

The Pursuit of God
by **A.W. Tozer**

Discussion Guide



Preface

Memory Verse: Psalm 42:1–2

1. In what one thing does Tozer find hope within Christianity (ix)?
2. Consider Tozer's illustration of the altar on page ix. What types of things might be represented by the . . .
 - . . . alter?
 - . . . sacrifice?
 - . . . fire?
3. Consider the quotation from John Wesley on page x. Do you agree with his assigning of values to "right opinion" and "right temper"? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think people are content to replace "the art of worship" with a "program" (x)?
5. Tozer asserts, "the Bible is not an end in itself" (xi). What then is the purpose of the Bible? How would this change the way you study the Bible?

Chapter 1

Following Hard After God

Memory Verse: Psalm 63:8

1. How does Tozer define “prevenient grace”? Why is prevenient grace so important (13)?
2. Explain as best you can the paradox of divine upholding and man’s necessity of pursuing after God (13–14).
3. What are the differences between mechanical religion and genuine religion (14–15)?
4. God is a Person and we are created in His image. How do these two facts impact our understanding of the “heart of New Testament religion” (15)?
5. What does Tozer mean when he says, “To have found God and still to pursue Him is the soul’s paradox of love” (16)?
6. Tozer says that when holy men and women of old found God “the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking.” He then gives three examples of believers who sought long after God and discovered the sweetness of finding Him. Discuss how this was the case in each of these men’s lives: Moses, David, and Paul (16–17).
7. Discuss the habit in our day to leave “seeking God” to professional teachers and preachers. In what ways have many surrendered their responsibility to seek God themselves (17)?
8. Explain what Tozer means by “complexity” verses “simplicity” in seeking God. What does he mean by a “God-and” religion (18–19)?
9. The quotation, “We can well afford to make God our All, to concentrate, to sacrifice the many for the One,” is reminiscent of the parable of the Pearl of Great Price (19). Read Matthew 13:45–46. How would this approach to God impact your life?

Chapter 2

The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:3

1. What was God's purpose in creating the "things" of this world (21)?
2. How has the fall corrupted the place of "things" in the life of men and women (21)?
3. Tozer writes, "There is within the human heart a tough fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess" (22). How do we see this "root" express itself in today's culture, advertising, heroes, and entertainment?
4. In Matthew 16:24–25, Jesus contrasts the self-life of pursuing possessions with the true life of pursuing God alone. How should this truth help us to see the blessing of being "poor in spirit" (22–23)?
5. How can "things" control our lives even if we don't have much?
6. How does the story of Abraham and Isaac illustrate the truth of freedom from "things" (23–25)?
7. Isaac was the hardest thing that Abraham could have placed on that altar. What in your life would be the hardest thing to place on the altar for the Lord?
8. Do you fear surrendering your possessions or talents to the Lord because of what He may do to them? Why is this fear irrational (26)?
9. How should we approach the "holy business" of removing the idols of things from our life (27)?

Chapter 3

Removing the Veil

Memory Verse: Hebrews 10:19

1. What do you think Augustine meant when he said, “Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee” (29)? How can this be seen in the world today? How can this be a basis of sharing the gospel?
2. What is the chief end of man (30)?
3. How does the “Presence” of God Tozer is describing differ from the truth of God’s omnipresence, that He exists everywhere at all times (30–31)?
4. Describe how the Old Testament tabernacle illustrates the “interior journey of the soul from the wilds of sin into the enjoyed Presence of God” (31).
5. What is the central fact of Christianity? What is at the heart of the Christian message (32)?
6. Discuss what Tozer means when he writes, “The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and the Church is famishing for want of His Presence” (33). How does this differ from what many put forward as the greatest problems of our world and the greatest problems of the Church?
7. List and discuss some of the attributes of God mentioned on pages 33–34.
8. After reading Faber’s poetic worship of the Triune God on pages 34–36, discuss thoughts of God that cause worship of Him to burn within your heart.
9. Discuss Tozer’s distinction between a scribe and a prophet (36–37).
10. How does Tozer describe the veil of the self-life that divides our heart from God (37–39)? What specific sins does he accuse of building this veil (38)?
11. What is the process of removing this veil (39–40)? Is the process pleasant? What is the result?

Chapter 4

Apprehending God

Memory Verse: Psalm 34:8

1. Tozer gives three insufficient ways of understanding God—an inference, hearsay, and an ideal (41). Why are these understandings sub-Christian? How do they express themselves even among the unsaved?
2. How should the fact that “a loving Personality dominates the Bible” (42) affect the way we read the Scriptures?
3. Tozer gives examples of several verses where experiential verbs—taste, see, smell, hear—are used to describe a believer’s relationship to God (42). What are some other verses that make it clear that God intends for us to relate to Him as a Person?
4. Why must salvation be the first step if a person is truly to apprehend God (43)?
5. Discuss the implications of the statement “a spiritual kingdom lies all about us, enclosing us, embracing us, altogether within reach of our inner selves, waiting for us to recognize it” (43).
6. How does Tozer define *reality* (43–44)?
7. If, as Tozer says, “the Christian is too sincere to play with ideas for their own sake,” how should we approach the truths we learn (44–45)?
8. What does it mean to say that God is the great Reality (45)?
9. What is the difference between faith and imagination? How does this help us define the word *reckon* (46)?
10. How does the visible reality of this world impact our ability to perceive the greater spiritual reality all around us? How can we seek to overcome this distraction (46–48)?

Chapter 5

The Universal Presence

Memory Verse: Psalm 139:7

1. The universal presence of God is not pantheism. What is the definition of *pantheism* (49)? What is its root error (50)?
2. What is the proper way of viewing God's connection with His creation (50)?
3. What does it mean to say that God is "the uncaused Cause of matter, mind, and law" (50)? How does this affect your understanding of creation and the material world?
4. Would you agree or disagree with the following statement: Man's problem is not that he is far from God but that he fails to recognize God's presence (50–52)? Why?
5. When we pray that God would "draw us nearer," what are we actually praying for (53)?
6. What does Tozer see as the shared quality of the great saints of Scripture and Christian history (53–54)?
7. While recognizing the great importance of God working in us, Tozer warns "against a too-great preoccupation with the thought." Discuss our response and responsibility in relationship to the divine and human element of "receptivity"? How can we cultivate this gift (54–55)?
8. What is the result of applying "machine-age methods to our relationship with God" (55)?
9. Discuss the summary statement, "The Universal Presence is a fact. God is here. The whole universe is alive with His life" (56).
10. How does Tozer define *pursing God* (57)?

Chapter 6

The Speaking Voice

Memory Verse: John 1:1

1. What does Christ having the title, the Word, tell us about the nature of God (59)?
2. How did God create all things? How does He continue to reveal Himself through what He has created (59–60)?
3. What is the connection between “the speaking Voice” and the written Word (60–61)?
4. What did the ancient Hebrews call “this universal Voice of God” (62)? How should this impact our view of true wisdom’s nature?
5. Tozer says, “The tragedy is that our eternal welfare depends upon our hearing, and we have trained our ears not to hear” (62)? What are some ways we train our ears not to hear?
6. What are the differing approaches to the Divine Voice by a scientist verses a worshipper (62–63)?
7. Why can we say that the “Voice of God is a friendly Voice” (64)?
8. When we are listening to God’s Voice, why is it important to be still? To be alone? To wait with the Bible open before us (64–65)?
9. What does Tozer mean when he says of the Bible that “it is not only a book which was once spoken, but a book which is now speaking” (66).
10. What are some things that distract you from the Voice of God (66)?

Chapter 7

The Gaze of the Soul

Memory Verse: Hebrews 12:2

1. Tozer asserts that a simple reading of the Bible leads to the conclusion: “Faith is all-important in the life of the soul” (67–68). Give some verses or passages that support this conclusion.
2. The Bible only defines faith functionally—what it does, not what it is. However, the Bible does make clear two sources of faith. What are they (69)?
3. Based on Numbers 21 and John 3, what two words relating to faith are synonymous (69–70)?
4. Discuss the meaning and implication of the following quotations: “faith is the gaze of a soul upon a saving God” (70) and “believing...is directing the heart’s attention to Jesus” (71).
5. Why is faith the “least self-regarding of the virtues” (71)?
6. Why is the merit (value) of faith always to the one toward whom that faith is directed (72)?
7. By making faith the most important part of the Christian life, God places Christian living within all our grasps. Tozer gives four ways that faith is accessible to everyone: believing is simple; believing can be done at any time; believing can be done anywhere; and believing can be done by men and women of any calling (74–75). Discuss the wisdom and goodness of God in this.
8. What are some “means of grace” that can help us in our devotion (75)?
9. How does the illustration of one hundred pianos being tuned to the same fork picture the connection between private and corporate religion (75–76)?

