A. W. Tozer’s book, "The Pursuit of God," is a masterly study of the inner life of the believer thirsting after God. Keep in mind that Tozer wrote this in 1948… many believe the condition of the church today is worse now than it was then. What Tozer provides for us in this book is a theology of the heart, not of the head. It deals with the deep things of God and the riches of His grace. In this hour of seeming “universal darkness” in our world (keep in mind this was 1948) there exists only the cheering gleam of a small group of highly committed believers “hungering after God Himself.” Though there are numerous Bible teachers expounding the doctrines of Christ from our pulpits, the manifest Presence of God is nearly non-existent in our churches. The 17th century English poet John Milton’s painful words apply as accurately to our day as they did to his: "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.” It is a solemn thing to see God’s children starving while seated at the Father’s table. The words of the 18th century theologian John Wesley are also quite appropriate at this point: "Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is, at best, a very slender part of religion.” Though millions hold “right opinions,” yet true spiritual nourishment is tremendously lacking in the vast majority of our churches. This book by Tozer is a modest attempt to help God’s hungry children find Him. Following is a chapter by chapter summary of his book — this ten chapter study provides us with a wonderful “ten day” devotional. Prayerfully reflect upon each chapter.

**Chp #1 – Before a sinful man can think “right thoughts of God,”** there must be a work of enlightenment done within him – this is the secret cause of all desiring and seeking after God. Jesus said, “No man can come to Me except the Father who sent Me draws him” (Jn 6:44). The impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is “our following hard after Him.” Though all is of God, man is charged with the responsibility of pursuing God – on his part there must be positive reciprocation if the “secret drawing of God” is to eventuate in an identifiable experience of the Divine. Writes the psalmist: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” (Ps 42:1-2). God is a Person who thinks and wills and loves and enjoys and feels and desires as any other person may — as such He communicates with us through the avenues of our minds, our wills, and our emotions. The intercourse between God and the soul is known to us in conscious personal awareness. Being made in His image we have within us the capacity to know God, and once we know Him we can begin the glorious pursuit of His Presence; so once we have found God, we can then pursue Him.

Moses used the fact that “he knew God” as an argument for “knowing Him better.” Says Moses: “Now, therefore I pray Thee, if I have found favor in Thy sight, let me know Thy ways, that I may know Thee, so that I may find favor in Thy sight…. I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!” (Ex 33:13,18). God was pleased to reveal Himself to Moses. David’s life was full of spiritual desire, and his psalms ring with the cry of the seeker. Paul confessed that the mainspring of his life was a burning desire to “know God better” (Phil 3:10). How tragic that we in this dark day are only subjected to preaching that focuses on “accepting Christ,” and very little upon craving any further revelation of God to our souls — our spurious logic maintains that since we have found Him we need not seek Him more. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth – acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people.
Every age has its own characteristics. Right now we are in the age of “religious complexity.” The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of activities which occupy our time and attention, but never satisfy the longing of the heart. The shallowness of our inner experience, and the hollowness of our worship, testify that we, in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God scarcely at all. If we would find God amid all the religious externals we must first determine to find Him, and then proceed in the way of simplicity. We must strip down to a blessed few essentials, and come with the guileless candor of childhood — if we do this, without doubt God will respond. The author of the quaint old English classic, “The Cloud of Unknowing,” teaches us how to do this — “Lift up thine heart unto God with a meek stirring of love; and mean only Him, and none of His goods. And thereto, look thee loath to think on aught but God Himself…. This is the work of the soul that most pleaseth God.” Following is a prayer Tozer penned for us to pray —

O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, that so I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Give me grace to follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Chp #2 – Before the Lord made man, He created a world of useful and pleasant things for his sustenance and delight; the created things were always meant to be external to him and subservient to him. In the deep heart of the man was a shrine where none but God was worthy to abide… but sin has introduced complications and has made those very “gifts of God” a potential source of ruin to the soul — “things” have taken over the human heart; God is crowned there no longer. This is an accurate analysis of our real spiritual trouble — the human heart covets “things” with a deep and fierce passion. God’s gifts now take the place of God. Our Lord referred to this tyranny of things when He said to His disciples: “Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it” (Matt 16:25). The chief characteristic of the “self-life” is its possessiveness — the words “gain” and “profit” in the following verse suggest this. To allow this enemy to live is in the end to lose everything. To repudiate it and give up all for Christ’s sake is to love nothing at last, but to preserve everything unto life eternal.

