



GRACE MESSENGER

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Note from the Editors:

Newsletter Update

This is the last newsletter you will receive if you have not re-subscribed yet!

If you would like to continue receiving this, you must re-subscribe by entering your name and email address in the link below. Thank you to those who have already done this, you do not need to do anything further to keep receiving the newsletter.

Dr. Stone is offering you a free mp3 download from his 1 John series. We encourage each of you to listen to this free MP3:

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If you are not continuing with us our prayer for you is that you experience Jesus Christ in your relationships. Experiencing the love of God in intimate personal relationships has changed the world in the past and it can change the world again.

SEEKING BUT NOT SEEKING : Finding God by the grace of God

There is an amazing paradox that is largely unknown by most Christians in the seeking of God by the believer. Jesus indicates this mystery of finding God when He said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. . . And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: *For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* (Luke 10:21, 23-24) There is something definitely mysterious in the eyes of Israel which see not and the ears which hear not. They perceived themselves to be as a nation the one, true seeker of God. Paul writes, *But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and you need not that any man should teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.* (1 John 2:27)

Table of Contents

Newsletter Update	1
Seeking but not seeking	1
Christian Ministries	4
Contact Information	4

Quick Links

- [WAY of CHRIST](http://www.wayofchrist.org)
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- [RENEW THE NEWSLETTER](#)
- [Meet Dr. Stone](#)
- [Free CD Offer](#)
- [WEBINAR INFO.](#)
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- [What is Christianity?](#)
- [Summary of All Studies](#)
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Seeking but not seeking *(continued)*

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and rearest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness. (Rom. 2:17-19) However, what they perceived was not how God saw them: “...All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. 10:21). They were hearing, but they were hearing amiss and even obstinate in their faulty hearing. In fact, Paul adds, “... *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for. . .*” (Rom. 11:7). They actively sought God, but somehow in their seeking they did not find him. They misunderstood the unique Christian principle that the seeking of God must be by the grace of God.

The question has been raised, “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection” (Job 11:7). Paul, in his Corinthian letter raises the same query “*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. . .*” (1 Cor. 1:20,21). One of the foundational truths of Christianity is that the wisdom of this world is not capable of finding out God regardless of how hard the mind of man may seek, it is impossible for the wisdom of man to cross the great impasse into the mind of God. In fact, Paul records the statement of God to Moses, “. . . *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*” (Rom.

9:15,16). The secret of the Christian finding God lies not in the determination and effort of man, but rather it rests in the mercy of God.

If man cannot find out God by his own seeking and searching, then any knowledge of God that is acquired by man has to come from God’s own revelation of Himself. If God chose never to reveal Himself, man could never come to know God or anything concerning God (1 Cor. 2:10-16). For man to acquire any knowledge of God, God has to be the giver of that knowledge. In other words, man learns of God as he encounters God through the revelation of God.

God has revealed Himself in a self-opening out of His being. This is the statement of John when he wrote, “*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life*” (1 John 5:20). If it had not been for the coming of Jesus Christ, the ultimate revelation of God, mankind could never have come to “*know him that is the true God.*” Man cannot find out God by his searching. Thanks be to God, God chooses to reveal Himself by His grace.

Again, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul gives additional insight into this great principle of the uniqueness of Christianity. Speaking concerning the hidden wisdom of God (1 Cor. 2:7), Paul writes, “. . . *God hath revealed [it] unto us by his Spirit. . .*” (1 Cor 2:10). The word **revealed** literally means “a drawing back of the veil.” That which had been concealed from man by a veil which could not be penetrated by man’s wisdom is now revealed or made known to those who respond

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to the revelation. The belief in the existence of God and His revelation are acts of response to God’s initiative. True, man receives the revelation of God as he encounters or experiences God, but the source of truth is not the experience of man but the revelation of God.

Revelation presupposes the existence of God and that God has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind. All that man has or knows of God is a response to that revelation.

Paul gives an additional dynamic statement concerning this principle of finding God. He records a statement of Isaiah who is quoting God, “. . . *I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me*” (Rom. 10:20). This seemingly difficult statement lies at the very heart of understanding the unique Christian approach to God. Over against this statement is the proclamation of Jesus: “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened*” (Matt. 7:7,8). These two seemingly contradictory statements (God is found by them that did not seek him and Jesus’ admonition to seek and it shall be found) can be understood by recognizing that obviously there is a way to seek God that is not seeking Him.

(continued on page 3)

Seeking but not seeking *(conclusion)*

Paul seems to indicate that man's effort to seek God by his own study, skills, or acts of wisdom may actually hinder the process of finding God. He writes, "*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect*" (1 Cor. 1:17). His own preaching was ". . . *not with enticing words of man's wisdom. . . that. . . faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*" (1 Cor. 2:4,5). If man goes down in acts of humility, contrition, weakness, or foolishness, then God has the opportunity to reveal Himself to man.

Man's seeking God is not achieved by his climbing the ladder of his own skill, will, or determination, but rather by his coming to the realization that he stands naked before God, doomed to ignorance in the things of God unless God Himself intervenes into his helplessness. Paul writes, *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* (1 Cor. 1:27-31).

