

# ***GOD'S GREAT PURSUIT***

***BY ANTONIO BALDOVINOS***

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***“We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit.”***  
*A.W. Tozer*

**C**oming out of the Calgary airport one bone-chilling November morning, I hurried to the car rental kiosk in the hopes of avoiding yet another drawn-out wait. After being stuck in an airplane seat for six hours and standing in numerous lines, I was cranky, tired and irritable. As I waited yet again, when I finally got my car keys from counter, I sighed with relief; at last, no more people and no more delays, or so I thought. I was actually looking forward to my three-hour commute to unwind and relax.

Five minutes into my drive, I noticed something in the distance; the outline of a young man hitchhiking on the side of the road began to soon appear. I felt that familiar urge of the Lord, to pick him up, I thought, “not now, I am tired and just want to relax”. I knew I should probably obey, so rather reluctantly I put on my hazard lights, pulled over and picked him up. He greeted me with a thankful smile as he began to un-thaw and shake off the frost from lengthy time spent in the icy chill outside.

With a cordial nod and fake smile, I shook his hand, said hello and turned the music up. He attempted to make conversation, but I remained indifferent answered his inquiries and then would proceed to turn the worship music back up. After my continued lack of interest, he finally got the picture.

Despite my best efforts to remain detached, I could not ignore the increasing urge within me to speak to this man what was on Gods heart. Suddenly my lack of enthusiasm and selfishness were replaced with conviction and a soberness to do what God wanted. Great compassion and love washed over me for him; the thought of where this man would spend eternity overtook me. In that moment God began to reveal to me his heart for this man and in what seemed almost an instant I turned to my passenger and erupted: *“If you were to die today, where would you go?”* The young man, looked at me, and with shock and full sincerity stammered, *“I don’t know. What do you mean?”* *“Well,”* I said, *“there is a heaven and there is a hell. You are an eternal being. You will live forever. You will live in heaven or in hell. There is no paradise, purgatory, limbo, reincarnation or the like. Heaven was made for you. Hell was not, but if you live for God you will have eternal life. If you don’t live for God, you will live forever in hell.”* I went on to describe what heaven looked like. I also described hell. I asked him to grab my Bible from my back seat and had him read about sin and what Jesus did on the cross for us concerning our sins. How God wants to have a relationship with us, but sin separates us from having this life. And we can have eternal life when we exchange our old life for new life in Him. We will have a new life here on earth with peace and joy, with the cleansing power over our sin. His heart was pricked, and began to unravel his many questions about sin, God and eternity.

The drive in which I started out selfishly thinking was going to seem endless was now coming to an end. I knew was not going be enough, under my breath I asked the Lord for more time and proceeded to ask him his name, he said, *“I’m Steve”*. I then said *“Steve, I know we are at our destination, but would you join me for lunch?”*. He earnestly agreed to my invitation.

As I sat across the table from Steve at the restaurant, hoping that all I had said was sinking in, he began to make known to me that he had been hitchhiking for three days. Amidst those three days, **every** driver, in **every** car he had been in for the last three days had talked to him about God and eternity! I sat dumbfounded listening to him

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say this. I knew that God was aggressively pursuing Steve, He delighted in him and wanted him so much that he had three drivers in three days share this with Steve! Our conversation continued and our lunchtime couldn't have lasted long enough.

The plates were being cleared, and I began to think of a way to get more time with Steve, I then volunteered to take him a little bit farther, even though it was well out of my way. I needed more time. I knew God was pursuing him with great urgency. I had an intense burning within me to bring Steve to a place of response after three days of Gods relentless pursuit.

We walked back out to the rental car, sat down and not being able to contain it any longer I turned to Steve and blurted out, *"Steve, God is after you. He loves you and wants to know you and He wants you to know Him. He is calling you with great urgency and desperation. I want you to know how much He loves you. He has been trying to get your attention"*. I then closed my eyes, raised my voice, and with as much passion and affection as I could, I screamed out the words I felt straight from the Lord; *"STEVE, STEVE, I love you and I want to be with you. I want you to be with me. I love you. I gave my life for you. Would you lay down your life and take my life? I love you."* I opened my eyes looked at Steve, he turned to me with tears and a look of great joy and satisfaction and said, *"Yes, I want Him."* My heart leapt, and gratefulness filled my whole being for the goodness of God and how much He loves us!

I tell you this story because just like Steve, God is passionately pursuing us all. I believe God is aggressively and passionately pursuing you too, no matter where you are at in life. He loves you. He loves you so much and wants nothing else but for a voluntary love response from you to His pursuit.

## **RELENTLESS LOVE**

*"We love Him because He first loved us." (1 John. 4:19)*

God's pursuit begins before salvation for everyone. Before we ever get introduced to Jesus or even to who God is or what He's done for us. God has been relentlessly pursuing you and no matter where you find yourself in this journey be assured of this. God loves you. God has done everything possible to have a real and true relationship with you. His love is constant and never fades or ends. Moreover, God will continue to chase you down to have this relationship with you.

*"Or do you think Scripture says without reason the spirit He caused to live in us envies intensely." (James 4:5)*

God longs to have a vibrant and true relationship with us. Another version of this verse, says He *"yearns jealously"*. I know this thought doesn't really go through our minds or our hearts when it comes to our relationship with God. We think of longing and envious desire about boyfriends and girlfriends, husbands and wives but don't often imagine God desiring a relationship with us like that. I think this is partly the case because many Christians don't think He really loves them. If you are one of them, let me assure you, God really loves you. His love is boundless, limitless and intensely jealous. He is jealous over us. He will not share us with anyone or anything. He wants us solely to be His.

I'm often apprehended by the thought of God sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross for us. He died on the

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cross because sin separated us from relationship. He took care of anything in between that relationship.

***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)***

Everlasting life is made possible through Jesus' sacrifice. God loved us so much He would send His son to die on the cross so that nothing would separate us anymore. What an unbelievable thought of love and sacrifice. My question is why. Why would Jesus do this? Why would Jesus die on the cross for our sins?

***“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on the cross.” (Philippians 2:8)***

Why would Jesus take on the form of a human being and obey even to the death? Even though this is an unimaginable thought that Jesus would obey His Father even to death, what was the motive for Jesus to give His life?

***“Jesus... for the joy set before him he endured the cross...” (Heb. 12:2)***

Jesus endured the cross with great joy. Why? Let me suggest that Jesus not only died as an obedient son, but as a lover. He envies us so intensely that He will not allow anything in between Him and us. Consequently there is truly no mountain too high, no valley too low, and no sacrifice too great, that He would not give up His life, with great joy. And He did. His motive was two fold. One was as an obedient son, to His father, but even greater reason because He loves you that much. Jesus died and gave up His life as a lover.

God's ultimate purpose for His creation is to provide a family for Himself and a Bride for His Son as His eternal companion to reign with Him forever. The guiding principle of God's activity throughout history has been to raise up a prepared bride for His worthy Son. The Father set His heart to train the Bride to willingly prepare herself to rule the earth with Jesus.

He intensely and jealously wants *You!* Weak and broken people like Israel that have been unfaithful and have failed. He wants to pick them up, clean them up and restores them to Himself. That's a picture of you and me.

## **FOREVER**

He wants you *Forever*. It is not just for our time here on earth but forever and ever and ever. He wants to know you and for you to know Him forever. He wants to reveal His secrets. This can begin right now. He wants to reveal everything to us.

God is settled in one thing. No matter where you are at in your journey. God says; *“I will.”* It is not in the balance. It is not in question, He says, *“I will.”* It is final and cannot be turned back. He will take us to be His. He gives us a picture of a marriage relationship for several reasons. He desires emotional wholeness and a radiant heart in us. He will never allow injustice to harm His people. We are the object of His tender affections and goodwill. Above all, His goal is intimacy with His people forever and ever!