

**He Seeks You**  
**Part 1**

**Introduction:**

**(ILL)** In his book *The Colors of Hope*, Richard Dahlstrom describes what he calls "the safety first mentality." According to this perspective, "the key to living well is living safely." So Dahlstrom writes:

*Lock your doors at night. Get an alarm system. Save 10 percent and make sure your investment is insured .... Take your vitamins, minerals, omega-3s, ginko bilboa, and St. John's Wort. Eat lots of soluble fibers. Exercise. Get eight hours of sleep .... Go to church regularly, being certain to drive carefully both on the way there and on the way home (it's best if your car's the biggest, because then you're the safest). Don't go on mission trips to places where you might contract staph infection, malaria, intestinal parasites, or face a terrorist plot. Risky hobbies? Forget it. Read books instead .... Eat organic. Get a colonoscopy.*

*There, that should do it. Now you're safe, right? Well, not really. Pistol Pete Maravich, extraordinary athlete and specimen of fine health, died at the age of forty, while shooting hoops. He didn't smoke or drink. Meanwhile, the oldest woman on record, Jeanne Calment, who died at the age of 122, stopped smoking at 117 because her eyesight was so bad she could no longer see clearly enough to light her cigarettes ....*

*[The safety-first posture] is wrong on several levels. First, and most significantly, the good life is never defined by Jesus in terms of either length or comfort. To the contrary, Jesus says that those who seek to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their lives, spilling them out generously in service to others because of love for God and humanity, will find them.*

1. Jesus taught the principle of self-giving or self-sacrifice
2. It was not well received or understood by the disciples
  - a. The angst they felt toward the woman who broke open the expensive perfume
  - b. Even when Jesus said He must suffer (Peter rebuked Him)
3. Paul taught this principle as well (Romans 12:1—bodies a living sacrifice)
4. The text that we will deal with the next two weeks is a classic example

### Context of the Passage

- Preparing a 3<sup>rd</sup> time to travel to Corinth
- His 1<sup>st</sup> visit he founded the church in Corinth (Acts 18)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> visit was to check up on the church (2 Corinthians 2:1)
- This 3<sup>rd</sup> visit is to judge the church (he will call on them to examine themselves to see if they are “in the faith.” (2 Corinthians 13:6))
- Paul’s Leadership and apostleship has been questioned by the Corinthian factions
- There was the larger church that met corporately on occasion and the smaller house churches that had developed factions of divisiveness
- Easy for false teachers to invade the house churches (false apostles) have crept their way into the churches and created great division

So...NOW he comes to visit a third time...

—Promises NOT to be a burden (14)

- I don’t seek yours but you (he is coming also to complete the offering for the famine-struck and impoverished church in Jerusalem so this issue is important (not coming after just your money))
- I will gladly spend and be spent for you—spend=*dapanan* AND be spent (expend)=*ekdapanan*
- Point is that Paul will use his resources and his energy to do whatever it takes to restore relationship with them
- Relationships are more important to him than resources

This is the model for self-sacrifice

**“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** Mark 10:45 NIV

NOTE: We are called to **“let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”** (He came to serve, became a human servant and gave his life)

Jesus could have easily said —“*I want not yours but you.*”

That is what he asks of us—HE WANTS US

Today—answering the question, “What does it mean for God to have you?”

**I. God HAS YOU when He is the primary object of your thoughts.**

*“Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.” Hebrews 3:1 NIV*

A. The point of this text (Hebrews) is to keep thoughts focused on Christ as opposed to any other means of salvation or fulfillment

1. The Jews tempted to return to Judaism
2. Gentles to other gods/idols
3. Keep your thoughts (focus) on Christ as your only means to satisfy and fulfill

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV*

B. Many things vie for our attention, thoughts and focus today

1. Pursuit of wealth and fame
2. Love of sports and pleasure
3. What is our down time thinking consists of?
  - a. Thoughts of Him?
  - b. Growing in Him?
  - c. Knowing Him?
  - d. Kingdom thoughts?
  - e. OR—things of the world

Paul said to Colossians:

*“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” Colossians 3:2 NIV*

**John said:**

*“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” 1 John 2:15-17 NIV*

**Is HE the primary object of your thoughts? Does HE have you?**

(ILL) *After living as a quadriplegic for 45 years, Joni Eareckson Tada reflected on the diving accident that changed her life. As a 14-year-old, Joni had embraced Jesus as her savior, but in her words she had "confused the abundant Christian life with the great American dream." Joni said:*

*I was a Christian and would lose weight, get good grades, get voted captain of the hockey team, go to college, marry a wonderful man who made \$250,000 a year, and we'd have 2.5 children. It was me focused: What can God do for me? I almost thought that I had done God a great big favor by accepting Jesus .... [And my boyfriend and I] were doing some things together that we wrong.*

*In April 1967, I came home from a sordid Friday night date ... and cried, "Oh God ... I'm staining your reputation by saying I'm a Christian, yet doing one thing Friday night and another Sunday morning. I'm a hypocrite .... I want you to change my life ... Please do something in my life that will jerk it right side up because I'm making a mess of the Christian faith in my life and I don't want that. I want to glorify you." Then I had the diving accident about three months later.*

*Immediately after the accident, Joni told God, "You'll never be trusted with another of my prayers." But after struggling with anguish and anger Joni said, "I prayed one short prayer that changed my life: 'Oh God, if I can't die, show me how to live.' That was probably the most powerful prayer I had ever prayed."*

- I don't want to imply that if God doesn't HAVE you a tragedy will strike
- I just want to ask you—does God have your thoughts?
- Is he where your affections are set?

He HAS YOU if HE is the primary focus of your thoughts!

## **II. God HAS YOU when He is the standard of your actions.**

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*"We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did." 1 John 2:3-6 NIV*

*"If you love me, keep my commands." John 14:15 NIV*

A. What is the standard of your actions?

1. I am living better than them?
2. I am not violating any code or law that I see
3. I can do this and still go to heaven!
4. If these are your standards, He does not have you!

B. We know He has us when we say with Paul (I want to know Him)

*"I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death." Philipians 3:10 NLT*

C. We know He has us when we are being changed from glory to glory as we behold Him

*"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV*

D. We know He has us when our aim is always to please Him

*"So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it." 2 Corinthians 5:9 NIV*

Joseph Stowell (former president to Moody Bible College)

*I am preaching to construct a biblical grid in the minds of believers through which everything—including what they watch on TV—is processed.*

Biblical grid that gauges our lives is the key to him having us!

Is HE the standard of your actions?

### **III. God HAS YOU when He is the motive of your efforts.**

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He is the reason you do what you do!

**A Motive Test:**

- A. Are you bothered when someone else gets recognized for their efforts but you do not?
- B. Are you angered when others do not jump in and help you do your work for Him?
- C. Are you frustrated when you are overlooked for opportunities to serve?
- D. Are you fickle and inconsistent about your service and your willingness driven by feelings or emotions? (Start and stop in service)

If so—then HE is NOT the motive for your efforts!

*“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.” Colossians 3:23-24 NLT*

**(ILL)** According to USA Today, firms are spending billions of dollars to fire up workers—with little results. The article states:

*There has been exhaustive academic research trying to find out what motivates workers, and it has turned up almost no evidence that motivational spending makes any difference.*

*Poll-taker Gallup analyzed its massive database and determined in March that 55 percent of employees have no enthusiasm for their work—Gallup uses the term “not engaged”—based on several criteria, including loyalty and the desire to improve job performance. One in five (19 percent) are so uninterested or negative about their jobs that they poison the workplace to the point that companies might be better off if they called in sick.*

*Further into the article, Spencer Johnson, author of *Who Moved My Cheese?* states he “believes research may one day show that the only long-lasting motivation will come from employees who bring it to work in the form of God, spirituality, or something else that causes them to ‘rise to a higher purpose.’”*

*“You cannot play the piano well unless you are singing within you.”—Concert pianist Arthur Rubenstein (1887–1982)*

**Truth:** You cannot serve well and live as God HAS you unless your heart is singing within, seeing your service as a way of pleasing your Master and worshipping Him!

Is Christ the Motive of your efforts? Then HE HAS YOU!