The way to “deeper knowledge of God” is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and the abnegation of all things. The blessed ones who possess the Kingdom are they who have repudiated every external thing and have rooted from their hearts all sense of possessing. These blessed poor are no longer slaves to the tyranny of things — they have broken the yoke of the oppressor; and this they have done not by fighting but by surrendering. We learn much from Abraham at this point — God said to him, “Take Thy son whom you love and offer him up as a burnt-offering” (Gen 22:2). God suffered Abraham to go through with it up to the point where He knew he would not retreat — God only wanted to “remove Isaac” from the temple of his heart that He might reign unchallenged there; He wanted to correct the perversion that existed in his love. After Abraham was tested, he still had everything he had prior to that point, but now he possessed nothing — and that is the spiritual secret. Things had now become external to Abraham; his real treasures were now inward and eternal. The Christian who is alive enough to know himself even slightly will recognize the symptoms of this possession malady, and will grieve to find them in his own
heart. Let him come to God and insist that God remove those things from his heart, and that He would reign there in power.

Writes Tozer: “Let us never forget that such a truth as this cannot be learned by rote as one would learn the facts of physical science — they must be experienced before we can really know them. We must in our hearts live through Abraham’s harsh and bitter experiences if we would know the blessedness which follows them. The ancient curse will not go out painlessly; the tough old miser within us will not lie down and die obedient to our command. He must be torn out of our heart like a plant from the soil… he must be extracted in agony and blood like a tooth from the jaw.” If we would indeed know God “intimately” we must go this way of renunciation… and if we are set upon the pursuit of God, [let there be no doubt about it] He will sooner or later bring us to this test. Following is another prayer Tozer penned for us —

Father, I want to know Thee, but my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shalt Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. This I pray in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Chp #3 – Among the famous sayings of the Church fathers none is better known than “Augustine’s” — “Thou has formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.” God made us for Himself — that is the only explanation that satisfies the heart of a thinking man. Should perverse reasoning lead a man to conclude otherwise, says Tozer, “I have no message for such a man…. I speak to [admittedly] thirsty hearts whose longings have been awakened by the touch of God within them…. Their restless hearts furnish all the proof they need. The Shorter Catechism asks the following question: “What is the chief End of Man?” It’s answer: “Man’s chief End is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” God formed us for His pleasure, and so formed us that we might enjoy each others kindred personalities… but we joined the rebellion of Satan and his hosts, and have broken with God and have ceased to obey Him, and have fled as far as possible from His manifest Presence. So the life of man upon the earth is a life away from God’s Presence. The loss of our first estate is the cause of our unceasing restlessness.

The whole work of God in redemption is to undo the tragic effects of our revolt against God, and to bring us back again into right and eternal relationship with Himself… and to return again into “conscious communion with God” and live again in His Presence as before. This first comes to our notice when our restless hearts feel a yearning for God’s Presence, and we say within ourselves, “I will arise and go to my Father.” That is the first step, and as the Chinese sage Lao-tze has said, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a first step.” Western Christianity seems to know this Presence only in theory — it fails to stress the Christian’s privilege of present realization. The “fiery urge” that drove the greatest saints down through the ages is wholly missing. Writes Tozer: “Ignoble contentment takes the place of burning zeal.” The Church is famishing for want of God’s manifest Presence. God now waits to show Himself in His fullness to the humble of soul and the pure in heart. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to become suddenly aware that we are in God and that God is in us — this would burn away the impurities from our lives.
The 17th century Dutch philosopher “Baruch Spinoza” wrote of the intellectual love of God, and he had a measure of truth there; but the highest love of God is not intellectual, it is spiritual. God is spirit and only the spirit of man can truly know Him. The greatest saints of the Kingdom have been those who “loved God” more than others did. Of God the Father they sing:

> Only to sit and think of God, Oh what a joy it is!
> To think the thought, to breathe the Name; Earth has no higher bliss.

