciple. We've got to surrender everything.

And I guarantee this, if we surrender everything, Jesus isn't going to come along to us and say, okay, now make school your priority. Make homework your priority. Make getting a job a priority to the point where you rule me out of your life.

He's not going to say that. So, what do we say to a guy like this? If you get to the place where you're not as you once were, listen, do you know what Jesus Himself told the Ephesians? What did He say? You've lost your first love. When you say to somebody, you've lost your first love, you say you're not where you used to be.

And what did He say to them? Before He said that, He told them to remember. Remember from where you've fallen. Remember where you came from.

You see, that's important to remember. Remember back to when we did walk together. When we walked together in the cool of the day.

What was different then than now? And you know what? If we come to the conclusion, my life has gotten busy, we need to change our priorities. It may be true our life is busy. But you know what? If it is busy, we need to protect parts of our day where He gets priority.

And we need to give the best to Him. Look, it's never changed. God wants us to love Him with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, all our strength.

We're to love Him first. Jesus said it. Jesus said, look, if you love somebody more than Me, you're not worthy of Me.

And that would include school. I know He's talking about family members. But that would include school.

If you love school more than Me, if you love homework more than Me, if you love getting a good job more than Me, then you're not worthy of Me. You see, the first step is we have to be honest. We have to be honest about where we were and where we've fallen to.

We really need to do an honest inventory of our life. You need to remember from where you've fallen. And then He says to them, you need to repent.

In fact, we should look at that. Let's go to Revelation 2. In Revelation 2, the first church dealt with is the Ephesian church. He says in verse 4, I have this against you, that you've abandoned the love you had at first.

See the first thing? Remember. Remember therefore from where you've fallen. Remember.

Do an honest spiritual inventory. You need to really recognize where you... If there was a day when God wasn't hidden, think about it. What was true of your life? And what became true of your life now that He is hidden? And go back.

Go back. That's the thing. Repenting is changing your mind.

The repent is to think again, but we know that the metanoia word is change your mind. You've got to change your mind about things. You've got to change your mind about your priorities.

One thing that's true, if this guy keeps going along the line that he's convinced by these words that he needs to keep continuing on, if he continues to have this idea that there are so many things that have to be done that God is nowhere in the picture, you see what he's saying? There are so many things I have to do that keep God out of the picture. Well, he needs to have his mind changed on that. No, he needs to come to the place where it's this.

My priority has to be God. My priority has to be fellowship with God. If anything's going to lack in my life, it's not going to be my time spent with the Lord.

That was George Whitefield. Basically, if you look at men and women who have had the closest walk with the Lord, those that have been most mightily used, you know what you'll find? You'll find men and women that had protected times of time in the Word, protected times of time in prayer. They had regular seasons of prayer and fasting.

They had times when they would get away, times when they would be alone with the Lord. They would often have special times where they would devote whole days, or they would devote these seasons. They would get away.

Many of you know. You've heard Paul Washer's testimony. He's a brand new Christian.

Spring break comes. He was in college. He took that week and got away.

I know that... Brethren, I can remember the first time that I was involved with church planning down in Stockdale, Texas. I believe I took three days and we had a building over in Stockdale. And I took three days and I just went over there, just away from family, away from the children, and just stayed there for those three days to pray and fast.

And I took my books, some good devotional books, and I took the Scriptures and I just went there to seek the Lord. I can tell you, brethren, it was one of the most blessed times. And I remember hearing a pastor that said to men who are in the ministry, and I think this would apply to all Christians in a broader, wider sense, but he recommended at least once a year take a season to get away and just to be alone with the Lord.

These things are essential. Listen, a man will do this with his wife. It's our anniversary.

I'm taking my wife on a cruise. I'm taking my wife to the B&B over here at the coast or up here in the hill country. You see, men will do that.

It's vacation time. The family's going to go get away. A man will do that with his wife.

A man will do that with his family. But the thing is, Jesus is saying you've got to love Me more. If we love Him more, are we going to do things with our wife and with our family that we don't do with Him? Are we going to devote these seasons to my family? Are we going to devote seasons to study and to prayer or study and to homework and to school and to all that goes along with that? Brethren, I'll tell you, when just recently, you remember that on Sunday, I took us to the Song of Solomon, which I very much believe is a spiritual picture of Christ and the church.

