



Scriptures and Doctrine :: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round?

Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by yuehan, on: 2017/3/10 9:31

Is it God who seeks the individual? Or is it the individual who seeks God?

In the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-6), it is God who goes after the individual who is lost. There's also a similar theme in Ezekiel 34:11.

Yet other verses, such as Hebrews 11:6 and Jeremiah 29:13, speaks of the individual searching for God wholeheartedly, and thus finding Him. Even in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), it is the son who returns home to his father (though I'm not sure if this parable is meant to be taken so literally in this aspect).

1. What do you think? Scripture references, testimonies...
2. If you were at the pulpit, would you emphasize God seeking the individual, or the individual seeking God?

Re: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/10 10:13

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? Rom 2:4

I think this applies to your question- but not sure exactly how.

Re: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by proudpapa, on: 2017/3/10 10:35

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/3/10 10:44

I think God draws us, and pursues us even; it is up to us whether or not to pursue Him back.

At a time in my youth when I was backsliding pretty good God always always pursued me. I never felt abandoned and it was this fact that brought me back where I belonged.

I just heard this song this morning:

Your Kindness

Waiting for angry words to sear my soul
Knowing I don't deserve another chance
Suddenly the kindest words I've ever heard
Come flooding from God's heart

It's your kindness that leads us
To repentance Oh Lord
Knowing that You love us

No matter what we do
Makes us want to love You too

It's your kindness that leads us
To repentance Oh Lord
Knowing that You love us
No matter what we do
Makes us want to love You too

No excuse no one to blame
No way to hide
The eyes of God have found my failures
Found my pain
He understands my weaknesses
And knows my shame
But His heart never leaves me.

It's your kindness that leads us
To repentance Oh Lord
Knowing that You love us
No matter what we do
Makes us want to love You too

If You are for us
Who can be against us
You gave us everything
even Your only Son

It's your kindness that leads us
To repentance Oh Lord
Knowing that You love us
No matter what we do
Makes us want to love You too

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2017/3/10 11:01

Interesting question.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44

"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." John 6:65

On first reading this could seem to say God the Father arbitrarily chooses those who He draws to Jesus. However the context is Jesus speaking to the religious Jews who would not believe, because their hearts were not seeking after God anyway, therefore the Father would not draw them to accept Jesus.

I think it is both us who seek God (even if we don't understand who He is) and God who seeks us and draws those whose hearts He knows seek Him.

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;"

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:"

Acts 17:26-27

Re: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by savannah, on: 2017/3/10 11:05

It is as it has always been from the beginning;

Genesis 3

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden toward the cool of the day; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the LORD God called unto the man, and said unto him: "Where art thou?" 10 And he said: "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Re: , on: 2017/3/10 14:30

Quote: "If you were at the pulpit, would you emphasize God seeking the individual, or the individual seeking God?"
I would emphasize none of the above.

How then can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? Romans 10:14

Re: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by Jasmine, on: 2017/3/10 16:31

Actually I think it can be both. I can remember about a year and a half before I got Saved, I was having what I call "mmm experiences". There were things happening to me that didn't make sense but they gave me pause like "what was that?" but then I'd just move on until the next time and there was always a next time. Things got more intense right before I got Saved. None of it made sense until after I got Saved and looked back over the chain of events or even just the day before. That's when I could see as plain as day, God had been pursuing me. On the other hand when I got Saved one of the things I remember was having a sense of "this is it! I found it (rather Him)". There was no doubt in my mind that He was who I had been looking for. Before then I was a person who if you asked to go to church, odds are I would accept the invitation. The problem for me was I didn't "see" Him. They could be alright meetings but I didn't "see" Him until He Himself came for me and when He did, I knew it was Him. I had never been Saved before but I knew. I do believe that the timing and things that are beyond my understanding was orchestrated by the Holy Spirit because I didn't know any Scriptures or have any expectations of any kind...

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2017/3/11 19:27

Acts 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

Romans 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

They must hear with their ears, see with their eyes what God has shewed them.

