

SEEKING GOD

How many people do you love? What is it like to love someone special? Does it make you feel more secure when you know someone loves you? Do you feel peace in your heart when you know that that special person loves you also?

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

Every human being is God's offspring. And so, in many ways we humans act like God, our Father. That's right! On one occasion, Jesus likened the love of earthly fathers with the love that God has toward his children. Jesus asked, "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:11-13)

Do you have children? If you can love a few people like you do your children, then think how God must love everyone, because everyone is God's offspring! God loves even the vilest of sinners. Jesus told a story about God's great love. Jesus likened God to a father who had two sons. The youngest son came to him and said, "Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me." [And so the father divided his property between his sons.] (13) Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. [Friends, think about the allurements of a "far country." The boy felt no more restraint upon him. He was free from his father and free from any other restraint he might have felt back at home. Freedom is a precious thing. Everyone cherishes freedom. How will you use the freedom that the loving heavenly Father has given you? What will you do with your freedom?] (14) And when [the young man] had spent everything [in that far country], a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. (15) So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country; [his new boss] sent him into his fields to feed pigs. (16) [The young man was so hungry that] ...he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. (17) "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him,

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. (19) I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." (20) And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him." (Luke 15:12-20 ESV) This father did not care about appearances. You see, in ancient times, fathers did not run. But this father ran to his son; he saw the boy a long way off; he felt compassion for him, and ran to him, embraced him and kissed him. This is God's love demonstrated.

The apostle Paul was speaking in the capital city of Greece when he said, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, (25) nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (26) And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, (27) that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, (28) for "'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.'" (Acts 17:24-28 ESV) Notice that Paul said that God, the heavenly Father, is not far from each one of us. Notice also that Paul said that all people "should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him."

Friend, are you seeking the One who loves you, are you seeking God? God wants to be found by you. However, you will not find God among the witches of the world! That's right! God said this to the people of Israel: "Do not turn to mediums or [witchcraft]; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God." (Leviticus 19:31 ESV)

The people of Israel had lived in Egypt over 300 hundred years. Although the Israelites were a prominent minority among the Egyptian people, eventually, because they were foreigners, the Israelites were made slaves by an Egyptian Pharaoh. Moses, the leader of the people of Israel who led them out of Egyptian slavery, later predicted a time when the Lord would scatter those people across the world. And why? Because of the Israelite tendency to be

like their neighbors around them. The Israelites followed the practices of the world, rather than to seek God where He could be found. Moses said, “The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, [idols] that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But **from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him**, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Deuteronomy 4:27ff) Well, friends, when are you likely to seek God? When things are rosy? When you have all the money you want or need? When you have everything going your way? No; Moses predicted, “When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice.” (Deuteronomy 4:30) Friends, are you in trouble? Is it time for you to seek the Lord? Is your heart telling you that it is time to seek the Lord?

David sang this song, “Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him; sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works! Glory in his holy name; **let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!**” (1 Chronicles 16:8-11) In another song, David sang, “The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.” (Psalms 14:2 ESV) Are you seeking God?

In yet another Psalm, David sang a great prayer, “Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, LORD, do I seek.” Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in.” (Psalms 27:7-10 ESV) David’s father and mother had died, but the LORD of his father and mother lives forever. The LORD will take us in. Are you ready to seek the Lord?

One day Jesus was teaching in the temple. Sadducees and Pharisees tested Him with questions. There was a certain scribe who passed by and heard Jesus answering their questions, so he asked a question also. “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O

Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.' And the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.'" And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, [Jesus] said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mark 12:28-34 ESV)

Friends, are you close to the kingdom of God? You know that there is something missing from your busy life. It's God and His righteousness. Are you seeking God? Then you are ready to repent of your sins; that is, you are ready to fight sin in your life. You are ready to be rid of the sin that will cause you to be lost. You are ready for God's forgiveness.

God offers forgiveness through His Son, Jesus Christ. You see, it was Jesus who paid the penalty your sins. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, then was raised from the dead for your justification. Do you believe this? Then you are ready to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins. In that act you are calling on the name of the Lord. Saul of Tarsus was blinded by the light of Jesus on the road to Damascus where Saul had intended to imprison the followers of Jesus. But now, for three days, Saul was seeking God in prayer. Jesus appeared in a vision to a preacher by the name of Ananias and told him where to find Saul, and what to say to him. In Acts 22:14 we read what Ananias said to Saul, "The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'" (Acts 22:14-16 KJV) Saul still had his sins after seeking the Lord for three days. But finally a man came to him to tell what he needed to do to receive the forgiveness of his sins. "Why do you wait? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Saul had been praying, but he had not yet "called on the name of the Lord" until he submitted to immersion in water, the baptism that Jesus commanded.

Have you obeyed the command of Jesus? Have you been baptized in order to “wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”? Find a member of the church of Christ who can assist you in obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ.