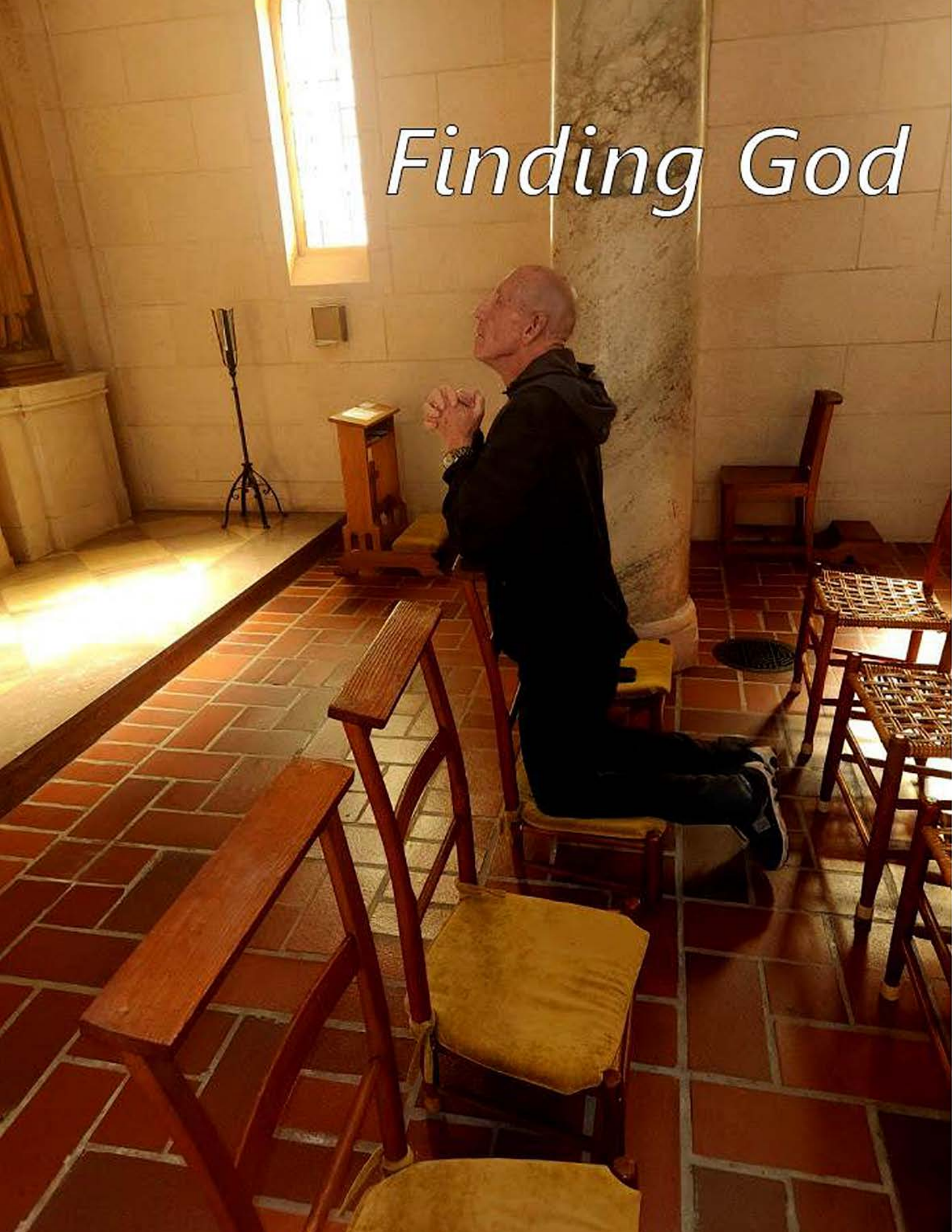


Finding God



Chapter 1

One of the most popular views of the nature of God has been the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Trinity is the belief that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are essentially a generic three in One collective entity with all three “co-equal” with each other. The doctrine of the Trinity, which holds that God exists as three distinct but united persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - was established as a core Christian belief by the 4th century AD. While the Church, as we know it has always recognized that God the Father and Christ are both God, they also acknowledged that the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit is the power of God. Yet, some today view God and Jesus Christ in a similar way to how Trinitarians view Them. They view the Father and Christ as essentially the same. As a result, those holding that view of God and Christ typically treat the names and titles of God in the Bible as equally applying to both God the Father and Jesus Christ. By not recognizing that many of the names and titles for God in the bible are unique and only apply to either God the Father or Jesus Christ, readers blur the distinctions between the Two.