Such worship can never come from a mere doctrinal knowledge of God; they can only come from one who has been in the Presence of God. The Church waits today for the tender voice of the saint who has experienced God’s holy Presence. Why does the believer today consent to abide all his days just outside the “Holy of Holies” and never enter into God’s very Presence? The “veil” in the Temple was torn top to bottom when Christ went to the Cross, so why do we as Christians continue to grow old in the “Outer Courts” of the tabernacle? Why do we continue to erect a “veil” in our hearts to keep us hidden from the face of God? It is the veil of our fleshly fallen nature “living on uncrucified” — it is the veil of the “self-life” of which we have been secretly ashamed, and have never brought to the judgment of the Cross. The “self-sins” of the self-life are these: self-righteousness, self-pity, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-admiration, self-love, and a host of others like them. They dwell too deep within us and are too much a part of our natures to come to our attention till the light of God is focused upon them.

Many in the Christian community have believed that justification through the righteousness of Christ alone should effectuate deliverance from the power of the self-sins; but it does not work that way. Self can live unrebuked at the very altar. Self can actually feed upon orthodoxy and be more at home in a Bible Conference than in a tavern. Self is the opaque veil that hides the Face of God from us — it can be removed only in spiritual experience, never by mere instruction. We must invite the Cross to do its deadly work within us… we must bring our self-sins to the cross for judgment… we must prepare ourselves for an ordeal of suffering in some measure like that through which our Savior passed when He suffered under Pontius Pilate; in actuality there is nothing pleasant about it — to tear away the fleshly veil in our hearts is to injure us, to hurt us and make us bleed. To say otherwise is to make the cross no cross at all, and death no death at all. It is never fun to die. To rip through the dear and tender stuff of which life is made can never be anything but deeply painful. Yet it is only through an experience of the Cross that the believer can truly be set free. We must confess, forsake, repudiate the self-life, and then reckon it crucified. We must insist upon the work being done. The Cross is rough, and it is deadly, but it is effective. There comes a moment when its work is finished and the suffering victim dies. After that is resurrection glory and power, and the pain is forgotten for joy that the veil is taken away, and we have entered in actual spiritual experience to the Presence of the living God. Tozer give us this prayer:

> Lord, how excellent are Thy ways, and how devious and dark are the ways of man. Show us how to die, that we may rise again to newness of life.
> Rend the veil of our self-life, that we would draw near in full assurance of faith. Grant us the grace to dwell with Thee in daily experience. This we ask in Jesus’ Name. Amen.
Chp #4 – To most people God is merely an inference — not a reality; he remains personally unknown to the individual. “God must be,” they say, “therefore we believe He is.” To many others God is but an “ideal,” another name for goodness, or beauty, or truth; or He is a law, or life, or the creative impulse behind the phenomena of existence. All these notions have one thing in common: they do not know God in personal experience. While admitting His existence they do not think of Him as knowable in the sense that they know people. Christians, to be sure, go further than this, at least in theory — their creed requires them to believe in the personality of God. Yet for millions of Christians, God is no more real than He is to the non-Christian — they go through life trying to love an idea and be loyal to a mere principle. Against all of this cloudy vagueness stands the clear scriptural doctrine that God can be known in personal experience. Most Christians know little of conscious communion with God because of a defective faith and a numbness toward spiritual things – they do not reckon upon the reality of God’s Presence. Man knows that the world is “real” — with his five senses he engages in this real world. But God is also “real,” and all other realities are contingent upon the fact that He is real.