#### IV. God HAS YOU when He is the model for your well-being.

- A. We want a life that is sacrifice and pain free
- B. If that is what we pursue—He does not have us
- C. Jesus made it clear that those who follow Him must bear a cross of pain and suffering

*“If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.”*

Matthew 10:38-39 NLT

*“...Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2*  
Corinthians 12:7-10 NIV

- D. Paul said I want Jesus to be my model (I want to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the FELLOWSHIP of His sufferings.
- E. Peter as well—

*“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” 1 Peter 2:21 NIV*

*(ILL) An early Christian document known as the Epistle to Diognetus (c. A.D. 120-200) is believed to have been written by a man named Athenagoras. In one important section the author describes how Christians are alike—and different from others:*

*The difference between Christians and the rest of mankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. Christians do not live in separate cities of their own, speak any special dialect, not practice any eccentric way of life. ... They pass their lives in whatever township—Greek or foreign—each man's lot has determined; and conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet, and other habits. Nevertheless, the organization of their community does exhibit some features that are remarkable, and even surprising. For instance, though they are residents at home in their own countries, their behavior there is more like transients. ... Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh; their days are passed on earth, but their citizenship is above in the*

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*heavens. They obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws. They show love to all men—and all men persecute them. They are misunderstood, and condemned; yet by suffering death they are quickened into life. They are poor, yet making many rich; lacking all things, yet having all things in abundance. . . . They repay [curses] with blessings, and abuse with courtesy. For the good they do, they suffer stripes as evildoers.*

Is Christ and His Suffering the Model for your well-being or is it self-preservation? Does He HAVE YOU!

**V. God HAS YOU when He is the measure of your surrender.**

A. God doesn't have me when I am measuring my surrender by another's standards or by how much I can afford to surrender.

1. Many believers do this—with their time, talent, and their money
2. I can afford to give this much—it won't hurt me too bad

B. God has us when we place our surrender up against the surrender of Jesus and measure it that way—He gave all, it cost Him something

*"...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." Ephesians 5:25-27 NIV*

(ILL) Peter began to say to Him, *"See, we have left all and followed You."* —*Mark 10:28*. Jesus replies to this statement of Peter by saying that this surrender is *"for My sake and the gospel's"* (*Mark 10:29*).

It was not for the purpose of what the disciples themselves would get out of it

*"Beware of the surrender that is motivated by personal benefits that may result."* (Oswald Sanders—My Utmost for His Highest)

C. We tend to offer surrender that allows us to meet our own needs first (Luke 9)

1. I will follow you wherever you go (foxes have holes and birds have nests)
2. Let me bury my father first (better season in life)—let the dead bury their dead
3. Let me first say goodbye (hand to plow and looks back not fit for the Kingdom)

*"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26-27 NIV*

*"In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples." Luke 14:33 NIV*

**Conclusion: Does God HAVE YOU—is He the measure of your surrender?**

*Orthodox Church officials in Russia discovered in 2008 that one of their church buildings had disappeared. Poof—gone! The 200-year-old building northeast of Moscow had gone unused for a decade, but the Orthodox Church, which was experiencing growth, was considering reopening the church building, and that's when they discovered their building wasn't there.*

*They had to get to the bottom of this. After investigating the matter, the church officials did not blame aliens from outer space for the missing structure. Rather, they said the perpetrators were villagers from a nearby town, whom they said had taken and sold bricks from the building to a businessman. For each brick, the thieves received one ruble (about 4 cents).*

*This two-story church facility did not go from being a building to not being a building in one bulldozing stroke. Rather, the bricks were apparently chiseled out one by one by lots of people. In the same way, some churches—built not of bricks but of "living stones," that is of Christians—are not reduced in one fatal stroke but rather by Christians one by one choosing not to be involved. Stay home and watch a TV preacher. Read the Bible and pray, but don't mess with the organized church. Do your own spiritual thing. Each decision means one less living stone. In the end, the church, intended by God to be the display of Christ's glory, is chiseled away. Conversely, each person who gets involved helps to build a holy temple in the Lord made up of living bricks, where Christ is glorified.*

- For GT to accomplish what God has called us to we must be people GOD HAS.
- We must not slowly lose our commitment, our surrender, our sacrifice and eventually lose our influence in this community.
- He wants YOU not your stuff.
- Does He have you?