Chapter 8

Restoring the Creator-Creature Relationship

Memory Verse: Psalm 57:5

1. What does Tozer see as the ultimate cause of all human miseries (77)? What is the solution?
2. God is to be the “fixed center” of everything else in life, but we cause ourselves much difficulty by trying to modify God to our image rather than adjusting our lives to Him (78–79). What are some ways you have seen this truth in your own life?
3. What is the “only thinkable relation” between mankind and God (79)?
4. As we exalt God and bring our lives into submission to Him, we become out of step with the ways of the world around us. Discuss some of the “new” things we will find in our life (79–80). Discuss how this will affect our relation to the world (80).
5. Discuss the meaning and implication of the phrase, “be thou exalted” (80). What parts of your life could you mark as areas where God is exalted? What areas do not exalt God?
6. Can any man be his own master? What are our only choices concerning whom we will serve (81)?
7. What is the “original habitat” of our heart (81)?
8. How does God respond to those that seek to exalt Him? Does God demand that we exalt Him perfectly? Give some examples of those who have exalted God imperfectly but were still used for His glory (81–82).
9. What is at the “back of religious self-righteousness and empty worship (83)?
10. What does Tozer mean when he says he fears that he “may convince the mind before God can win the heart” (83)?
11. In the closing prayer, Tozer prays that God would be exalted over ten things. What are they (84)? Which of these things is the greatest struggle for you?

Chapter 9

Meekness and Rest

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:5

1. The last paragraph on page 85 contrasts the Beatitudes with the “virtues” of this world. Do you think Tozer makes a fair assessment of mankind’s attitude toward these things? Give some evidences to support your answer.
2. Tozer mentions two things that mankind uses to try and moderate our sinful nature—culture and education. How effective are these attempts (86)?
3. What two things does Tozer contrast as the emotional disposition of all people (86–87)?
4. What is the nature of mankind’s burden, and how does it manifest itself (87)?
5. Our burden has three main elements—pride (87–88), pretense (88–89), and artificiality (89–90). How would you define each of these burdens? Do you see them evidenced in any areas of your life?
6. What is the biblical view of “self” (88)?
7. In what settings or activities do you find yourself most tempted to “put the best foot forward and hide from the world [your] inward poverty” (88)?
8. In what aspects of your life or abilities do you most fear being exposed as less impressive than others suppose you to be?
9. How does Tozer define the “rest of meekness” (90)?

Chapter 10

The Sacrament of Living

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:31

1. What common “hindrance to peace” is addressed in this chapter (91)?
2. What aspect of our Christian life makes it so easy to fall into the trap of living a divided life (91)?
3. Tozer says, “[Many Christians] try to walk the tightrope between two kingdoms and they find no peace in either” (92). How could this be used to explain why many Christians struggle emotionally while some unbelievers seem to live lives of ease and comfort?
4. Discuss the implications of Paul’s exhortation to “do all to the glory of God” (93). What specific areas does Paul use as illustrations in 1 Corinthians 10:31?
5. How does Christ’s incarnation—taking on of human flesh—prove that normal activities of our body can be done as acts of worship (93–94)?
6. How has the error of “the sacred-secular antitheis” shown up in our interest in “holy” places and “holy” times (96–97)? What was the purpose of the holy places in the Old Testament? How did the teachings of Jesus and Paul demonstrate a change under the New Testament?
7. Are there ways that you are moving back towards a “sacred-secular antithesis” in your life or worship?
8. What two things does Tozer not mean by his discussion of “the sacramental quality of everyday living” (98–99)?
9. Does God measure our service for Him based on our giftedness (98)? Can you think of any biblical evidence that God takes pleasure in all sacrifices to Him, regardless of size?