

Do you remember when “*science*” was actually *science*, and that reality was the solid expectation of everyone who was a serious, thinking human being? You remember, right? That was when everything you learned in science classes was demonstrably, objectively, and replicably proven! And before something “became” science, it was just a hypothesis—that’s a proposition about the natural world that can be tested by experiments or observations. You know, *doing real research!*

Nowadays, it’s increasingly apparent that some believe that humanity has somehow evolved to a higher level of awareness overall and specifically in many fields of endeavor like the sciences. Well, at least that’s apparent in some folks who’ve perceived to have the “correct” pedigrees and worldview and slogans. This has been going on for a number of decades, even in formalized fields of study in colleges and universities.

Here’s some evidence of that—several fields of study use the hefty word “science” and couple it with an idea that’s naturally more soft and squishy...like a degree in *political science*...or studies in the *social sciences*. You see, they want to add credibility to the field, so they tacked on an adjective before the word “science” to make their endeavor to look more like...*truth!* And these adjectives can be the playground of manipulators manipulating the unwary! That doesn’t mean that areas like politics are unworthy of study—it *does* mean that students and learners and internet-surfers need to be aware of what they are being fed.

One of the funny things that’s developed in recent years when it comes to research is the term “me-search.” Yeah, I said *me-search*, where self-absorption allegedly takes precedence over more objective approaches. And didn’t that make you smile just a bit? Yeah, that’s because you kinda already know that, in some cases, verifiable, objective *research* may have been degraded some due to a bias in *me-search*.

For example, how about when a person advocates their cataclysmic interpretation of climate data, and personally stimulated more so to that conclusion by personally experiencing unusually hot summers...such that others might understandably wonder if there’s specific, individual bias in *that* climate science.

But, on the other hand, some might think that such experience-grounded climate science findings *do* have greater credibility...just like a cancer survivor might be perceived as a better-informed researcher because they *were* a me-searcher! So...sometimes me-search can be seen as legitimate...but sometimes not!

And it doesn’t take long to move from *me-search* to *we-search*. Yeah, we are *all* “we-searchers,” where a group dynamic influences, guides, or even rules a group of like-minded thinkers. Frankly, this is so prevalent in social groups of all types every day that it’s completely unremarkable to say it—yes, we think like the others in the groups we choose to hang with! Is that good or bad? Let’s take an example.

Mormons, members of the fast-growing LDS church, have historically had a very strong group-think, with many individual, serious Mormons strongly resisting any teaching that might disrupt that. Mormons do “research” as “we-searchers”...going again and again with their peers to the Book of Mormon as inspired. Yes, they naturally look to their Mormon interpreters and overseers as *authoritative*. ...All to be expected.

But traditional Christians of many stripes believe, of course, that the Book of Mormon is definitely not authoritative...in fact, it’s worse than that—they believe that the group of “we-Mormons” has actually disobeyed the Bible by adding and exalting the Book of Mormon. Not surprisingly here, Mormons continue to think they’re right and non-Mormons insist they’re wrong. Interestingly, some prominent long-time devout Mormons are now discontented due to alleged financial misrepresentations and covering up child abuse. Surely some will break from Mormonism...others will stand fast. Yeah, that’s *we-search*, in action!

Hey, did you hear what I said a minute ago about “traditional Christians of many stripes” coming against Mormonism. But those “traditional Christians” themselves have broken into vigorously-disagreeing groups of we-searchers, notably with the Reformers breaking significantly with the Roman Catholic Church centuries ago. Martin Luther was a me-searcher first, then others gathered to him to become “Lutheran” we-searchers! And the rest is history! Since then, Christians have splintered in the many groups of we-searchers, much to the chagrin and disdain of traditional Catholics who hold the view that Rome is the

only “true” group of we-searchers! All that is why the Holy Spirit orchestrated the giving of the Word of God! While the Bible doesn’t solve the downsides of we-searchers, it gives the core foundation to which we-searchers can anchor. Unless, of course, *your* specific we-searchers group is Hindu, Muslim, or atheist!

