

Pursuing God—A Seeker's Guide

Chapter Two *You Don't Look So Good*

1. Please read chapter two of *Pursuing God—A Seeker's Guide* aloud. Perhaps you can share the reading.
2. This is a chapter that will be hard to accept. There is no question that the description given would be a mere insult except for one fact: *it is true*. This is God's view of every person outside of Christ and it is repeated in the Bible from the beginning to the end. I guess you would have to say that God does not have an optimistic view of man; He does not see him as starting out righteous or evolving into something better. So, instead of flattering you, I have decided to simply write the truth in the plainest way. Let's look now in some detail at the person we see in the mirror of the Bible. We'll be looking at the passage written out in the chapter you just read, Romans 3:10-18.
3. *You're not righteous* ("There is none righteous, no not one"). Most people would not believe this. In your opinion, why are most people so adamant to believe that they are inherently righteous?
4. There is an interesting verse in Galatians 3:21. It goes like this: "I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness comes by the law, Christ died needlessly." What do you think this means?
5. *You have no understanding* ("there is none who understands"). Of course, Paul means that the person without Christ has no real comprehension of the truths concerning salvation. There is a difference between knowing a few facts about Christ and salvation, and having true understanding. Re-read the section called *No Understanding*, p. 14, 2nd paragraph. Why do I assert that the professor did not understand?
6. *You have no desire for God* ("there is no one who seeks God"). In John 6:44, Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." Here is the real problem. You must come to Him, yet you do not naturally seek Him. In your estimation, why is it that people are not inclined to actually seek Him? Also, how far can you go seeking peace, a good life, and heaven, and yet not be seeking God at all?
7. *You are rebellious* ("All have turned aside to their own way"). We just read that you cannot come to Christ unless the Father draws you. This verse ("All have turned aside . . .") puts the blame on the person who chooses to go his or her own way. If you come to Christ, God gets the credit (you would not have done it without Him drawing you to Christ), but if you just go your own way, then *you* are to blame.

Isaiah wrote: "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every one to his own way . . ." (Isaiah 53:6). Is it possible to be religious and still be going your own way? Jesus spoke His harshest words against religious people who would not believe in Him on His terms. Why do you think we are naturally rebellious?

8. *You have become worthless* (“together they have become worthless”). I have often looked at the rows of biographies in the bookstore. Most of these people were great in the eyes of their generation, but what about in the eyes of God? It is one thing to have a high value in the estimation of other humans, but it is another to be accepted by God. If you see yourself as God sees you (before genuine salvation), would you be inclined to have low self-esteem? Is that good or bad?

9. I also wrote about Romans 3:13-18. Please have someone read that again (p. 15). I said that this language seems untrue when you first look at it. It seems inconceivable to think of yourself or your kind neighbor as a murderer, for instance. Yet, remember, God sees the inner man and often describes us by what we are on the inside rather than what we appear to be on the outside. The lust, hatred, and selfishness of every person is usually concealed, but to God it is openly revealed. It is no wonder that God thinks of us as sinful people who deserve judgment and who have no hope of making ourselves any different apart from Him. It is not bad to feel hopeless if it drives you to God. You are in fact ruined by sin and you do deserve eternal punishment. Yet, nothing is impossible with God. Do you find it difficult to think of yourself in the way God describes you in this passage? Why or why not?

10. Many believe that they are good enough, or could become good enough, to deliver themselves from the power of sin and the condemnation they deserve. Others, as I have already mentioned, have become hopeless about their own ability to do anything to correct their situation on their own. Which is the better position, and why?

11. Perhaps someone in the group would be willing to describe a time when they have actually *felt* their inability to get to God on their own moral strength. Or, if someone in the group is already converted to Christ, perhaps he would be willing to describe how he viewed himself before coming to Christ. Don't hesitate to ask questions about how this person was thinking and feeling at that time.

12. Finally, let me just mention that I have had the experience of talking with many people around the world about Christ. Those who have come to Him and been converted have always wished they had done so earlier. Yet, before knowing about the intensity of their problem, they were unable to *want* Christ. The Spirit of God used the knowledge of the seriousness of the dilemma to bring them into that authentic relationship with Him. And this changed everything for them. If you are not yet sure you are truly converted, I hope this knowledge of your problem will do the same for you.

For next week: Please read chapter three.