Scripture has not left us to "wander around in a fog, never able to see clearly who God is or how to reach God or how we should live." Instead, God is revealed through creation, and most importantly, through Jesus Christ close relation with his Father. Scripture indicates that a deeper understanding of God and scriptural teachings come through studying Christ and His relationship with His Father, God. Therefore, while studying Christ is integral to understanding Christianity, it is essential to heed Christs directive to connect with God the Father, as this forms the core of the Christian faith and provides clarity in the spiritual journey. According to the Scripture, God promises you can find your Creator when you seek God with all your heart. "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." (**Jeremiah 29:13**) But from there you will seek the LORD (Christ) and you will find God if you “search after God with all your heart and with all your soul.” (**Deuteronomy 4:29**)

God is revealed to those who prioritize a worshipful relationship above all else which involves carving out quality time to read the Scriptures, worship, pray and meditate continually, so that God can reveal and mature you in Christ. Scripture also promises that when you seek God, you will find rest for your weary soul, strength, and abundant life, as God replaces the heaviness of worldly striving with Christs easy yoke and light burden. In summary the promise of God is to be available to those who diligently pursue an intimate relationship with God the Father.

Christianity is fundamentally about a relationship with God the Father, through the person of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. While learning the life and teachings of Christ is crucial, our goal is to know and experience God the Father. It's important to note that Christ Himself emphasized the importance of connecting with God the Father. This is clear in the Lord's Prayer, where Christ taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in Heaven" (**Matthew 6:9-13**). This prayer serves as a model for how Christians should communicate with God, emphasizing the relationship between God as a Father and Gods children. It's true at times the focus on studying Christs teachings can lead to a loss of emphasis on seeking a direct connection with God the Father. However, it does not diminish the importance of studying Christ; rather, it highlights the need for a balanced approach that encompasses both understanding Christ's teachings and nurturing a personal relationship with God the Father.

According to the Bible, God wants people to be close, to experience blessings, and fulfill their purpose by the power of Gods Spirit, and love God with all their hearts. Additionally, God desires that people love kindness, do justice, and walk humbly with Christ. This is summarized in the commandments to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Ultimately, the overarching theme is that God wants a *personal and intimate* relationship with individuals, characterized by love, surrender, and righteousness.

The apostle Paul points to a higher, better, wisdom, which he does teach to those who are mature, meaning those who are in Christ and have God's Spirit with them. Paul describes this wisdom of God as secret and hidden in the sense that it cannot be obtained by mere observation of the world. Evidence can point towards God (**Psalms 19:1**), but it won't help those who don't want to seek God (**Matthew 7:7-8**). God's wisdom is above and beyond what humans can perceive in our natural state apart from Him (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). God must reveal Wisdom to us, or we will not be aware of it.

Paul describes mere *human wisdom*, with its limited perspective, as fatally incomplete in understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ. Reason and evidence are important, but they do not force a person to accept the truth (**James 2:19; Romans 1:18-23**).

In the 1600s Jakob Boehme wrote about finding God: "**The Disciple** asked the **Master**: Master, how may I come to the *hidden Wisdom of God*, so that I may see God, and hear God speak?

The Master answered and said: When you can throw yourself into That, where no Creature dwells, if only for a Moment, then you will hear God speak.

Disciple. Is that place where no Creature dwells near at hand; or is it far off?

Master. It is in you. And if you can, for a time, cease from all your own thinking and willing, then you will hear the unspeakable Words of God.

Disciple. How can I hear God speak, when I stand still from thinking and willing?

Master. When you stand still from the thinking of Self, and the willing of Self; when both your intellect and will are quiet, and passive to the Expressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit; and when your Soul is winged up, and above that which is temporal, the outward Senses, and the Imagination being locked up by holy abstraction, then the Eternal Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking will be revealed in you; and so, God hears and sees through you, being now the Organ of God's Spirit; and so, God speaks in you, and whispers to your Spirit, and your Spirit hears God's Voice.

Blessed are you therefore if you can stand still from *Self*-thinking and *Self*-willing and can stop the prevailing of your Imagination and Senses; for thus you may arrive at length to see the great Salvation of God being and be in earnest. What is there required of you, but to stand still, and see the Salvation of your God? And could you want anything less? For God knows what is best; and if you can but trust God will most certainly do better for you, than if you were left to your own Choice”.

The overarching promise is that by knowing God intimately, we will experience God's faithfulness, His power to transform us, and God's unbreakable love - even during life's difficulties. The more we seek to truly know God, the more we will see these promises fulfilled in our lives. Meeting God in silence is not about hearing a specific message, but about simply being present with Him. It's about acknowledging God's control and finding intimacy and peace through His presence.

שלום

Chapter 2

Scripture has a special word for the character of pre-Fall life in the Garden — Shalom, which means full human flourishing in every dimension of life. Shalom means a perfect and harmonious prospering... economically, relationally, spiritually. So, if life was already perfect, what exactly was God asking humankind to *do*? Fundamentally, God gave us the task of stewarding, enlarging, and enhancing the conditions for human flourishing. God clearly envisioned a much larger humankind than that with which he was starting. Given that, the conditions for shalom would need to be *enlarged*. Productivity would need to be *increased*; new kinds of value created. God gifted us, if you will, with Garden 1.0 and said, ‘Here, take this precious gift and make it even more valuable — enlarge and enhance it into Garden 2.0.