God and the spiritual world are “real” — we can reckon upon them with as much assurance as we reckon upon the familiar world around us. Our problem is that we place more confidence in that which is seen – the visible world – and experience a level of doubt when thinking about that which our five senses cannot see – the invisible world. The world of sense intrudes upon our attention day and night for the whole of our lifetime, and “sin” has so clouded the lenses of our hearts that we cannot see the Presence of the Divine Reality all around us. At the root of the Christian life lies belief in the invisible — the object of the Christian’s faith is unseen reality. The spiritual realm is as real as the physical realm. The author of Hebrews writes, “He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6). This is basic to the life of faith. Jesus said, “You believe in God… believe also in Me” (Jn 14:1). Without the first there can be no second. If we truly want to follow God we must seek to be otherworldly — the Kingdom of God must be our sphere of interest. We must avoid the common problem of pushing the “other world” into the future — it is not future, but present. It parallels our familiar physical world. It is only as we “focus upon God” that the things of the spirit will take shape before our inner eyes — obedience to the Word will bring an inward revelation of the Godhead (Jn 14:21-23). A new God-consciousness will seize upon us and we shall begin to taste and hear and inwardly feel the God who is our life and our all (Ps 34:8). More and more, as our faculties grow sharper and more sure, God will become to us the great All, and His Presence the glory and wonder of our lives. Tozer has offered us the following prayer —

O God, quicken to life every power within me, that I may lay hold on eternal things. Open my eyes that I may see; give me acute spiritual perception; enable me to taste Thee and know that thou art good. Make heaven more real to me than any earthly thing has ever been. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Chp #5 – One of the most significant truths in all Christian teaching is that of “divine immanence” — God dwells in His creation and is everywhere present. For some reason this truth has not sunk into the average Christian’s heart so as to become a part of his believing self. Divine immanence simply means that “God is here” — He is everywhere present; there is no place that He is not. The psalmist David wrote, “Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there” (Ps 139:7-8). The apostle Paul assured the Athenians that “God is not far from any one of
us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:27-28). The problem with most Christians is that they are not consciously aware of God’s Presence — God manifests Himself to us when we co-operate with Him in loving obedience. It is a great moment for Christians when they really begin to believe that God’s promise of self-revelation is literally true. Our pursuit of God is successful just because He is forever seeking to manifest Himself to us. We must pray for an increasing degree of awareness, and for a more perfect consciousness of the divine Presence. God is nearer than our own soul, closer than our most secret thoughts.

Why do some persons “find God” in a way that others do not? Tozer suggests that the one vital quality is that of “spiritual receptivity.” The testimony of the great saints of history is that they had spiritual awareness and that they went on to cultivate it until it became the biggest thing in their lives; they were obedient to the heavenly vision and acquired the lifelong habit of spiritual response. The idea of cultivation and exercise, so dear to the saints of old, has now no place in our total religious picture. Let any man turn to God in earnest, let him begin to exercise himself unto godliness, let him seek to develop his powers of spiritual receptivity by trust and obedience and humility, and the results will exceed anything he may have hoped in his leaner and weaker days. The Universal Presence is a fact — God is here — the whole universe is alive with His life. And He is always trying to get our attention… to reveal Himself to us… to communicate with us. We have within us the ability to know Him if we will but respond to His overtures. We will know Him in increasing degree as our receptivity becomes more perfect by faith and love and practice. “Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you” (Jam 4:8). Tozer penned this prayer for us —

O God and Father, I repent of my sinful preoccupation with visible things. 
The world has been too much with me. Thou hast been here and I knew it not. I have been blind to Thy Presence. Open my eyes that I may behold 
Thee in and around me. For Christ’s sake. Amen.

