

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Now More than Ever - Week of July 27

Introduction

This week in our message outline, it was shared how Leonardo Da Vinci was an unsatisfied man. Though his gift of art was incredible, many in his day felt like he wasted much of his talent because he was into so many different things. Though Da Vinci passionately sought knowledge and longed for that knowledge to come to expression, his seeking nearly crushed him; for alongside his pursuit of knowledge, he also had a crushing sense that his time was short. So little time; so much left undone. For Da Vinci, the pursuit of perfection was a tragic impossibility. Can you relate?

What are you seeking? Where have your pursuits taken you? Perhaps the deepest longings of your heart have been side-railed by a culture full of distractions. Across the landscape of history, distractions and side-railed dreams and goals have brought many to the end of their days unsatisfied. Entities seeking power and control, wealth and riches have left countless others seeking mere survival. Life is not fair. As St. Augustine once said: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You."

Though most people *hopefully* pursue good things: love, fulfillment through honest work, health, strength, and perhaps to have a family and be surrounded by people who love and support the common goal of sacred civility, such pursuits can still lead to emptiness. That is, if we leave God out. Of all people, the Lord Jesus knows that life is not fair and worldly pursuits alone will never satisfy. This is way Jesus teaches us to pursue the heart of God. Thus, instead of asking *What am I seeking?* perhaps the question should be *What is God seeking?* As we align our pursuits with the pursuit of God, we may very well find peace during the days given us on earth. The Bible speaks to the wisdom of seeking God:

"I love all who love me. Those who search for me will surely find me" (Proverbs 8:17).
... and Jesus said—

"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need" (Matthew 6:33).

Background

In the Old Testament there was a king in Judah, Asa, who sought the LORD with his whole heart during the early years of his reign. Asa commanded all his people to seek God and obey Him with their whole heart, and as a result, God was with king Asa and his people. The LORD gave the people of Judah a heart to unite and accomplish great goals of teaching his decrees and statutes, strengthening the land physically and spiritually. God ensured success at every turn, giving them peace from surrounding nations and victory over their enemies. When an imposing army of 1,000,000 men from Ethiopia advanced upon Judah, king Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and God showed up!... defeating the Ethiopians and causing other nations to leave them alone (2 Chronicles 14:9-14).

Read 2 Chronicles 15:1-7

The LORD'S Spirit through the prophet Azariah encouraged Asa to continue strong in the LORD. Asa responded by further removing all detestable idols from the land and repairing the altar of the LORD.

- What is the next thing Asa does, according to 2 Chronicles 15:9?

As king Asa calls together all the people, they sacrifice to the LORD the plunder taken in battle. "Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul" (v12). They devoted themselves wholeheartedly to God and "...shouted out their oath of loyalty to the LORD with trumpets blaring and rams' horns sounding. All in Judah were happy about this covenant, for they had entered into it with all their heart. They earnestly sought after God, and they found him. And the LORD gave them rest from their enemies on every side" (2 Chronicles 15:14-15).

- When you seek the Lord, you will find him. Share at least one insight the Holy Spirit is giving you through these verses.
- Are you seeking the things of God and desiring the Lord Jesus with your whole heart? How is choosing to seek the Lord *first* a daily, ongoing choice we must make?
- We learned in the previous message series, "When the Church Was Young", the early church was wholehearted in their commitment to Christ. Fully devoted followers of Christ are just that: *fully* devoted, not half devoted. What does half devoted look like? What does fully devoted look like?

Read together Christ Church's Mission Statement:

Reaching millions of unchurched persons by developing thousands of fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Reaching and *Developing* are key components as we obey Christ's Great Commandment. What did Jesus say is the Greatest Commandment —

"The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31).

... and the Lord Jesus gives his Great Commission —

... "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19).

It is important that we respond willingly to the Holy Spirit and to the Word of God. John Wesley spoke of the preventing grace of God being the Holy Spirit going before us, calling us into a love relationship with the Lord — like the *Hound of Heaven* in loving pursuit of each wayward son and daughter. Thus, we must pay attention! The Holy Spirit stirs us out of sin's imprisonment, slavery to darkness, half-hearted complacency and brings us into a place of glorious light where GOD IS WITH US. We must seek the One who

seeks us! He is Emmanuel and provides (equips) us with all we need to live wholeheartedly for Christ. God in Christ is with us so one day we can be with him forever (Psalm 23:6).

In Closing

Sadly, king Asa falls away from the Lord toward the end of his reign. For some reason, when he gets word that Baasha of Israel is encroaching upon Judah, Asa takes money from the Temple treasury and gives it to king Ben-Hadad of Aram urging his help. The prophet Hanai comes to Asa and declares:

“Because you have put your trust in the king of Aram instead of in the LORD your God, you missed your chance to destroy the army of the king of Aram. Don’t you remember what happened to the Ethiopians and Libyans and their vast army At that time you relied on the LORD and he handed them over to you. The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. What a fool you have been! From now on you will be at war” (2 Chronicles 16:8-9).

As we close in a time of prayer, may we resolve to put our hope in Christ alone. May we continue to pursue the One who pursues us. May we think carefully about our desires, for only when our hearts align with the will of our Heavenly Father will we find rest, peace, and full satisfaction. We must also lift one another in fervent prayer. There is a story of Dwight L. Moody and two women in his church on the front row who began to pray for their pastor while he was preaching. Their prayers began to humble him and bring more Holy Spirit fire into his heart; as a result, a new hunger stirred within him, a new seeking: a desire for the Vine, not for the fruit. Once fully devoted followers find Jesus, they don’t want anyone to live another day without Christ. When we first seek *and find* God, we will then begin to seek *with* God. “For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost” (Luke 19:10).

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

July 27: 2 Chronicles 19:1-20:37, Romans 10:14-11:12, Psalm 21:1-13, Proverbs 20:4-6
July 28: 2 Chronicles 21:1-23:21, Romans 11:13-36, Psalm 22:1-18, Proverbs 20:7
July 29: 2 Chronicles 24:1-25:28, Romans 12:1-21, Psalm 22:19-31, Proverbs 20:8-10
July 30: 2 Chronicles 26:1-28:27, Romans 13:1-14, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 20:11
July 31: 2 Chronicles 29:1-36, Romans 14:1-23, Psalm 24:1-10, Proverbs 20:12
August 1: 2 Chronicles 30:1-31:21, Romans 15:1-22, Psalm 25:1-15, Proverbs 20:13-15
August 2: 2 Chronicles 32:1-33:13, Romans 15:23-16:9, Psalm 25:16-22, Prov. 20:16-18

Now More Than Ever

Text: 2 Chronicles 15:1-15; Romans 10:9-14; Romans 9:1-5

PLAIN TRUTH

Once _____ followers find _____ they don’t want anyone to _____ another day without Christ.

1. Follow the Spirit’s _____ by _____ the God who _____ you through His Word.
2. It takes _____ to clarify your _____.
3. _____ is second nature when _____ something of great _____.

July 27, 2025