



# reflecting Jesus

BETA

I was designed  
for intimacy with God **12**

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*did you know...*

- ☞ Less than 1% of the water supply on earth can be used as drinking water.
- ☞ The total amount of water in the body of an average adult is 37 litres.
- ☞ Human brains are 75% water, bones are 25% water, and blood is 83% water.
- ☞ In a 100 year period, a water molecule spends 98 years in the ocean, 20 months as ice, about 2 weeks in lakes and rivers, and less than a week in the atmosphere.
- ☞ Ground-water can take a human lifetime just to travel a mile.
- ☞ A person can live about a month without food, but only about a week without water.
- ☞ If all the world's water were fit into a gallon jug, the fresh water available for us to use would equal only about one tablespoon.
- ☞ Each day the sun evaporates a trillion tons of water.
- ☞ A person must consume 2 litres of water daily to live healthily.
- ☞ Most of the world's people must walk at least 3 hours to fetch water.
- ☞ Each day almost 10,000 children under the age of 5 in Third World countries die as a result of illnesses caused by impure water.



*As the deer longs for streams of water,  
so I long for you, O God.  
I thirst for God, the living God.  
Psalm 42:1-2a (NLT)*

(source: [www.lenntech.com](http://www.lenntech.com))



## *the facts of his story*

We were designed to live continually in God's presence, but because of sin we are separated. However, this does not mean that God has stopped longing to be with us, nor does it mean that we don't long to be with him.

Consider these texts about God's longing for us:

1. What does Isaiah 40:11 tell you about God?

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2. What does Matthew 23:37 say about the longing of God to help us?

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Now consider these examples of man's longing for God:

3. Read Deuteronomy 6:5. What do you think it means to love God with all our heart, soul and strength?

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4. Read Psalm 42:1-2. How would you describe how the Psalmist is feeling about God?

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5. In Psalm 84:1-2, why does the Psalmist long so much for God? What do you think it would be like to feel like this?

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## *thinking it through*

1. From the texts you have read, how would you summarise the way God feels about you?

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2. How important do you think it is to feel a deep hunger for God—that goes to the very depths of your souls—as we have seen illustrated in the Psalms? How do you think your life would change if this deep, passionate, longing for God was part of your own experience?

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## habits for reflecting the heart of Jesus ~ longing for God

### does your heart long for God?

Do you have a longing to go on holiday in Malé?

Perhaps you are not too sure? Is it a hot place? Cold? Windy? Who knows?

What if I told you that Malé was a tropical coral island in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The Maldives island chain around Malé has beautiful white beaches with warm water, ideal for snorkelling where you can see all sorts of beautiful fishes. It is the definition of paradise on earth.

By now, maybe you're already planning to go there for your next vacation! But as you can see, longing comes as a result of knowing. We don't long for things we don't know anything about—even if they are wonderful.

It is the same with God. Our hearts will never long to be with Jesus and spend time in his presence if we don't know much about him.

### the mind-heart link

There is a direct connection between the knowing of our minds and the longing of our hearts. The longing we have for God is not just a feeling that we can manufacture inside ourselves. These feelings of longing for God are the consequence of what the "eyes of our mind" see.

The Psalmist cried out, "My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." (Psalm 84:2) Why did he do that? Because he saw the beauty of where God "lived"—the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.

What about you? What do you see in God that creates a longing within your heart to spend more time with him?

This is a challenge for all of us, because there are so many other things in our lives competing for our attention. Television, the internet, hobbies, work, the list goes on. So if our hearts are to truly long to be with God, we have to carve out time

where we can be alone with God to gaze upon him.

### practising the habit

Our hearts begin to long for God when we see something wonderful about God. For example:

1. Descriptions in the Bible of God's longing to be with me
2. The Bible's descriptions of God's character and seeing how he is always working for my good
3. The promises he has made to me in the Bible to care for all my needs
4. His work for good in the lives of people around me
5. The assurance of the love, work, and presence of the Holy Spirit as I pray
6. God's goodness to me in the past
7. God's goodness seen in nature

However, if our morning and evening devotions are a couple of minutes rushing through a prayer before rushing on to the next thing, our hearts will never learn to long for God like the writer of Psalm 84. But if you would like to understand a little more of what the Psalmists were writing about, you could try the following:

1. Begin by setting aside time in the morning and evening for time with God. Choose times where you will not be rushed.
2. When you read the Bible, keep an eye out for:
  - a) Descriptions of how valuable God thinks you are,
  - b) God's desire to be with you
  - c) God's promises to care for you
  - d) God's promises to transform you
  - e) God's working for good in the lives of his people
3. Spend time in prayer to thank him for what you see—take your time. Don't hurry!
4. As you pray, be sensitive to the impressions of the Holy Spirit which affirm the truth of what you have read in the Bible.
5. As you go through the rest of your day, try to remember the things you discovered in your time with God.

## in your journal

In your journal, record what you discover in your time with God, along with your prayers that express your longing to be with him.

Remember, as we said, we cannot manufacture a longing for God. But as we spend time observing his goodness, we won't be able to help it.



## putting the pieces together

In “the facts of his story” we saw how God longs to be with us so very much, and when we understand this, we will long to be with God in return—for who would want to be separated from someone who loves us so much?

In “thinking it through” you were challenged about your own attitude towards God. Perhaps you haven't had such a longing for God before, but now you would like to have relationship with him in which you really want to spend time with him!

In “habits for reflecting the heart of Jesus” we saw how our longing for God is not something we manufacture, but it is a response to seeing the great love of God towards us as we read his words, and spend time in his presence.



## my time with God

1. Read the texts below and spend a moment to think about what it means, and how it could apply to you. Is there anything in these verses that causes your heart long for God?
  - a) God's desires for his people: Exodus 19:4-6
  - b) One of God's promises to you: 1 Peter 5:7
  - c) God's actions towards you: Psalm 103:1-18
2. Go and find something that God has made. What can you see in this that makes your heart long for God?
3. Spend some time to think about how God is at work in the lives of those around you. Is there anything that causes your heart to long more for God?
4. Think back over the past months or years. What can you see that might cause your heart to long for God?
5. Have noticed anything in the news recently that causes you to long for God?



## pass it on!

Are you able to explain to someone how deeply it is possible to long for God?



## extra help

1. Steps to Christ chapter 1 “God's love for Man”, by Ellen White.
2. Enjoying Intimacy with God, by J. Oswald Sanders.