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*Compiled and Edited by James L. Snyder*

# My Daily Pursuit

DEVOTIONS FOR EVERY DAY

A.W. TOZER



BETHANYHOUSE

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A.W. Tozer, My Daily Pursuit

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# Contents

Foreword by Ravi Zacharias .....	7
Introduction .....	9
1. January .....	13
2. February .....	44
3. March .....	73
4. April .....	104
5. May .....	134
6. June .....	165
7. July .....	195
8. August .....	226
9. September .....	257
10. October .....	287
11. November .....	318
12. December .....	348

## Foreword

The struggle in our time is often suggested to be of the intellect, in the assertion that both truth and God are unknowable. But if the questions I've encountered over four decades of speaking in universities as well as churches are any indication, I believe the deeper struggle is more often that of the heart.

I often recall the turning point of my own life: while still in my teens, I found myself lying in a hospital bed after an attempted suicide. The struggle for answers when met by despair led me along that tragic path. But there in my hospital room the Scriptures were brought and read to me. For the first time I engaged the direct answers of God to my seeking heart. The profound realization that God could be known personally drew me, with sincerity and determination, to plumb the depths of that claim.

The words of the Charles Wesley hymn, “And Can It Be that I Should Gain?” come flooding to my mind ever so often:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

With a simple prayer of trust in that moment, the change from a desperate heart to one that found the fullness of meaning became a reality for me.

A few short years later, I encountered, through his writings, the distinctive pastoral voice of A. W. Tozer, who expounded on the grandest of all themes to which the human mind could ascend and the heart could embrace: the study of God Himself. Tozer's voice was unique in his era, and I read and reread many of his books. Works such as *The Pursuit of God* and *The Knowledge of the Holy* opened up vistas that were life-transforming.

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Those truths were timely for me and timeless for anyone hungry to know God. So, his words still speak with power and tenderness today, leaving me with the twin passions of fulfillment and legitimate hunger. One statement of his, from *The Root of the Righteous*, that rang so true in cautioning the Church was that we are often like children skipping through the corridors of the kingdom, looking at everything, while pausing to learn the true value of nothing. Tozer gives us the right kind of pause to learn the value of deep reflection on noble truths.

What a thrill it is, therefore, to be introduced to more of Tozer's writings that have never been released until now. Inside these pages you may recognize a familiar tone on themes like worship—which he referred to as the missing jewel of the church—and the holiness and grandeur of God. Here you will find both practical insight and sobering wisdom such as, “Worship is to feel in the heart. I do not apologize for using the word ‘feel.’ . . . If you woke up one morning with no feeling in your arm at all, you would call a doctor, because anything without feeling you can be quite sure is dead.” Elsewhere Tozer observes, “The God of the evangelical church is so small that we can put Him in our pocket.” These are solemn words, and yet we are reminded that a life that has been radically transformed by an encounter with the resurrected Christ will hunger and thirst for God as for no other: “What would today be without living in the conscious presence of God Almighty? I do not want to live any day when that is absent from my life.”

It is a great privilege for me to introduce a new generation to A. W. Tozer and to welcome longtime readers to this fresh volume of his daily readings. I am so grateful for the publication of these writings and know that you will treasure them as well. Tozer truly was one of the great explorers of truths that are indispensable if we are to rise above our shallow times. In proportion to the discipline of study, the reader will be rewarded with lifelong treasures.

Ravi Zacharias

Bestselling author

Founder and president of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

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# Introduction

The great passion of A. W. Tozer, or maybe I should say obsession, was pursuing God on a daily basis. Nothing, neither family nor friends, was more important than his daily pursuit to be with God. The worship of God was the highest calling of Tozer's life.

During his ministry, Tozer was the keynote speaker at many Bible conferences. At one particular conference, the time came for the service to begin and Tozer had not arrived yet. Thinking he was just running a little late, the leader began the service believing Tozer would soon arrive. As the service progressed without any sign of Tozer, the leader became nervous. Finally, the time came for Tozer to begin his sermon but he was nowhere to be found. At the last moment, someone else filled in, much to the disappointment of the audience.

The next morning the leader found Tozer and asked him very simply where he was last night. "Why did you miss your appointment last night?"

Tozer, with a faraway look in his eyes, simply said, "I had a more important appointment last night." Later, that leader discovered Tozer had spent all night on his knees before God. The most important thing in his life was being in the presence of God.

Living in Chicago for most of his ministry, Tozer had a rather busy schedule with many people wanting his advice or prayer—people like Billy Graham and Senator Mark Hatfield, to name a few. Tozer had a unique way of eluding this disturbance when he needed to be alone with God. When he felt he was becoming a little stale, it was time to leave the world behind and be alone with God.