It must be of God first then we can hear by the preacher what leads to salvation.

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/8/29 22:54

Unsaved people do not seek the God of the bible, if they do seek a god, its one they can work with, one that's amenable to their needs, a god that fits their designs, appreciates their skills, loves their personality, enjoys their opinions. The sinner seeks only a god that will never ever crucify him.

The God of the bible seeks just this exact kind of man. In fact the only kind of man God brings to Christ are those men and women who in their hearts admit they wanted nothing to do with Him. The God of scripture and the god of a sinners imagination are opposite ends of the universe. Now, when a sinner is seeking what he thinks is God and speaks some Christian vernacular, many Christians are fooled and the one that is really fooled is the sinner who believes on a Jesus that is the exact image of the god he imagined.

Only the God of scripture and truth calls a man to die, only a God of truth and life offers himself as a substitute and utterly abominates everything that man will attempt to offer God in the place of complete surrender and dependence upon Je

sus Christ.

So, I say as best I understand, If God didn't do the seeking first, finding and revealing of Himself, there would be nothing on the earth representative of himself. Everything would be fashioned after the corrupted heart of man.

Those who truly seek the one True God, already know him by New Birth, they seek him and find him.

Those who are under the instruction of the Spirit of God by means of conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment find the True God...and the cause of it is God's own seeking and obtaining those who will worship him in Spirit and Truth.

What God seeks for in us, He must create in us first, otherwise all God would receive is constant corruption, false worship, false relationships and false understanding of His person.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2017/8/29 23:42

I came from a Hindu faith. I had no clue of the Gospel. Also no one formally shared the Gospel with me. I started reading the Bible myself after I was influenced by a fellowship of believers. The moment I started reading the book of Gospels, I started believing in Jesus as God and his words. After few years of being born again, I asked this question to the Lord, 'how did I believe that the words of Jesus is from God?'. God answered me with this verse.

John 7-17:- If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

Deep in my heart there was a desire to do God's will, but I did not know the true God. God revealed himself to me through his word. The moment I started reading his Word, I knew it was from God.

Even as an unbeliever, I used to believe I was a sinner. I had a strong conviction of my sins. I used to repent before those Hindu Idols of my sins. God by his mercy revealed himself to me.

This verse always brings tears to my eyes.

Hosea 2-14:- Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Bring her into the wilderness
And speak kindly to her.

The word Allure means to attract someone strongly. Like how a man will try to attract a woman to be his bride. God allured me to come to him.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/8/30 1:12

Being raised in church, I was confronted by the gospel many many times though mostly I resisted it,... resisted Him. Eventually in my rebellion I was rejected by my church, not formally but casually. Becoming a teenager I began to take note of the hypocrisy of most of those in my church and the love lacking legalism of the rest. They were sincere yet I couldn't see or find Jesus in them mostly due to my own blindness, yet I had an insatiable desire for truth. So for the next 20 years I ran from God in search of truth. Spending much of that time in deep study of literature, history, science, art, music, and ultimately Buddhism and Taoism. Taoism became my obsession as it presented me with a simple yet mysterious and elusive "truth", complete with "miracles" and "immortality".

The architect of my ego constructed, out of my belief system, a very comfortable bed from which I was slow to be roused. It was perfect, or so I thought, and I was thoroughly repulsed by Christianity and mostly Christians. Though when I needed it most, in the midst of a crisis, it (my belief system) collapsed like a child's lego building under the weight of falling bricks... it was then that I remembered the God of my youth, the God of my mother and father and theirs before them. So I cried out to Him, asking if He was really real? and if so would He please show Himself to me?

Though I had briefly encountered Him in prison years before this and had been baptized and experienced the change His grace brings, I had never truly been broken, cracked and chipped but not broken and it was not till I was broken that from the depths of my heart I sought Him, I sought the truth about Truth... it was then and there that He revealed Himself to me as the Christ... as the Holy One- the God who saves. Jesus of Nazareth appeared to me as clearly as anything I'd ever beheld, even more real than I had imagined. The weight of His presence transcended everything- I was scared to even look directly at Him- just fell to the floor on my knees and worshiped,... that's all I could do- I had nothing else to offer Him. He began changing me that night, it was obvious to everyone without my saying a word. It continued for an extended period till when I would run into an old friend whom I had done drugs with they would just ask, "what happened - I mean you are a completely different person, it's definitely better but how did you..?" And His name, like honey from my lips would

d fall so softly they would just tear up and say "wow! Good for you! Just Wow!" I always asked to pray with or for them, some accepted some passed... but they all heard His name from a grateful heart and that is the testimony He gave me... His name as my God:)

So for me it's both, as there are clear scriptures that testify to both -

When I ran away, He pursued...

When I sought, He hid until the time was right...

but like sister Jasmine said, He was there all along :)

Oh great and merciful God thank you that you hide from the wise but show yourself to the children, may we all grow weary with the wisdom of this world- for in our wisdom we seek to use you and are fools, yet as children we obey you and are clay in your hands to be used by you to glorify your Son with the testimony He gives us, all we have to offer you is what you have first given us:)

Re: - posted by StirltUp (), on: 2017/8/30 2:51

Beautiful testimonies Fletcher and Sree

"He who thirsts for righteousness will be filled"

God bless,

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2017/8/30 17:29

Marvin, This statement you made, quote: " In fact the only kind of man God brings to Christ are those men and women who in their hearts admit they wanted nothing to do with Him."

This is just not supported by scripture, in fact it goes against what we read in the bible. There are many examples where we are called to seek God and also where God reveals Himself to those who are seeking to know Him. I will give just one example.....Cornelius:

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,

A DEVOUT MAN WHO FEARED GOD with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.

"Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter."

Acts 10:1-5

We see hear that Cornelius was God fearing and sought to follow the true God of Israel. Because of this God sought him, to reveal the way of salvation in Christ through Peter.

It is restated here....

So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

and said, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God.

Acts 10: 30-31.

Peter's response to this....

Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

"But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.
Acts 10:34-35

So what does Peter mean when he said the above? Is he declaring salvation by works? No, that cannot be because he then preached the gospel of remission of sins through faith in Christ to Cornelius! What I understand Peter (and scripture) to be teaching is that God looks upon those whose heart is toward him, and then reveals the way of salvation to them.

As has been well said by others here, it is BOTH us seeking God and God seeking us. This is the clear position presented in the bible. It is not one at the exclusion of the other. Otherwise we would just have to rip out the many statements that Jesus made about the need for men to 'seek'.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/8/30 18:21

The "you-know-what-ist" will say that Cornelius was only seeking God because God was already drawing him.

I don't buy it but that is what they will say. As you point out Dave, that would render meaningless the various commands to "seek."

Picture this: God commands all men to repent and seek after Him (Acts 17:30), but only those He draws first will repent and seek after him. That makes no sense whatsoever, to me at least.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/8/30 19:05

Hello Heydave: I'll do my best to answer the questions.

1. If you read the next sentence... "Those who are under the instruction of the Spirit of God by means of conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment find the True God...and the cause of it is God's own seeking and obtaining those who will worship him in Spirit and Truth".

Explanation, in keeping with my understanding of scripture, God is the author of our faith, therefore if we express faith toward God as Cornelius did, that was due to God's working in his heart whereby his first expressions were prayer and alms. Yet, he was not converted and knowledgeable of Jesus Christ, therefore Peter shares the gospel with him.

I look past the actions of the man to the God who calls men to himself. As you know we are not born of God according to our own will but according to God himself who saves his elect.

The conversion of Cornelius is precious in that we see God's working in an unconverted man...God taking notice of his prayers and alms, but we also know that God's taking notice is (obviously) God already noticed Cornelius and moved upon his heart to pray and give. When Saul was praying and no doubt giving alms as a Pharisee, Saul's intentions were to hurt the Church, Cornelius to help the Church. Both of them in their unsaved state needed the gospel and the revelation of Jesus Christ.