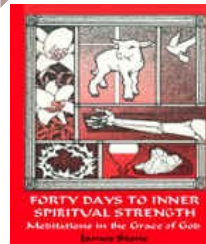
God is found not so much in the upward seeking, but in the downward responding. The unique distinctiveness of finding God is that it occurs ultimately by the seeker's responding to that which God has initiated.

Jesus, the revelation of God, is always revealed by the believer's responding to the revelation and not by the believer's seeking the revelation. Jesus Himself said, ". . . *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter the Spirit of truth. . . he shall teach you all things. . .*" (John 14:16-26) and ". . . *he shall testify of me*" (John 15:26). An atmosphere of humble openness to the grace of God that will allow the Holy Spirit freedom to reveal the ways of God is the pathway to finding God. As mysterious as it may sound, there is a way of seeking God that is not seeking Him. It is finding God through the grace of God and not through the works of man's mind.

THOUGHT AND PRAYER FOR TODAY

Heavenly Father, I now know that I cannot understand your ways unless you reveal them to me. I confess that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Jesus and they are not in my ingenuity. I pray you will enlighten my eyes that I may see Jesus as never before. Bring me face to face with your Son today that I may learn the ways of life.

This article has been taken from the book, Forty Days to Inner Spiritual Strength, Meditation Six, by Dr. Stone.



Forty Days to Inner Spiritual Strength: Meditations in the Grace of God by Dr. James Stone

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." (Eph. 3:14-16)

Why forty days?

Moses was in the midst of the cloud for forty days receiving new direction for the people of God.

When the word of the Lord came to Jonah to go to Nineveh, he preached a simple message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

In the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, he was led of the Spirit into the wilderness. For forty days he successfully conquered those temptations and came out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit.

Jesus had been crucified, buried, and raised again to life. He spoke of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Putting the final emphasis upon his earthly journey, he gathered together his followers. Forty days after his death and resurrection, he was taken up to dwell at the right hand of his Father.

Forty days seems to be a set time for the process of trying the character or abilities of a person or of a people in a certain role or task. It was a time where a series of events occurred intended to establish the quality, performance or reliability of those being tested. It was a time where the participant was molded into what he was to become.

Forty Days to Inner Spiritual Strength has been developed to assist you in becoming what you were intended to be. It must be stated from the beginning that the process of being molded into the image of Jesus Christ is a work of the Holy Spirit. Specifically, the Spirit is the means by which the revelation of Jesus Christ occurs in your life. It is the interplay of the Word of God and the Spirit of God that develops spiritual strength in those who hunger for God. **Forty Days to Inner Spiritual Strength** can provide an opportunity for you to be molded by the Holy Spirit.

Listen to chapter one on mp3.

Order this book by audio or print copy.

www.wayofchrist.org/meditations-mp3-download.asp



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The good news of God is the coming of Jesus into this world. It is His life, His teaching, his death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His coming into the life of the believer.

Ultimately, the good news is that man can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a personal relationship with God Himself.

Christian Ministries exists solely to help all people experience the fullness of the manifestation of Christ in their life.

Weekly CD:

Barry and Jennifer with their children, Kaitlyn Grace & Gabriel James



Christian Ministries offers a **Weekly CD** of Bible study for those who desire to participate.

Contact Barry Shepherd
barrysheperd@wayofchrist.org

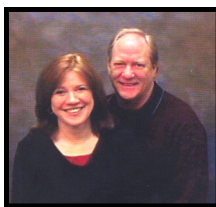
We encourage you to share these CD's with others in your community to increase discussion of what the Lord is revealing in your lives.

Way of Christ Webinar Information:

When do the on-line live sessions take place? (Time is in Eastern Standard Time)

- Tuesday - 10:00 P.M. (EST)
- Wednesday - 11:00 A.M. (EST)
- Wednesday - 8:00 P.M. (EST)
- Thursday - 8:00 P.M. (EST) *This is an open discussion night.*

Interested in joining us, or seeing what they are all about? Dr. Stone will provide your first 2 sessions free!



Meet the Editors: Dale and Joy Simpson

Our prayer for you is that the life of the Spirit would enable you to hear the mystery of the Word in this newsletter. We believe the Lord is revealing how the gospel of Jesus Christ is setting us free from ourselves.



Please sent all correspondence from International Pastors or Missionaries to this email address:
nyagali@gmail.com

God bless you today! Dale and Joy Simpson

Host (or Support) a Live Home Bible Study from ANYWHERE in the World!

www.wayofchrist.org/bible-study-conference.asp

From anywhere in the world invite a few friends over for a Bible Study and Dr. Stone will join you live through the Internet. All you need is a computer, a bible, and a few friends, family or neighbors. It would be helpful if you had a webcam and microphone on your computer in order to interact live with Dr. Stone and the brothers and sisters, but not essential.



Please seek the Lord if you would like to help sponsor a group or an individual to have access to this opportunity. For more general information on the new web conference:

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