And *that* is why Christian believers are given the mandate of proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in companion with the wooing of the Holy Spirit. All that brings us to what I’m going to call “He-search.” Jesus taught this in Matthew 7:7-8 (ESV): “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” You see, God made provision through His Son to die on the Cross for all who believe in Christ. God seeks eternal fellowship to every person—this enduring “He-search” for reconciliation and eternal fellowship with Him is the grandest plan ever carried forth in history!

And once we believe in Christ, we still sometimes need direction or reminders about how and what to seek for *afterwards*. Here’s Jesus again, speaking to His disciples: “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:31-33)

And for those with a family member or dear friend who’s wandered away from the Lord’s presence, Jesus gave us the Parable of the Lost Sheep. A sheep is already part of a shepherd’s flock and Jesus, the True Shepherd, will temporarily depart from the 99 sheep to find the sheep who is lost. This parable is similar to that of the Prodigal Son, where the prodigal sought to return to his father and was gleefully received!

Startlingly, all that means that *sincere me-searches are entirely valid* in God’s eyes—and God will affirm! That’s a “stick in the eye” to atheist-scientist types who dwell in their flawed fortress of a God-vacuum!

Look, the Christian faith isn’t pure physics or biology—rather, the Bible explicitly validates the right kinds of me-search and we-search. And there’s a sort of hierarchical approach to searching and seeking in the Christian life that’s prescribed and really very practical...and it’s especially helpful when we’re struggling.

He-search is first, the foundation! God “first loved us” (1 John 4:19) and sought our reconciliation to Him for eternity through His Son and His sacrificial death on the Cross. And God has revealed himself flawlessly in His Word...giving us the foundational, extraordinary Source for living our best life in Christ—that being for the sake of God and the sake of others! And He is persistent in seeking after us when we stray!

Me-search is next. *We are* fallible, but God will be rightly found when we sincerely seek after Him with a repentant heart and connection to the Spirit—yes, we can consistently find the essential truths for us to be right with God in everyday life. You simply cannot entirely rely on your pastor...dad...or boss. You will be alone before Christ at His judgment seat...both for the merciful burning of your unfruitfulness and for any eternal rewards! So: nurture effective me-search approaches based on *He-search* and wise *we-search*!

And, indeed, we-search is essential. We are not meant to be islands unto ourselves. And we naturally are born into we-search communities. *But that’s the problem!* Many we-search communities are substantially wrong...and all of them are only partly right. Your task is to constantly challenge your key we-search groups for right wisdom and navigation. Your seeking contrasts to your prevailing we-search groups is key—first, in the Word...second, in a proven quiver of competent experts...and, third, in the overarching affirming by the Spirit. So: sort your way past folly and false teaching. And if your church is off-base, leave!

Last, research is the imperative catch-all for essential knowledge that you’ve yet to study. Hey, vast digital resources unheard of just a few decades ago abound. And wise, timeless books cost a pittance. Use them.

Look, “science” is just a subset of God’s truth—and God’s ways cannot be fully apprehended by scientific methods. And data is crushing in on us from everywhere. To that end, a believer’s strong framework for apprehending truth from all that data is a relentlessly hierarchical yet interrelated mix...that of *He-search*, *me-search*, *we-search*, and *research*! So: joyfully work to cultivate that mix in all facets of your life!

## *A&A: Application & Action*

1. Are you truly fully anchored in the ongoing pursuit of the amazing promises of He-search—your saturation in the Word of God, your hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd (“My sheep know my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27), and your cultivating the teaching of the Spirit (Jesus: “the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things” John 14:26)? Discuss.
2. How about your church (and denomination, if applicable), which, of course, is not perfect (no church is, of course)? Is this category of your life vetted by you such that, even though you embrace this crucial “we-group” by virtue of your current commitment and participation, you can still readily detail any weaknesses in faith statements, postures, and practices? Discuss.
3. When it comes to your personal “me-search,” are you effectively reaping a fullness of the facets of God’s He-search for believers? Discuss.