You quoted "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.
Acts 10:34-35

We do know God accepts them because God has been working in them before their conversion. We do not allow ourselves to circumvent the necessary salvation through Christ because on the surface this statement appears to validate "a come without Christ, bring your good works and righteousness and you are accepted". But we also know that Peter understood this, therefore he would not have us take that as his meaning.

What was Peter getting at? The brand new idea that Gentiles were now able to come to salvation, that this Cornelius is a first fruit of that, in this case a notable Gentile who was known for his good works.

What we are seeing in this text is a brand new thing in the world, salvation come to the pagans, heathens, idol worshippers going beyond the wildest dreams of the Jews at that time.

I do not treat this text as a special case scenario validating the seeking gentiles as "not needing or able to come to Christ on their own without the convicting work of the Spirit of God".

So, in conclusion I do not see this text as anything but the conversion of a Gentile (notable one) who came to Christ at the offer of the gospel. But I don't see people asking the question..."wow, so easy, so fast, not big deal just go ahead and believe upon a crucified Jew who was rejected by the Jewish leadership, crucified by the Romans and rejected by the public". All that, with no historical perspective like we have, no bible, no full blown Church organization and by the way no g

entiles in the fellowship.

For all that, I absolutely abide by God's complete working in the hearts of men before they are saved and the absolute necessity of that work otherwise Cornelius would have simply stayed a Roman and died in his sin.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2017/8/31 4:01

Here's another good example...

The Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. He was reading the bible and not understanding, but seeking to, so God sent His messenger to him.

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

Acts 17.

We need let the scriptures speak for themselves and not try and explain how they can fit into a particular theological theory.

Re: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by savannah, on: 2017/8/31 13:11

I thought Genesis 3 would put this to rest. But I forgot how stubborn we all are. Let's try again,

8And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

Are all men born sons of Adam? Is Eve the mother of all living? Have men's nature's changed?

Thanks be to God, for I was dead and He resurrected me, I was born of the flesh but He birthed me of His Spirit into His family, I was part of the fallen creation but He made me a new creation in Christ!

Give thanks with a grateful heart!

Stop the proud thought that I sought...

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/8/31 14:26

Adam and Eve did hide from the Lord it is true. God had His reasons for coming after them like He did.

But who is to say that Adam would not have presented himself in due course? We can't know that obviously. But this episode, to me at least, cannot support the proposition that a man will never seek after God.

If a man is unable to seek after God without God first drawing him, then it is madness for God to command that He do so. Unless of course you believe that God only commands those he first draws. The Mad Hatter would get a kick out of that one.

Re: , on: 2017/8/31 16:28

Fletcher and Sree,

What encouraging testimonies! Thank you for sharing them.

Romans 10:20 But Isaiah is very bold and says:

â€œI was found by those who did not seek Me;
I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/8/31 19:00

Heydave: Thanks for the response. I know that after your 1200 posts you've come to recognize no one posts anything that doesn't already have a metanarrative attached to it. Everyone has a theology whether its a developed Reformed, Charismatic, Evangelical or other; but each person who is a good student of scripture attempts to place scripture in front of their brothers and sister after a learned manner and according to what they believe to be true. You may have read my intro and know I am reformed so its a given I will explain things as I understand them from a reformed viewpoint. This is a good thing.

There are plenty who argue "I don't learn from men" and you know as soon as they say it they have disqualified themselves from an audience. Why? Because they are men so in order for me to apply such reasoning I must immediately reject anything he says. But this is silly as well as unbiblical. We are able to edify, teach and instruct one another in righteousness. I am attempting to do that.

You see, when you have a specific theology (and people know it) its easy to be dismissive as if "my theology is steering me wrong" and in all candor that can be true. But its not true simply because someone asserts that theology is false and it can be dangerous as well thinking because they are of such-and-such theology they have nothing to contribute to you or me...and that in itself speaks more to our own prejudice rather than exhibiting spiritual wisdom and maturity.

