

STUDY GUIDE

Monday, November 28 – Throughout the Bible we read stories of people believing God was absent. Abraham thought God had forgotten about him. The Israelites spent years wondering if God really was there. In **Deuteronomy 4:26-29**, we read God's response to the Israelites. What about us? Do we want to know God? God promised the Israelites that they would find him when they searched with all their hearts and souls. God is knowable and wants to be known – but we have to want to know him. Acts of service and worship must be accompanied by sincere devotion of the heart. As **Hebrews 11:6** says, **“Anyone who wants to come to him, must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.”** God will reward those who pursue a relationship with him.

Tuesday, November 29– Does God seem absent in your life? We all go through life wavering between doubt and faith. Anyone that says they have never doubted God, or something about the character of God, is lying. Doubt itself is not evil. In fact, it can lead us to a deeper belief. David was a man after God's own heart. Listen to his words in **Psalms 105:4**: **“Search for the Lord and for his strength, and keep on searching.”** We cannot let doubt stop us from following God and seeking Him. David didn't let the death of his son, the betrayal of a son or endless conflicts keep him from pursuing a relationship with God. When the “feeling of God's presence” isn't there, doesn't mean he's gone. Don't give up.

Wednesday, November 30 – **Read Isaiah 55:6-8.** God said that he had abandoned Israel for a brief moment, so the nation was like a young wife rejected by her husband. But God still called Israel his own. The God we serve is holy, and he cannot tolerate sin. When his people blatantly sinned, God in his anger chose to punish them. Sin separates us from God and can bring us pain and suffering. But if we confess our sin and repent, then God will forgive us. Have you ever been separated from a loved one and then experienced the joy when that person returned? That is like the joy God experiences when you repent and return to him. When God seems absent in your life, it might be a good idea to look inwardly and see if there is anything within that is causing the separation.

Thursday, December 1 – When we ask the question, “Where is God?” it could mean different things to different people. For instance, it could be a power question. It's a question of His power, His capacity, and His ability to fix a bad situation. **Read Jeremiah 32:17.** We need a miracle and we look in His direction. It could also be a presence question. **Read Psalm 42:1.** One of the signs of a growing faith is when we seek God's presence when things are dark and hard. Continuing to seek Him when He doesn't come up with the power goods, but recognizing He is there still, comforting and encouraging us, indicates a deepening and maturing of our inner selves as we continue to let him develop us. Sometimes the question “Where is God?” is not a question but a protest. It is a statement of how badly we hate what is going on. It is a desire, a wish, a cry of pain and anguish. It is an emotional reaction to a great difficulty. **Read Matthew 27:66.** Jesus knew what was going on and what the plan was. If you are asking this question, what are you really asking?

Friday, December 2 – *“Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.”* These words come from a hymn written by John Wesley in 1744. John knew that we seek after God and only when we find Him, that we will find rest. The challenge for the rest of this month is to actually recognize God in the midst of all the busyness. In the middle of trying to get here and there and to buy this and that and standing forever in line may we all find our “rest” in God. May our prayer be: *“Come Lord Jesus. Free me from my fears, forgive me not seeking after you with my whole heart. Give me the rest only you can give.”*