Here's how the Theology of Work Project puts it: “God brought into being a flawless creation, an ideal platform, and then created humanity to continue the creation project . . . God could have created everything imaginable and filled the earth himself. But he

chose to create humanity to collaborate with him to actualize the universe's potential, to take part in God's own work. It is remarkable that God trusts us to conduct this amazing task of building on the good earth he has given us. Through our work God brings forth food and drink, products and services, knowledge and beauty, organizations and communities, growth and health, and praise and glory to himself.

This continues to be the work of Jesus' followers. In the two parables Jesus talked about vocation and purpose, i.e., the stories about servants given sums of money, the job of the servants was to *enlarge* what had been entrusted to them by the master — i.e., the same task as the one originally assigned in the creation mandate. There is one difference, however. Pre-Fall, God's intention for humankind, and the task to which we were assigned, was to see shalom enlarged. Post-Fall, God's purpose took on a further thrust to see shalom restored. We see this especially clearly in the fact that all of Jesus' miracles were to restore shalom: hungry people were fed, broken bodies were made whole, the dead were restored to life. The shalom mission of God's people now shares this duality. We are meant both to *enlarge* and to *restore* shalom on the earth.

One other important topic. A notable aspect of God's mandate to humankind is that of dominion. We see this especially in the specific commands to "subdue" the earth and to "rule over" all the other created creatures. Bible scholars widely note, however, that God has entrusted humankind with a *delegated* authority, i.e., a viceroy-like dominion that must be exercised entirely in keeping with the larger purpose(s) and directives of the Sovereign. It is a steward-like administration, not a self-centered or arbitrary rulership. The *Theology of Work Project* puts it especially nicely: "Dominion is not the authority to work *against* God's creation, but the ability to work *for* it." In the context of (**Genesis 1:26**), God grants humanity dominion over the earth and its creatures. However, this dominion is not a license to exploit or harm creation. Instead, it is a sacred responsibility—a divine contract—to care for and steward God's handiwork.

Keyways to evidence you have surrendered control of your life over to God: You have a deep trust and surrender to God's sovereignty: Truly believing and understanding that God is in complete control of all things, even the smallest details of our lives, is crucial. This involves letting go of the need to be in control yourself.

✓ *You rely on God's promises and character: The passages highlight that as you get to know God through God's Word,*

your confidence in God goodness, love, and perfect plan will grow. This allows you to rest in Gods sovereignty rather than fearing the unknown.

- ✓ *You see God working all things together for good: Even when you don't understand your circumstances, you can trust that God is using them for your ultimate benefit and Gods purposes, as Romans 8:28 promises.*
- ✓ *You experience decreased anxiety and fear: Truly grasping God's control should alleviate your worries and fears, because you know God is in charge, not you.*
- ✓ *You are willing to submit your plans and decisions to God: Rather than trying to control your own life, you humbly acknowledge that God's purposes will stand, not your own. You seek Gods will above your own.*

Become "**unself-ed**" and let go of the ego and its chatter to hear the voice of God speaking within

" When you stand still from the thinking of Self, and the willing of Self; when both your intellect and will are quiet, and passive to the Expressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit. " In these lines, we sense an invitation to surrender—to step beyond the confines of our ego-driven thoughts and desires. "unself-ed"

Let's break it down: *Standing Still*: Imagine a moment of stillness—a pause in the ceaseless movement of our minds. It's as if time suspends, and we become aware of something greater. *Thinking of Self*: Our thoughts often revolve around ourselves—our needs, fears, ambitions. But what if we release that self-centered focus? *Willing of Self*: Our will—the force that drives our actions—is often directed toward personal goals. But what if we relinquish control? *Quiet Intellect*: The intellect, with its analytical power, can be noisy. Yet, in silence, we may hear whispers of deeper truths. *Passive to the Eternal Word and Spirit*: Here lies the heart of the matter. To be passive—to surrender—is to open ourselves to the Divine. The "Eternal Word" suggests a cosmic language—an expression beyond mere words.

(1 Kings 19) describes how God spoke to Elijah not in the strong wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a "low whisper" or "sound of thin silence." This suggests that to hear God, we need to create space for silence and solitude, rather than being consumed by the noise and busyness of life. (Psalms) also emphasize waiting on God in silence, as the psalmist says, "For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from God". This implies that it takes faith and trust to patiently wait for **God-in-the-silence**, rather than

rushing ahead or filling the silence with our own noise. What is the Hardship in this? God knows what is best; and if you can simply trust that God will most certainly do better for you, than when you are left to your own devises.