Chp #6 – It is the nature of God to “communicate His thoughts” to others. Words are the medium by which thoughts are expressed – God is forever seeking to speak to His creation. All of Scripture supports this idea. “In the beginning was the WORD, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God…. The WORD was full of grace and truth and became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:1, 14). The Bible is the “written word” of God. Jesus said, “The words that I speak to your are spirit and they are life” (Jn 6:63). God’s word is “living, active and powerful” (Heb 4:12). Francis Schaeffer reminds us of the reality of God’s Presence and His active work among us in his books, “The God Who is There” and “He is There and He is Not Silent.” When God spoke out of heaven to our Lord, self-centered men who heard it explained it by natural causes: They said, “It thundered!” This habit of explaining the Voice to natural law is at the very root of modern science. In the living breathing cosmos there is a mysterious Something, too wonderful, too awful for any mind to understand. The believer does not claim to understand, but falls to his knees and whispers, “God.” The earthly man kneels also, but not to worship; he kneels to examine the cause and the how of things. Our thought habits more often resemble the scientist, not those of the worshipper. We are more likely to explain than to adore. The Voice continues speak forth the truth, but most men are too busy or too stubborn to give it attention.

Listening today is not a part of popular religion — we are too busy and too preoccupied to listen. God says, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10) — this passage of Scripture inspired Katharina von Schlegel to pen the words of the hymn, “Be Still, My Soul” —
Be still, my soul! the Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul! thy best, thy heavenly Friend
Thro’ thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

It is important that we get still to wait on God... and it is best that we get alone, preferably with our Bible outspread before us. Then if we will we may draw near to God and begin to hear Him speak to us in our hearts. The average person may admit that they should accept the Bible as the Word of God, but they find it impossible to believe that the words there on the page are actually for them. A man may say, “These words are addressed to me, and yet in his heart not feel and know that they are. He is the victim of a divided theology. The facts are that God is not silent, and never has been — it is the nature of God to speak. The Bible is the infallible declaration of God’s mind to man in human words. If you would follow on to know the Lord, come at once to the open Bible expecting it to speak to you — it is a voice, the very Word of the living God. Tozer penned these words for us to pray —

Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, “Speak, for Thy servant heareth.” Let me hear Thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy Voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Thy Voice speaking. This I pray in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Chp #7 – The writer of Hebrews said, “Look unto Jesus the author & perfecter of your faith” (Heb 12:2). High on the list of things which the bible teaches us is the “doctrine of faith” — the Bible gives weighty importance to faith. Faith is all-important in the life of the soul; without it it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6); without it there can be no approach to God, no forgiveness, no deliverance, no salvation, no communion, no spiritual life at all. What is faith? Most authors tell us it is believing God’s promises, taking God at His word, reckoning the Bible to be true and stepping out upon it. Scripture tells us that faith is a gift of God, and that it comes by hearing the word of God (Rom 10:17; Eph 2:8). Believing and looking are synonymous terms (Jn 3:14-19; Heb 12:2). Faith is the gaze of a soul upon a saving God; it is directing the heart’s attention to Jesus. Faith is the least “self-regarding” of the virtues — it is by its very nature scarcely conscious of its own existence. Like the eye which sees everything in front of it and never sees itself, faith is occupied with the Object upon it rests and pays no attention to itself at all. While we are “looking at God” we do not see ourselves — blessed riddance. The man who has struggled to purify himself has but to “look away to the perfect One” — while he gazes upon Christ, God will be doing His transforming work in the soul. So faith is a redirecting of our sight, a getting out of the focus of our own vision and getting God into focus. Sin has twisted our vision inward and made it “self-regarding.” Unbelief has put self where God should be, and is perilously close to the sin of Lucifer who said, “I will set my throne above the throne of God.” Following is a prayer by Tozer —

O Lord, I have heard a good word inviting me to look away to Thee and be satisfied. My heart longs to respond, but sin has clouded my vision till I see
Thee but dimly. Be pleased to cleanse me in Thine own precious blood, and make me inwardly pure, so that I may with unveiled eyes gaze upon Thee all the days of my earthly pilgrimage. Lord Jesus, open my eyes to behold Your face. This I pray in Your Name. Amen.

