

Who Seeks after God?

O God, you are my God; early will I seek you— my soul thirsts for you, my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water; to see your power and your glory, so as I have seen you in the sanctuary. (Psalms 63:1, 2)

Do carnal, unregenerate men know anything of these holy longings and spiritual breathings after an invisible God, or after a manifestation of the blood and love of Christ? Depend upon this, that no unregenerated man ever longed truly and really for God. He might desire to have his sins pardoned, under the convictions and stings of his natural conscience; he might even wish to go to heaven that he might escape hell; but he never desired God for what he is in himself. He is too pure and holy, too great and glorious a Being for a natural heart to love, or a carnal mind to desire. But every unregenerate sinner says unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of your ways." (Job 21:14.)

There must be a new nature raised up in the soul, a new heart and a new spirit, before God can be desired for his own sake. If there are in your soul breathings similar, if not so deep, you have so far marks and evidences that God is your God, though you may not be able, in the sweet approbation of faith, to say with unfaltering lips, "O God, you are my God!" I fully grant were you able to say this, it would put more life into your longing, more earnestness into your seeking, and more power into your wrestling; for it is this appropriating faith which holds the Lord so firmly in the arms of wrestling prayer. But though you cannot, from various internal hindrances, rise up into the sweet appropriation of faith, yet, as having these longings, seekings, and thirstings, you have so far an indubitable, because scriptural, evidence that God has not left you devoid of a work of grace upon your heart. I am very sure that if a man knows nothing of the power of God in his soul he can know nothing of true religion or vital godliness.

— J.C. Philpot