

## What Am I Lacking?

We are reminded often in scripture that our search to better know and grow closer to God is connected to our daily interactions with other people, both believers and nonbelievers. More than that, answers we find to struggles or questions about spiritual life can be found by how we interact with others. The giving and receiving of love with the people around us that grants truth its best chance to come to the surface and open our eyes. Famous writer and philosopher Feodor Dostoevsky also once said, "He who desires to see the living God face to face should not seek Him in the empty firmament of his mind, but in human love."

When it comes to matters of godliness, there is a much-needed combination of thought and action. Not just any thought is sufficient however. We must never forget that our thoughts and actions are driven or determined by God's word. But there is also a sense where proper actions are what is necessary for proper thinking. The right circumstances because of our actions can drive us to have thoughts that can be considered righteous.

Possibly due to having lives that are a bit more concrete, people who live more simple lives seem to find God more easily than those who live more sophisticated ones. We find Paul talking about this in 1 Corinthians 1:26-27, "For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong." Despite the lack of philosophical knowledge, down-to-earth people do know about one thing; they know about real, practical, everyday love. They know how to love a God whom they've not seen because they know how to love others whom they have seen. And this is consistent with John's statement, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20). So there is a great deal of importance to understand what it means to love. First John 4:8 is proof of this fact as it says that "he who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

Suppose that I have been agonizing over some question I have concerning God that may be embarrassing to bring to peoples' attention. It is entirely appropriate and even more so, it is essential that I search the scriptures carefully and spend as much time as needed meditating on the matter. But suppose that after many hours of study, thought, and prayer, I am still confused or unable to answer the question. Then, I discover that my neighbor cannot cut his grass because he is needed at the bedside of his wife who is dying of cancer. There is at least some likelihood that by showing kindness through cutting that neighbors grass that I may be able to find the answer that has eluded me in my studies. Therefore, if you have been studying and working hard to show yourself approved of God but feel you are lacking, consider reaching out and helping others. You may find that by doing so, you gain a better understanding of how to live a more godly life.

Oren Caskey