Chp #8 – Tozer states that the cause of all our human miseries is a “radical moral dislocation,” an upset in our relation to God and to each other. Whatever else the Fall may have been, it was a total change in man’s relation to his Creator—he destroyed the proper Creator-creature relation in which, unknown to him, his true happiness lay. So, essentially, salvation is the restoration of a right relation between man and his Creator. A satisfactory spiritual life begins with a complete change in relation between God and the sinner. Much of our difficulty as seeking Christians stems from our unwillingness to take God as He is and adjust our lives accordingly—we insist on trying to modify Him and bring Him nearer to our own image. We can get a right start only by accepting God as He is and learning to love Him for what He is. As we go on to know Him better we find it a source of unspeakable joy that God is just what He is. Above all, God is the self-existent One who gave being to all things—all things have been created by Him and for Him (Col 1:16; Rom 11:36). We owe Him every honor—our everlasting grief lies in rendering to Him less than He deserves. When we make up our minds that we are going to exalt God over all things, we discover that we have a new mindset and a new viewpoint… we no longer adjust to the ways of the world; as such, we step out of the world’s parade. Tozer penned the following prayer—

O God, be Thou exalted over my possessions—nothing of earth’s treasures shall seem dear unto me if only thou art glorified in my life. Be Thou exalted over my friendships—I am determined that Thou shall be above all, though I must stand deserted and alone in the midst of the earth. Be Thou exalted above my comforts—though it mean the loss of bodily comforts and the carrying of heavy crosses I shall keep my vow made this day before Thee. Be Thou exalted over my reputation—make me ambitious to please Thee even if as a result I must sink into obscurity and my name be forgotten as a dream. Rise, O Lord, into Thy proper place of honor, above my ambitions… above my likes and dislikes… and even above my family, my health and even my life itself. Let me decrease that Thou mayest increase. I pray this, Jesus, in Your Name. Amen.

Chp #9 – Tozer says a fairly accurate description of the “human race” is the inverse of the Beatitudes, because such are the qualities that distinguish human life and conduct—instead of poverty of spirit we find incessant pride… instead of mourners we find pleasure seekers… instead of meekness, arrogance… instead of hungering after righteousness we are hungering after riches… instead of mercy, cruelty… instead of purity of heart, corrupt imaginings… instead of being peace-makers, we find people quarrelsome and resentful… instead of rejoicing in mistreatment we find ourselves fighting back with every weapon at our disposal. Of this kind of moral stuff civilized society is composed. Though culture and education refine these things slightly, it leaves them basically untouched. All our heartaches are a direct product of our sins—pride, arrogance, evil imaginings, resentfulness, malice, greed—these are the sources of more human pain than all the diseases that ever afflicted mortal flesh. Into just such a world comes the wonderful and strange words of Jesus—“Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest
for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Mt 11:28-30). The burden borne by mankind is a heavy and crushing thing — rest is simply release from that burden.

The “meek man” cares not at all who is greater than he, for he has long ago decided that the esteem of the world is not worth the effort. The meek man is no longer being fooled about himself; he has accepted God’s estimate of his own life; he knows he is as weak and helpless as God has declared him to be; he knows well that the world will never see him as God sees him and he has stopped caring... he rests perfectly content to allow God to give him his own values. In the meantime he has arrived at place where his soul is at rest... as he walks on in meekness he is content to let God defend him; the old struggle to defend himself is over. No longer does he suffer under the burden of pretense — the common human desire to put one’s best foot forward and hide from the world one’s real inward poverty. There is hardly a man or woman alive who dares to be just what he or she is without doctoring up the impression. To all the victims of this gnawing disease Jesus says, “You must become as little children” — for little children do not compare; they receive direct enjoyment from what they have without relating it to something else or someone else. Only as they get older and sin begins to stir within their hearts do jealousy and envy appear... and it never leaves them until Jesus sets them free. Only an evil desire to shine makes us want to appear other than what we are. The heart of the world is breaking under this load of pride and pretense. To men and women everywhere Jesus says, “Come unto Me and I will give you rest.” The rest He offers is the rest of meekness, the blessed relief which comes when we accept ourselves for what we are and cease to pretend. Truly meek individuals joyfully discover that the yoke of Jesus is “easy” and His burden is “light.” Tozer offers us the following prayer —

Lord, make me childlike. Deliver me from the urge to compete with another for place or prestige or position. I would be simple and artless as a little child. Deliver me from pose and pretense. Forgive me for thinking of myself. Help me to forget myself and find my true peace in beholding Thee. That Thou mayest answer this prayer I humble myself before Thee. Lay upon me Thy easy yoke of self-forgetfulness that through it I may find rest. I pray this in Your most holy Name. Amen.