But do you remember what it says in Song of Solomon 5? Do you remember the picture there? Maybe we should look at it. Song of Solomon 5. I mean, what a picture. Verse 2, I slept, but my heart was awake.

Song of Solomon 5. Verse 2, I slept, but my heart was awake. A sound. My Beloved is knocking.

This is like the Laodicean church. He's knocking. My Beloved is knocking.

Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one. For my head is wet with dew. Now the thing you have to remember is this.

This is a great picture. God calls us. God draws us.

He's calling to us. Come and commune with me. Fellowship with me.

Open the door. I'll come in and I'll sup with you. I'll come in.

We'll have intimacy together. But what happens? I had put off my garment. Excuses.

I mean, that's the thing. How could I put it on? Do you hear that in this, guys? I have so many things to do. How can I go to the door and answer? So many things to do.

How could I possibly have time to go open the door and let God in? That's exactly what he's saying. I have to do good in school. Well, I have to remain here in bed.

I've taken off my clothes. I've taken off my shoes. I've got a dirt floor.

This is the olden days. It's not the days of tile and carpet. I have to wash my feet again.

This would be very inconvenient to have to do this. But see, that's what happens. Things come up and we make excuses and we justify those excuses.

She's justifying the excuses she's made. He's justifying the excuses he's made. And what happens in the end? I put off my garment.

How could I put it on? I bathed my feet. How could I soil them? My Beloved put His hand to the latch. This is God making an effort.

This is Christ approaching us, calling to us. My heart was thrilled within me. I rose to open to My Beloved and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the bolt.

I opened to My Beloved, but My Beloved had turned and gone. And see, that's the problem. He says, how do I deal with the hiddenness of God? I'll tell you how you deal with the hiddenness of God.

You get to the door before Christ leaves. That's it. To every one of you Christians here, you've got to lay that down as a rule for your walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Get to the door before He goes. Because if you tarry, He won't be there when you open. And I've lived long enough, I mean, a Christian could burst into tears just thinking about that reality.

Because there have been seasons. And what happens is we feel the pull, we feel the compulsion. It seems like we dealt with this not too long ago.

But brethren, I'll tell you this, and I can tell this young man this as well. We have a God. Look at Hosea 5.15. Hosea.

Brethren, let me tell you something. I know that oftentimes the minor prophets at times are some of the least recognized, least read, least known books among probably present day Christians, especially young Christians. But if I could make a recommendation to you, well, I would say to you, master all of them.

But Hosea has riches in it. Hosea is called a minor prophet, but he is hardly minor. I mean, if you just look, Hosea.

How many chapters have we got in Hosea? It's a long book. Look at Hosea 5. Hosea 5.15 Listen to what God says. I will return again to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face and in their distress earnestly seek Me.

Think about that. I will return again to My place. From where? Like standing at the door.

From a place of closeness. I'm going to go away. Now, I know this is speaking to Israel.

But Israel is His people. And Old Testament Israel is a type of the true people of God. And some of them were true Israel.

There was a true Israel in Israel. But you see the picture here. God says this.

They basically spurned My love. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to go to My place. That's withdrawal.

That's Him hiding. He's going away to His place. We are to seek His presence.

Where is that? Well, He's withdrawn to His place. Notice what it takes for Him to come back. And this isn't really any different than what we see in Revelation 2 when He's dealing with the church at Ephesus, is it? Not really.

"...Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face, and in their distress earnestly seek Me." You see, if you come to a place where you recognize my life has gotten busy, God is not there. You know, acknowledging your guilt, because you're guilty. This guy's guilty.

This is sin. When you exchange anything for God, it's sin. You need to acknowledge it for what it is.

This isn't a good, healthy college lifestyle. Let me tell you about a good, healthy college lifestyle as a Christian. Self-control.

Self-discipline. I'm going to get up at a certain time and I'm going to get into the Word of God every single day of my life, no matter what test I have to take, no matter what. I'm going to put God first.