Early in the morning, he would board a westbound train, get in a Pullman car for privacy and ride for the next four hours. Sequestered in his Pullman car he spent the time on his face before God. No cell phones at the time, thankfully, and Tozer had absolute privacy to spend four hours alone with God without interruption. Once he arrived at his destination, he simply boarded an eastbound train returning to Chicago for another four hours alone with God. With an outspread

Bible on his knees, he quieted his heart before God and waited upon God to speak to him and refresh his spirit.

On a similar trip to Texas, Tozer wrote the first draft of the devotional classic, *The Pursuit of God*, which might explain the impact this book has had on Christianity at large. Pursuing God was not a matter of convenience for Tozer, but rather a matter of passion. Tozer could not start his day without spending quality time alone in the presence of God.

Often during these times, he would take a hymnal and begin his time alone with God by quietly singing a hymn. He simply marinated his soul in those great hymns of the church that he loved so much. Hymns were important in helping him express to God that which was deep in his own heart and soul. It would be a very unusual day for him not to meditate on some great hymn of the church.


Because of his passionate desire for God, Tozer was willing to commit to whatever it took to pursue God daily. This book, *My Daily Pursuit*, is a microcosm of Tozer's daily pursuit. Here you will find the components of his daily pursuit of God.

These devotions are taken from the audio sermons of Dr. Tozer and are not quotations from his published works. These represent what I like to refer to as, "conversational Tozer." His preaching style was very conversational—as if he were talking to one person and baring the passion of his heart to that individual.

The one goal of this devotional is to stir up in the hearts of serious-minded Christians such a passion for God. My prayer is that Tozer will inspire you in your daily pursuit.

James L. Snyder

# My Daily Pursuit



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— ❧ — January 1 — ❧ —

*For we have seen his star in the east,  
and are come to worship him.*

MATTHEW 2:2

For the Christian, everything begins and ends with worship. Whatever interferes with one's personal worship of God needs to be properly dealt with and dismissed. Keep in mind that above all else, worship is an attitude, a state of mind and a sustained act. It is not a physical attitude, but an inward act of the heart toward God. The mighty bestowment of God Almighty upon us who trust in Him is that we might be worshipers. Unfortunately, we have become everything else but worshipers. Sin robs God of this pristine pleasure of worship from those created in His image. Through the miracle of the new birth our alienation with God has been done away with; and through His atonement we have become friends of God and have been brought back again into the sphere of worship.

Each day is a special call for all of us to worship God.

Awake, my soul, to joyful lays,  
And sing thy great Redeemer's praise.

SAMUEL MEDLEY (1738–1799)

*My heavenly Father, I begin today in joyful worship.  
Thou hast called me, and I answer Thee in praise and adoration.  
In Jesus' name, amen.*

*And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness  
and of right praise all the day long.*

PSALM 35:28

Worship embodies a number of spiritual and emotional factors. Worship is to feel in the heart. I do not apologize for using the word “feel.” As Christians, we are not to be people without feelings. I certainly do not think we should follow our feelings alone, but I believe that if there is no feeling in our hearts, then we are dead.

Certainly, there is danger in relying only upon feelings.

If you woke up one morning with no feeling in your arm at all, you would call a doctor, because anything without feeling you can be quite sure is dead.

Real worship is, among other things, a feeling in the heart that is appropriately expressed. You can worship God in any manner appropriate to you by feeling in the heart and expressing that humbling but delightful sense of admiring love. Let your heart dictate your worship to the God you love, and who loves you.

Soon, the delightful day will come  
When my dear Lord will bring me home,  
And I shall see His face.

SAMUEL MEDLEY (1738–1799)

*Oh, come, dear Lord, and fill my heart with blessed desire for Thee.  
I lift my heart anticipating the shining of Thy blessed face. Amen.*

*And one cried unto another, and said,  
Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts:  
the whole earth is full of his glory.*

ISAIAH 6:3

Worship is humbling, but it is also delightful, invoking a sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder. Astonishment and wonder are always found in the presence of the Holy Spirit. The difficulty with this today is that everybody is sure of everything. The proud man cannot worship God any more than the proud devil can worship God.

Without mystery, there can be no worship. If I can understand God, then I cannot worship God. I will never get on my knees and say, “Holy, holy, holy” to that which I can figure out. But the more I know of God, the less I understand about Him.

It is in the presence of the Holy Spirit that I begin to recognize what a sinful man I really am. The apostle Paul said, “Woe is me.” Isaiah the prophet cried, “Woe is me!” when he came into the presence of God. They were experiencing the mysterious wonder of that One who is incomprehensible.

’Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!  
Who can explore His strange design?

CHARLES WESLEY (1707–1788)

*Our Father which art in heaven, I come to Thee,  
adoring the mystery of that which is Thyself. The more I know Thee,  
the more I want to know Thee in all the beauty of thy holiness.  
In the name of Jesus, I pray, amen.*