Chp #10 – One of the great hindrances to “internal peace” which the Christian community encounters is the common habit of dividing our lives into two areas — the sacred and the secular. Our problem springs from the fact that as believers we inhabit two worlds — the spiritual and the natural. To live among men requires of us years of hard toil and paying much attention to the things of this world. In sharp contrast to this is our life in the Spirit; as such we tend to divide our total life into two departments. We often perform the rigors of everyday living — eating, sleeping, working, looking after the needs of the body, and performing our dull everyday duties here on earth — reluctantly and with many misgivings, often apologizing to God for what we consider a waste of time and strength. We go about our common tasks telling ourselves “there’s a better day coming” when we shall no longer be bothered with the affairs of this world. This is the old sacred-secular antithesis, and most Christians are caught in its trap. The truth is, there is no sacred- secular antithesis found in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus said, “Everything I do is to please the Father.” Jesus never once performed a non-sacred act.

Likewise Paul said, “Everything we do we are to do to the glory of God.” Paul’s injunction opens before us the possibility of making “every act of our lives” something that contributes to
the glory of God. Lest we should be too timid to include everything, Paul mentions specifically eating and drinking (1 Cor 10:31). Every act of life can be as truly sacred as prayer or partaking of the Lord’s Supper — thus, we are to lift every act up into a living kingdom and turn the whole of life into a sacrament. By one act of consecration of our total selves to God, we can make every subsequent act express that consecration. We must determine in our hearts to do everything to the glory of God. Long-held habits, however, do not die easily — it will take intelligent thought and a great deal of reverent prayer to escape completely from the sacred-secular psychology. We must offer all our acts to God and truly believe that He accepts them. Let us believe that God is in all our simple deeds and learn to find Him there — this is the art of making every work a priestly ministration.

From the “sacred-secular bondage” reformers, puritans and mystics have labored to free us. Today the trend in conservative circles is back toward that bondage again… fundamentalism is stubbornly moving us back toward “spiritual slavery.” The observation of days and times is becoming more and more prominent among us — “Lent” and “Holy Week” and “Good Friday” are words heard more and more frequently upon the lips of gospel Christians. Tozer goes on to say, however, that “this does not mean that everything we do is of equal importance with everything else we may do. One act of a good man’s life may differ widely from another in importance. Paul’s sewing of tents was not equal to his writing of an Epistle to the Romans, but both were accepted of God and both were true acts of worship.” The “layman” should never think of his humbler task as being inferior to that of his pastor — “Let every man abide in the calling wherein he is called and his work will be as sacred as the work of the ministry.” It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why he does it — motive is everything. Let a man sanctify the Lord God in his heart and he can thereafter do no common act. All he does is good and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For such a man, “living itself will be sacramental and the whole world a sanctuary — his entire life will be a priestly ministration.” Tozer ends his book with this closing prayer —

Lord, I would trust Thee completely; I would be altogether Thine; I would exalt Thee above all. I desire that I may feel no sense of possessing anything outside of Thee. I want constantly to be aware of Thy overshadowing Presence and to hear Thy speaking Voice. I long to live in restful sincerity of heart. I want to live so fully in the Spirit that all my thoughts may be as sweet incense ascending to Thee and every act of my life may be an act of worship. Therefore I pray in the words of Thy great servant of old, “I beseech Thee, God, that you would cleanse the intent of mine heart with the unspeakable gift of Thy grace, that I may perfectly love Thee and worthily praise Thee.” And all this I confidently believe Thou wilt grant me through the merits of Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen.