

Part Three In A Series Of Seven

Why Does God Continue To Pursue Us?

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- Human Love Can Teach Us Something About The Love Of God.
- Right-thinking People Want God To Take Evil Seriously.
- Bible History Is Written To Show How God Has Lovingly Pursued Man Down Through The Centuries.
- The Structure Of Old Testament Worship Taught Man He Couldn't Get Full Intimacy With God Until Christ Would Come.

EVALUATION SHEET

Please go ahead and fill in the evaluation sheet attached.

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GREAT BARR
CHURCH OF CHRIST



GOD, LIFE AND PEOPLE

Part three in a Series of Seven



3. THE SEARCH

**Why Does God
Continue To
Lovingly Pursue
Us?**

'caring for **PEOPLE** for **PEOPLE** matter to God' **Romans 5:8**

“I’LL FIND YOU! I LOVE YOU.”

I. A HOLY GOD IN SEARCH OF A LOST PEOPLE!

1. In Australia, some years ago, a small plane went down in the desert after making a distress call. The pilot was killed but the boy with him survived.

By the time they had located the wreck the lad had wandered off. Afraid that the boy would panic at being lost, the father printed thousands of leaflets which lie dropped from an aeroplane over the area.

The central message was: ‘Dirky don’t be afraid! I’m looking for you! I’ll find you! I love you – Dad.’ Dirky found one of the leaflets and this assurance helped see him through. God sent us a loving message too – in the person of his Son (John 3:16-17 and Luke 19:10).

II. HOW CAN GOD CONTINUE TO LOVE SINFUL PEOPLE?

2. The apostle Paul insists that we can’t completely answer that question (Ephesians 3:19). Still, even if we can’t fully explain it, we can know he does, says Paul, because God showed it to us in Jesus Christ (1 John 4:9).

ISRAEL, THE NATION, WAS TO BE A SIGN TO THE WORLD

But since it was God who provided the sacrifices (Leviticus 17:11), we are taught that it is God who pursues us and them and provides what we need to have life with him! They had an inner sanctuary in which God dwelt and which was ‘off-limits’.

This, and the endless sacrifices which had to be offered, taught them and us that full intimacy with God would only come later in Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 9:7-8 & Hebrews 10:19-20).

12. This tabernacle and those sacrifices foretold the day when God would tabernacle among all people in Jesus Christ.

And they taught that God would offer the sacrifice which would enable him to forgive the ungodly and give life to those who deserve death. See John 1:14 / 1 John 2:2 and Romans 3:23-26.

13. This NATION was to be a sign to the world that God loved MAN (and not just Israel). It was to be a proof (like the rainbow) that God was still longing for loving fellowship with sinful humans!

THE RAINBOW IS A PERMANENT SIGN

IV. BIBLE HISTORY TELLS THE STORY

9. Bible history is the story of how God has pursued us! It reveals Man's awful sinfulness again and again but it shows us God coming after him. He promises the sinful pair that a Redeemer is coming (**Genesis 3:15**). He chooses Noah and his family to bless the coming generations (**Genesis 6:8; 7:1**) and saves them from the flood. He leaves the rainbow as a permanent sign of Man's evil and his love of Man (**Genesis 9:12-17**).

10. He graciously chose to bless a childless old man and his barren wife so that he would be a blessing to the whole world (**Genesis 12:1-2**). He later made Abraham's offspring into a nation at Mount Sinai (**Exodus 19:5-6**) after delivering them from slavery under an evil oppressor (**Exodus 1-12**). Abraham and Israel became models of what God wanted for the whole world.

11. Israel's rescue from slavery under Pharaoh teaches us about rescue from slavery under Satan and Sin. Their worship taught them and us that God wants to live (**tabernacle**) in the midst of people despite their sinfulness. Their sacrificial system told them that life with God could only exist where sin was taken seriously.

EVEN HUMAN LOVE IS MYSTERIOUS!

3. Even love among humans is often mysterious! Haven't you been amazed by a woman who continues to love a husband who has hurt her since the day they married? You may even have urged her to 'get rid' of him. She knows you care, and smiles, and murmurs something about loving him no matter what he is.

Haven't you seen parents weep for the return of a child whose selfishness at home drove them to heartbreak? How do you explain that? And you must know of children who despite being terribly mistreated, loved their parents with deep devotion and would make all sorts of excuses for them! If sinful people can love beyond explanation, should it surprise us if God can? The parable of the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15**) gives us a lovely illustration of the nature and character of God.

III. HOW CAN GOD LOVE US AND PUNISH SIN AT THE SAME TIME?

4. Humans know how to do that when they lovingly chastise their children, don't they? God insists that chastisement is part of loving (**Revelation 3:19**). The greater the wrong, the more seriously it must be viewed. Doesn't that make sense? It does with God. God tells us that when Judgment day arrives, it will be more bearable for some than others (**Matthew 11: 22, 24**).

WE SHOULD WANT GOD TO TAKE EVIL SERIOUSLY

5. When God sent a flood to destroy the bulk of humanity ([Genesis 6-9](#)), Sin had filled the earth. Mankind didn't need a gentle rebuke. They ate, drank, slept and dreamed evil ([Genesis 6:5, 11](#)) and radical surgery had to be performed. God alone sees Sin as it really is and will do what he must to deal with it!

6. Punishment of Sin is God taking our sin seriously. We take crime seriously in a just society, *don't we?* We should want God to take evil seriously. *Could we respect a God who doesn't?*

What would you think of a God who smiles at the rape of little boys and girls? Could you praise a God who grinned when thugs beat an old man to death just for fun? How would you feel about a God who got pleasure by watching children forced into evil movies and prostitution? Who wouldn't despise a God who chuckled while wicked rulers enslaved and crushed the poor? Don't we want someone to do something about the drug bosses who make vast fortunes out of the misery of millions (addicts and families)?

A God who yawned at all this wouldn't be worshipped. A God like that shouldn't be worshipped! We might be afraid of him, be we'd never respect him or praise him.

THINK NOBLE THINGS OF GOD

7. Sin is an offence against God himself and that leads him to view it with severity. *Should that surprise us?* Evil is repulsive to his nature and dishonouring to his person ([1 John 4:8](#) / [Psalm 29:2](#)). In this lies Sin's fundamental nature – it is an offence against God ([Psalm 51:4](#)).

8. But God's anger at Sin is partly because he loves those who are being exploited! God will right all the wrongs done to the oppressed and defenceless people ([Genesis 18:25](#))! We don't have to feel personal hatred against a brutal criminal to imprison him to protect those he is cruelly abusing. The nations didn't have to feel personal hatred for Hitler during WWII to know they had to keep him from exterminating whole nations. *Must we view God as a hate-filled lunatic, if for love of the oppressed and unborn generations, he buries their tormentors?*

Think noble things of God!