What I would like you to point out is any error I made in my claims regarding the Acts text you quoted to me or any other error specifically where if I am wrong I have a chance to review it and give your viewpoint a fair hearing. Otherwise we literally just shoot past each other; I believe this would be a dis-service to Jesus who wants us to learn from one another and a poor example to the other readers who are lurking in the back.

So, please engage me...I'm not here merely to create typing lessons for myself. :)

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/8/31 19:18

Hi Todd: Hey in response to your thoughts on commands that cannot be done...and that not making sense. On the surface it does not make sense because when we think after the manner of man to man responsibility we speak a word to another with a human history attached, this in turn gives validation to our assumption "he can do what I tell him".

God on the other hand is not speaking man to man, asking man to do unto God just what human nature can achieve. In fact I don't see how God would ever want what man by his nature can achieve.

I Think one example would be "love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself". So, some say it must be achievable if it is commanded of us. But we who have walked with God for very long know full well, that little word "all" prevents us from describing our Christian history as a complete fulfillment of that command. So, in reality God didn't get past the first commandment and men cannot do it.

So, we need help, no...more than help we need Christ living in us the hope of Glory.

I think you can see where I am going with this. Take any sermon on the "hot list" on sermonindex homepage and you will hear this same reiteration over and again "God does not want man's best effort he wants the life of God by the power of the spirit to manifest in love and action toward God for God's own glory and for love to him.

So, I don't see God asking man what God will not do in him and through him, what I see is an assumption that man can do for God on his own what God requires. I share good company when I say God will simply reject it.

I hope you see where I'm coming from.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/8/31 20:14

Marvin-

I appreciate your response- not sure I understand 100% what you are saying but I do appreciate it.

Re: In Tenderness He Sought Me - posted by savannah, on: 2017/8/31 21:01

Todd,

Please consider this;

"Adam and Eve did hide from the Lord it is true. God had His reasons for coming after them like He did."

God sought them! Or, as you wrote, "...had His reasons for coming after them."

"But who is to say that Adam would not have presented himself in due course? We can't know that obviously."

Why go with what we can't know, when we have 'it is written'. Is that not enough? Why conjecture?

"But this episode, to me at least, cannot support the proposition that a man will never seek after God."

Again, 'it is written', there in Genesis in plain sight and in plain language. God has given us this account for good reason. It's a fundamental truth which introduces God's Gospel of Grace.

And,

"as it is written,

â€œTHERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.â€œ
Romans 3:10-12

Psalms 14:1-3 The fool has said in his heart, â€œThere is no God.â€œ

â€œThey are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds;
There is no one who does good.

â€œThe LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men,
To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.

â€œThey have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt;
There is no one who does good, not even one.

"If a man is unable to seek after God without God first drawing him, then it is madness for God to command that He do so. Unless of course you believe that God only commands those he first draws. The Mad Hatter would get a kick out of that one."

God commands the impossible and then He gives men the grace and the strength to do what He commands.

John 11:43,44

And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, â€œLazarus, come forth.â€œ He who had died came

forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

As physical resurrection is miraculous, spiritual resurrection equally is.

Matthew chapter 19

"Then who can be saved?" 26 And looking upon them Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

The plain language of God Himself doesn't even convince many men!

"In Tenderness He Sought Me"

written in 1894 by W. Spencer Walton

Verse 1

In tenderness He sought me
Weary and sick with sin
And on His shoulders brought me
Back to His fold again
While angels in His presence sang, until the courts of heaven rang

Chorus

O "oh the love that sought me!
O "oh the blood that bought me!
Oh the grace that brought me to the fold of God
Grace that brought me to the fold of God

Verse 2

He died for me while I was sinning..
Needy and poor and blind
He whispered to assure me
"I've found thee; thou art Mine"
I never heard a sweeter voice, it made my aching heart rejoice

Verse 3

Upon His grace I'll daily ponder
and sing anew His praise
With all adoring wonder,
His blessings I retrace.
It seems as if eternal days, are far too short to sing His praise.

Verse 4

To You I give my life in praise
Until in peaceful grave
When I will rise with all the saints
On that eternal day
When He will call us to His side, to be with Him, His spotless bride

Stop the proud thought, of "I sought..."

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/8/31 21:04

Todd, brother if you got anything out of that, your pretty good. I am at work, I write when on break I have to make it fast.. and I think way toooooo fast. My thoughts were not clear even after I re-read it. I'll try again at a better time when I have no excuse for poorly explained theology.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2017/9/1 6:18

This appears to be getting into a debate around Arm/Cal and there have been to many of those on here over the years, to no benefit.

Despite the theories of the 'mechanics' behind how someone comes to salvation, the facts remain that God in scripture calls ALL to seek Him and ALL to come to repentance. He also seeks and calls men to repentance and it is also true that "No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him". As I said before it is not one at the expense of the other, but both are true.

It is also NOT true that God ONLY seeks those who have no interest in knowing Him. He may seek these as well, but more often we see the case that God seeks those who are already seeking Him. I have given some examples already. Consider also Paul the Apostle, who was zealous for God (but without knowledge). God called him, but you cannot say he had no interest in the knowing God before his Damascus Road conversion, it was just misplaced and ignorance.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Iss55:6-7

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him." 2 Cron 16:9

Who is the LORD searching for here? Those who are wicked and incapable of desiring God? No! it is those who are loyal to Him.

There is a complete over emphasis on what is called 'Total depravity'. It is true that no one can save themselves, but it is absolutely false to say no one has any ability to want to seek after God and His righteousness. Yes in that process we come to an end of ourselves, knowing we have nothing to offer God, but that is when He comes to us and enables us by His grace to repent and believe. But absolutely we can desire Him, even if we cannot obtain by our own efforts.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/9/1 7:22

Indeed- don't want another debate on Cal/Arm.

The implications of God only choosing some to respond to Him are too horrible to debate about.

Re: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by mguldner (), on: 2017/9/1 9:02

I believe that God and man's relationship is far more complicated than theological debate. Skimming through this thread I have seen a lot of random verses quoted but those verses don't really seem in their context. I would warn against trying to support one or the other using this method of exegesis. God no doubt pursued me, but I believe that WE must respond to the pursuit of God's spirit. The very nature of God is in the world around us and His awesome power is displayed for all to see. If I were in the pulpit I would emphasize the individual responding to the Love that God has already displayed to us.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/9/1 9:36

Agreed Matthew.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/9/1 16:37

Heydave: I probably didn't explain myself well. I'll do it again. This time more directly.

The idea no calvy-armin debates is impossible if you consider every Arminian will argue doctrine, revelation, man's responsibility from his Arminian/evangelical/Pentecostal/Baptist theology. Its just plain impossible unless of course we all debate contrary to the doctrine we hold and allow ourselves to be blown around by whatever personality is most favorable and then take his/her side.

So, what I am saying is, since I am reformed I am going to offer a theological explanation in my own terms and thinking in relation to the scripture I read and know.

If that theological construct is simply dismissed outright then I have literally nothing to add and of course, the others have nothing to add since the same argument can be made that they are just "feeding a dead debate" and we should avoid it.

I realize the moderators don't want a calvy-armin debate...ok but they should also know any disagreements will normally form because of those two opposing viewpoints. So, in short, it really impossible to avoid. The best you can do is act civilly in discussing a reformed view versus a non-reformed view or cessationist versus continuationist view. Either way, the theology present in our minds and hearts forbids us to express other than what we know and believe.

If we cannot allow that, or you and others will not allow that, just say so up front and I'll not respond.

Some folks will read this and think "he just wants to argue calvy-armin". I say to those people, you're dead wrong, I am saying my theology dictates a certain response and if you disagree one way to do it is to vilify it by associating me with some heated debate...then walk on eggshells to get past it without really examining the scripture on the subject at hand. In short, we talk past each other.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/9/1 18:19

You are right Marvin. I don't mind debating but in the past- here at least- the debates have not really led anywhere. In other words, no one ever changes their mind.

That being said, I believe discussions can be civil.

Personally, my problem with certain reformed doctrine is what I perceive to be extreme slander on God's character. I know that a reformed person sees those same doctrines and ideas and don't have a problem with it at all- they just say God is God and He can do what He wants.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/9/1 19:22

Thanks, Todd I appreciate the honesty and civility to allow me a fair hearing even when you heartily disagree. That my brother is spiritual fruit, I get to be partaker of it.

Re: ch...ch...ch...ch...changes - posted by savannah, on: 2017/9/1 19:30

"...the debates have not really led anywhere. In other words, no one ever changes their mind."

There once was a man named Krispy. When he joined the forum he had a very strong arm. He threw many a fast ball, and not a few curves. His arm became weak over the years. Now everyone who knows him calls him Cal.

Some of the forumites I'm sure remember him. And one of the moderators changed his name to Cal as well, after his arm got weak over the years. And there are others too. So remember...

Be slow to speak, quick to listen, and slow to become angry.

Re: Is it God who seeks the individual? Or the other way round? - posted by dspks, on: 2017/9/2 11:57

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” John 12:32

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2017/9/2 16:19

Hey Marvin,

I appreciate your honesty and openness to discuss. However let me explain....

Although it is impossible that anyone of us can present views without some pre-suppositions based on what we have learnt and become convinced about, I still believe it is possible to look at the scriptures and particular subjects without having to see them only through the lens of any particular theological system (be that Reformed or any other). In fact if we do not attempt to do this then we will never be open to receive any particular truth the Holy Spirit is wanting to show us.

I honestly do make a conscious effort to look at all scripture on its own merit and I will not allow myself to be constrained by any pre-conceived theological system. That is not to say I don't have pre-conceived doctrinal positions, we mostly all do, but I mean allegiance to a system such as Cal or Arm. That is why I can agree with some Reformed doctrines, but not others. Likewise with most other denominational systems. Now that does tend to make one a bit of an outsider in most churches, who like to have all their doctrinal positions engraved in stone! Men are creatures that seek acceptance and ease, therefore it is a tendency to fall into line with one or other 'camp' so now 'we know where we stand'. I refuse to compromise my integrity and 'fall in line' with any system or denomination that is man made....and you can be sure all these 'isms' are man made.

I find it a bit sad to read Savannah claim the 'scalps' of those who have been 'converted' to Calvinism. Not because it is Calvinism, the same would apply to any other 'ism', but because it is just plain sectarianism.

In summary, can you not just put off your Reformed hat and accept that the scripture clearly do command men to seek God and they also tell us God seeks us. Why insist it is only the latter when the evidence is there to read in scripture.

My original disagreement with you was your statement that "God only seeks those who have no interest in Him". That is clearly not true based on many scriptural examples and also not true in experience on many folk. I would not disagree that God does also seek people who are totally uninterested in Him, but your 'only' there is the problem and can only be based on your reformed thinking and not honest reading of the scriptures.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2017/9/2 18:36

I believe I would like to put forth somewhat of a fresh perspective on this that I have not seen in this thread yet.

Somewhere around 6000 years ago God created a planet. He provided for life with a sun and moon exactly positioned. He created a universe around this planet that is so vast that we can only see the minutest part of only one of its millions of galaxies with our naked eye on a good night. He created amazing life on this planet. And He did it all just so man, with whom he desired relationship, could dwell here and marvel at his creator.

Then, when man sinned, God did not pull the plug. In fact, He foresaw the sin, created the man anyway, and provided the price of reconciliation through the person of His one and only Son before the creation was even finished.

I am not sure that I even need to say more to make the point that I am trying to make. I am so amazed that almighty God longs so much to have intimacy with me that He did all of this. He must love me, desire me, and long after me in a way that I cannot even comprehend to have done all of this...just for me.

I think He has been seeking us since the very beginning. All He desires is that we reciprocate and take advantage of the reconciliation and relationship that has been offered from the very foundation of the world.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/9/2 21:48

Well said brother T:)