

What are you seeking? - a one-off study for small groups

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Pythagoras (580-500 BC) was best known for his theorem in geometry, but was also a great mathematician and philosopher of his time. He suggested that everyone is seeking one of three things: they are seeking knowledge (Pythagoras would have put himself in that category), fame or gain. Think about that! The world hasn't changed much, has it?



What this ancient Greek philosopher omitted from his list was any mention of the spiritual: those seeking after God. Was he wrong, therefore? The writer of Romans sums up what Psalms 14 & 53 state: 'There is ... no-one who seeks God' (Rom 3:10-12). This seems a harsh judgment until we realise that it does not come naturally to mankind to seek God because it is natural for us to seek significance in our lives. What difference have we made? How will we be remembered? What have we done or achieved? Seeking God has been viewed as leading to insignificance, and reaching the end of life without having done anything by which people will remember us. Perhaps this idea is summed up in the words of John the Baptist: "He must become greater, I must become less" (Jn3:30): not everyone's goal! Discuss this.

Read Psalm 63

David was a man who experienced great ups and downs in his life. Although in a favoured position he knew persecution, personal failure etc. But he seemed to be able to seek and find God in whatever circumstances he was to be found. Let's look in turn at some of the things listed in this Psalm which give a clue to his relationship with God:

- Knowing the power and glory of God (v2) – the Hebrew for glory, *kabod*, is a word which implies weight. David knew that by comparison the glory of man, whatever his social status, was weightless (Ps 62:9). But this idea of God's glory being a weighty matter is often missing today. Christians are forced to compete with the sophistication of the media but the shallowness of entertainment on offer for the time and attention of non-Christians. We ourselves may be treating the things of God lightly. David knew better, and his glimpse of the power and glory of God was fundamental to his relationship with the Lord. So also was this glory glimpsed by Abraham (Acts 7:2-3), and sought by Moses (Ex 33:14,18,21-23; 34:5-8). Do we know the power and glory of God in its full weight?
- Saying it out loud (v3) – David's own lips were committed to glorifying God? Are ours? Are we consistent in our praise to God among his people, however we feel? Do our lips give testimony to the redeeming power of Jesus among non-Christians? Among other things it will strengthen our own faith when we do so (Rom 10:9-10).
- Developing a quiet time habit (vv6-8) – David gave himself space to communicate with God and to worship him privately. Any time is a good time, of course, and here David thinks during a sleepless night of God's help to him. For David, however the chosen time was typically the morning: this was when he considered God's word and 'took instructions' for the day (Ps 143:8) and the occasion also when he spent time in prayer to God (Ps 5:3). When is a good time for members of the group?
- Deciding that he WILL rejoice in God (v11). David knew for sure of God's faithfulness (Ps 86:15). When the relationship was under strain it was David who had wandered, not God who had turned his back on him. David knew this. Sometimes we feel less joyful, yet need

to restate the fundamental joy of our salvation in an attitude of thanks: we need to RE-JOY-CE!