

INTRO

- What's one experience or moment in your life when you felt there was "something more" beyond the ordinary?

In Search Of addresses the universal quest for identity, belonging, purpose, transcendence and freedom. Today's discussion focuses on transcendence, our human longing for something beyond the material world and explores how this desire ultimately points us toward God.

READ

Psalm 42:1-2, 11; Ecclesiastes 3:11; John 17:3

REFLECT & RESPOND

Psalm 42 depicts a soul longing for God. Charles Taylor explains that the modern world perceives reality within an "immanent frame," viewing life solely within the confines of the material world (referred to as "life under the sun" in Ecclesiastes).

Qu: what are some of the ways people pursue in search of transcendence? (e.g. experiences, success, spirituality without God)

The issue with an immanent frame view of reality is that it suppresses our natural longing for something more in life. *Sehnsucht*, a German word, describes this insatiable yearning. CS Lewis calls it an "inconsolable longing" for something beyond what we can see. It's like a feeling of homesickness for God.

Qu: What are examples of this type of longing? (e.g. justice, love, beauty, purpose). How does understanding this longing as a "homesickness" for God connect with the thirst described in Ps 42?

Our desires for justice, relationships, love, and beauty often feel incomplete or broken, as if they're pointing towards something beyond ourselves. NT Wright refers to these as "broken

signposts." These broken signposts acknowledge our real desires, but until we realize that our ultimate fulfillment of these longings is in God, we will always be chasing after them.

Qu: How do we go about shifting our focus from these longings to the ultimate fulfillment of these longings in God?

As Augustine prayed, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in You." Christianity makes sense of *Sehnsucht*, broken signposts, and our restlessness because we are made for relationship with God. Jesus bridges the gap between heaven and earth, God and us, and invites us home.

Qu: Where have you felt restless or unfulfilled lately? How will you invite Jesus into that restlessness?

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for surrender and trust where we acknowledge our deep longings and the ways we potentially seek them outside of God.
- Pray for awareness of God's presence and realization that the beautiful gifts of life, such as justice, love, and beauty, are invitations to know God more.