And if one thing has to go, study or prayer, I'm going to pray. If one thing has to go, studying calculus over here or studying the Word of God, I am going to make it a habit in my life that I'm going to give God the first place. I'm going to be in His Word.

I'm going to pray. Now, I'm not saying that necessarily that praying time, that time in the Word necessarily has to be first in the day, but I would recommend to most college students that's when it ought to be. Because typically, when you get going in your day in a college situation, to think that you're going to do it

at the end of the day probably isn't going to happen.

You want to give God your best. If you're wiped out at the end of the day, that is not when you want to do it. If you find praying at night or whatever is going to be best for you, well, you want to give God your best.

You want to give God the time, but you do not want to exchange it for anything. You want to be like George Whitefield. 10 p.m. every night.

His was in the evening. He was going to go get with the Lord. That's not to say he didn't pray earlier in the day or get in the Word earlier in the day, but he had a time set.

And usually, godly people, the godliest of people, they do. They have a disciplined life. There's a time when they're going to get with the Lord and they're not going to let anything else encroach upon it.

It doesn't mean that throughout their life there might not be some exception or sickness comes or who knows. God can and does bring unexpected things into our life. But the fact is, as a rule, you have to be self-disciplined.

And the thing is, you've got to give your time to the Lord. And look, it's not like the Lord is absent from being involved in how well we do on a test. It's not like the Lord is absent from making my mind work.

You see, go to the Lord. Give the Lord priority. And then trust that He will cause you to have lost no time.

Isn't that the way the Lord works? I mean, I can trust the Lord that, Lord, I've given this much time to You, time that I'm not going to be able to study, but I trust that all the time that might be otherwise lost or all the time that I might not be able to memorize this thing, You're going to cause me to be able to do what I otherwise couldn't do. And You're going to cause me to excel in this, I want to be faithful, Lord, and I want to be a good testimony. See, that's the thing.

If I went through college again, you recognize you've got to make that I am going to go to church on Sundays. I am going to go to the assembly of God's people on the Lord's Day. I am going to do that.

I don't care how many tests I got Monday. I am going to do that. Now, I may have to come home and hit the books after that, but I am going to do that.

I'm going to make God a priority every single day. And I'm going to do that. God says to seek His face.

My heart says, Your face will I seek. And I'm going to seek it. And I'm going to make that a priority.

And you see, the thing is, what God promises us is that if you do acknowledge your guilt and in your distress you seek His face, you're going to find Him. But you know, that's one of the big things. Listen, I can tell any one of you here, if you get to the place where God has hidden Himself, the first step is acknowledge your sin.

Look, there can be cases like with Job where God simply puts you through a test, unleashes the devil on you, a dark season comes, God hides His face, and it's not directly the result of any sin on your part. But you know what? Usually it is. Usually it is misprioritization.

That's usually what it is when the Christian loses the face of God. And if you have lost His face, then you need to repent. You need to admit your guilt.

You need to call sin what it is. You need to call making other things a priority what it is. It's sin.

Anything that is going to give preeminence to something else in your life over God is wrong. It's bad. It's sin.

We need to confess our guilt. Listen, why do people get cold? Well, you know why they get cold. They don't run right to the door and let Christ in.

Few dealings with Christ, you lose a sense of His preciousness. You're not talking about Him. He's no longer filling your mind.

You're not thinking about His blood. You're not thinking about the cross. I had Randy Pizzino with us the other day, yesterday.

He had breakfast with us. What is he? Probably 70. I asked him to pray.

As he's even thinking about the sacrifice of Christ, as he's just praying for breakfast, he has to stop because he's ready to weep. And I'm thinking, wow, he's walked with the Lord a long time. Decades.

And there's a freshness still and there's a sensitivity to the things of Christ. And we've got to keep that. We've got to keep that.

We don't want to grow dull. We don't want to grow hard. We don't want to get to where the glory of Christ and where the love of Christ is just something that's a scarcity in our life.

It's something that we're not thinking about. It's something that we're not dwelling on. And you know what that can happen to? If it's where your Bible reading becomes mechanical.

It's like, okay, I'm in college. Or, okay, I've got a family and everything. I remember Brother Tim's message from way back there.

Okay, I've got to get in the Word. And so, I'm going to knock this out. In the seventh year of the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, and you're just flying through.

And it's like, I've got to get this done because I've got to study. No, you can't do that. You need to meditate on God's Word.

And you need to think about His promises to you. And you need to think about the cross. And you need to think about the love of God in Christ.

And you need to think about what you were saved from. You need to think about who owns you. And you need to think about glory.

You need to think about the richest truths that are found in Scripture. You need to meditate on them. And you need to dwell on them.

So what if you can't cover three chapters in that day? You set aside an hour where you're going to get in the Word. You know what? If you get stuck on one verse for the whole time, but it takes you up to glory, you're going to leave there and you're going to go out into that college community with a glow coming off your face that is better than if you knocked out three chapters. It was all mechanical.

You really didn't get anything in the heart. But you've got some glorious truth that you've grabbed hold of. That's going to carry you through that day.

That's going to be rich. That's how a Christian wants to go through college. Not living such a life where you so have justified putting God out of your life.

There's no justification for that. None whatsoever. None.

So priority, brethren. Priority, priority, priority. Anybody have anything they want to add to that? That what? Christ had the busiest life ever.

Well, Christ definitely had the most important life ever. And you notice how much time He had to go out and get by Himself on the mountaintop with His Father. And the thing is that we can tell Edwin or I can tell any of you, is God clearly desires that you return to Him.

How do I know? Well, because Jesus is saying that to the Ephesians. Return. Return.

That's what God says there in Hosea. I mean, He's giving every indication that if you seek Him, you'll find Him. I mean, we want to persuade everybody, persuade Christians, persuade Edwin here that God wants him back.

I mean, again, look at Hosea. I love this. I mean, God speaks so sternly about Ephraim throughout Hosea.

Track Ephraim through Hosea sometime. Ephraim as a tribe is what He's talking about. Ephraim as a part of Israel.

But notice what's said in v. 8. How can I give you up, O Ephraim? This is Hosea 11, v. 8. How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Adma? How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my burning anger. I will not again destroy Ephraim.

For I am God and not man, a holy one in your midst. I will not come in wrath. But notice that.

My heart recoils within me. My compassion grows warm and tender. I mean, when I go to Scripture, you know what I find? Wicked King Ahab looks to God for mercy.

And God gives it. Manasseh, probably the most wicked king of Judah. And he seeks God.

And God shows him mercy. Peter denied the Lord the way he did. He went out and wept bitterly.

And Jesus came. Jesus wanted to come. Jesus wanted to restore him.

I mean, that's the thing that we can say to Christians. Look, you've spurned God. You didn't get up and go to the door.

You've lost your first love. You've exchanged other things for His presence. Admit your guilt.

Confess your sin. Remember where you fell from. Acknowledge.

Acknowledge. And go back. And seek His face.

He wants you to. He calls you back. Mark, did you bail out when you should have gone on with the work? Yeah, but later he's restored.

Very valuable. Timothy, are you afraid? Need to stir up your gift? But God wasn't done with him. God didn't depart from him.

Corinthians, you've got all this wickedness going on among you. Yeah, but you can see in the two Ephesian letters, that apostle is speaking God-breathed words. That's the mind of God being expressed through that apostle.

What's he doing? He's calling them to himself. Calling them. That's exactly what 1 John is all about.

It's fellowship. You confess your sins. He's faithful and just to forgive.

You confess. Confess what's wrong. I mean, we can tell people, God wants you to come back.

Some people feel like, oh, well, there was this time when I really feel like the light of the Lord was there and His face was there, but now I don't think He wants anything to do with me. Yeah, but you misread God if you come to that conclusion. Because in Scripture, you find things like this.

You find, my heart recoils within me. My compassion grows warm and tender. If you could know all the things that Ephraim did, which we don't have time to go through them all right now, but wickedness, wicked rejection of God, and yet His heart grows tender within him.

Brethren, we can definitely, if you're in a place you don't want to be, well, turn. Acknowledge it. Confess it.

Turn. And seek the Lord. May your heart say, Your face then will I seek.

Make it a priority to seek Him. Because if you seek Him, you will find Him. The reason that men don't find God is because they don't seek Him.

They feign to seek Him. They say they seek Him. Men who don't find God would have us believe many things about their seeking God, but the only reason that people don't find God is because they don't truly seek Him.

They're truly seeking something else and they say they're seeking God. That's always the case. If you don't find God, it's not because you're not seeking Him.

It's because you're actually seeking something else. You're only saying. You may have even deceived yourself.

You say, what do people seek? Ah, they seek the applause of men. That's one of the big things. They seek some kind of credential, some kind of appearance before others.

They seek religion or they seek morality. Or they seek a salvation that they can have a part in. They seek all sorts of things that God isn't going to respond to.

But if men seek Him, He says if you seek Him with all your heart, He'll be found of you. Don't let that discourage you. All my heart? Well, is that really even possible? God's not saying it's impossible.

God's not saying to you that it's impossible for anybody to perfectly seek with all their heart, so what I'm really saying is nobody can ever be saved. That's not what He's saying. He's saying you will find Him when you make that your priority.

When that is a priority of your life to find God, you will find Him. Anything else? In Hosea 6, verses 1-3 it says, God let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us that He may heal us.

He has stuck us down and He will find us up. Let us know, let us press on to the Lord. He's going out as sure as the dawn.

He will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that wash us. Oh, that's great. He'll come to us like the showers.

It's like when you return... You may not think that very glamorous to stand out in a rainstorm, but that's a picture of the watering. In water there's life. In water there's green.

In water there's health. I've always liked how that verse says, His coming is sure. It's certain.

It's not just maybe so, but it's as certain as the dew and the grass on the morning or whatever. I have a question. What you said about the whole entire chapter reading thing.

I got done with these chapters. Well, I guess just setting down maybe not necessarily a chapter, but maybe a time limit or something. Right.

Right. I said lay down 60 minutes. If in that 60 minutes you only get through one verse, that's great.

You meditated on it. You profited from it. And I wouldn't expect that that would be the same every single day.

I do. Like right now as a pastor, I can pretty much establish that I want to get through this many chapters no matter how long it takes me. Sometimes I might be encroached upon by a meeting or something pressing, something I've got to do.

But usually that's not the case. Usually I can take the time that I need to get through all of them even if I get hung up somewhere. I'm not rigid.

I don't have to do that. But when I was working as an engineer, basically at a time I got up, I didn't eat breakfast. And the time it took me to shower and get dressed was this many minutes.

And I knew the time that I had to leave for work. And so I pretty much had a given, a designated. Like in those days, I think I had 40 minutes designated for Bible reading in the morning.

And then oftentimes I would stay in at lunch and read and I could give 60 minutes then. And then typically I loved to pray at night in those days. That's kind of changed now with a family and everything, but I guess I had one then.

The children went to bed early and it was very convenient in those days to pray in the evening. Not working as an engineer, I have flexibility to give myself primarily to prayer at other times of the day. But yes, we need discipline.

There's nothing wrong with being disciplined. The whole point I'm talking about though is you don't have to be so disciplined where it's like, okay, I've got 60 minutes and in that 60 minutes, I am going to read this many chapters. What you want to do is you really want to read to find God.

You want to read to know His will. You want to read to find Christ. You want to read to hear His voice.

You want to read for your own spiritual profit. And if we get hung up on one verse, we do not have to feel guilty if God came to us in that verse and we profited a bunch. Okay.

Well, Father, we thank You for this time. We thank You for the way that You have revealed Yourself in Scripture. Lord, to see the heart that You have.

Such a heart. Willing to have us come back to You if we've strayed. Willing to have us run into Your arms and to seek Your face.

Even if we've fallen into some sin, we've gone into some season of distraction. Our first love has grown cold. You would have us return.

You would have us remember and repent and return. Lord, thank You that You bear with us so long-suffering to our weaknesses. We thank You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/wTyQTplxE1w.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/busyness-leads-to-god-hiding-himself-ask-pastor-tim/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**