

## ***Preparing your heart to seek the Lord***

**Introduction:** The Word of God has so much to say about seeking the Lord - We all know the verse - *Jer. 29:13 "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*

Text: *Isa. 58:2 "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God."*

### **1. Preparing our hearts to seek the Lord is something we should be doing daily.**

**Question:** When was the last time you really set your heart to seek the Lord? This is something that we should do Daily but the sad reality is that many of us never or very seldom seek the Lord.

**Note:** I think we would all agree that our churches and nation are in desperate need of revival - How is this going to happen? Answer - *2 Chronicles 7:14*

*"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

> **Humble our selves** - acknowledgement of sin:

*David Psalm 51 - "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."*

> **Pray** - seeking forgiveness:

*David Psalm 51 continues - I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*

> **Seek God's face** -

*Psalms 27:8 "When thou said, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek."*

**> Turn from our wicked (sinful) ways -**

*(Isaiah 59:1-2) "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."*

**> Then God promises to send revival -**

*(Hosea 5:15 - 6:2) "I will go and return to my place (separate myself from them) , till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early. Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up...he revive us."*

**Question:** But what does it mean to "seek my face" = The Bible says "*The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend*" (Exodus 33:11)

**> Seek** = to search for (someone or something) : to try to find (someone or something): to ask for help or advice in finding someone or something

**> Face = Countenance / Presence** (Strong's #6440)

**Note:** The Hebrew word is a plural word and reflects the sense of motion as the face reflects many different moods, emotions and thoughts. You can tell a lot about a person by simply looking at the expressions on their face.

Thus the word is also translated "countenance" - *(Numbers 6:25-26) "The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."*

This Hebrew word for face can also be translated "presence" - *Psalm 16:11 "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

**A. It's time to seek the LORD - Once again I think we would all agree that it is time for us as individuals, church, and a nation to seek the Lord**

**Note:** Those who truly desire to "seek His face" must reprioritize their time -

Cancel some of your activities, put away some of your hobbies, turn off the TV, put away the newspaper, magazines and video games, shut down the computer, get off face book and social media, stop texting and start "seeking" etc ...

This doesn't mean we neglect our God given responsibilities, but we must forsake the things that steal away the time we need to "seek the Lord"

In order to seek God's face, we need to step way out of our daily routine and comfort zone.

### **B. It's time to set your heart to seek the LORD -**

*1 Chronicles 22:19 "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God."*

*Col. 3:2 "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

**SET** = to assume a fixed or rigid position or state...to place in a particular place, position or posture: to put into some condition.

### **C. It's time to prepare your heart to seek the LORD -**

*2 Chronicles 17:3-6 "Now the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel. Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. And his heart took delight in the ways of the Lord; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah."*

### **D. It's time to seek the LORD with all of our heart and soul -**

*Deuteronomy 4:29 "You will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul."*

### **E. It's time to covenant together to seek the LORD -**

*2 Chronicles 15:12-15 "Then they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; and whoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great,*

*whether man or woman. Then they took an oath before the Lord with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the Lord gave them rest all around."*

## **F. It time to seek the LORD while He may be found -**

*Isaiah 55:6-8 "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."*

**Warning** - Proverbs 1:20-33

## **2. Seven things that can get in the way of preparing your hearts to seek the Lord**

### **1) Not having a desire to prepare your hearts -**

*2 Chronicles 12:13-14 "Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned.... And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord."*

### **2) Not taking the time or setting aside a place to seek the Lord - Hosea 10:12**

*"...it is time to seek the LORD..."*

*2 Chron. 11:16 "All the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers."*

**Note:** Time is a gift from God (573 times the Word of God talks about time) -

**Note:** Think about how much time we waist that we could be seeking the Lord - Eph. 5:16 "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

*Jesus - Matt. 6:6 "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."*

*(Romans 13:11-14) "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is*

*far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."*

### **3) Unwillingness to separate ourselves from the filthiness of this world -**

*Ezra 6:21 "And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel."*

*"Love not the world...come out from among them... James 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."*

### **4) Allowing our heart to become hard concerning the things of the Lord -**

*Hosea 10:12 "Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you."*

*Heb. 3:15 "While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts"*

**> Unwillingness to humble oneself** - *Zephaniah 2:3"Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger."*

**> Unwillingness to confess and forsake sin** - *2 Chronicles 30:18-19 "For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary."*

**Note: Repentance is so important in seeking the Lord - (Prov. 28:13)**

*Palms 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."*

## 5) Not taking seeking the Lord seriously -

*2 Chron. 15:12 "And they entered into a covenant (together) to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul."*

**Note:** Do you know why we are not motivated to do certain things - Because we do not see the benefit in doing it!

> Solomon said - *"She (seeking wisdom from God) is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared."*

> *(Proverbs 2:4-11)"If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:"*

> *(Job 23:12) "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."*

## 6) Allowing others to discourage us and negatively influence us not to seek the Lord -

In 1 Corinthians 15:33 Paul tells us not to be influenced and misled by Bad company (carnal people) who will corrupt our good character.

**Quote:** It is impossible to live a life that is unaffected by other people. Their attitudes and opinions, like pollen, blow into our lives, shaping our perspective and influencing our decisions. When one godly person's life sharpens another's, it's a good thing. It yields a harvest of mature fruit over time.

But I can think of several instances in my life when I allowed the negative influence of others to sway my better judgment.

**Note: Surround yourself with those who desire to seek the Lord - Ezra 6:21**

*"Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the Lord God of Israel."*

**7) Unwillingness to obey the Word of God - Ezra 7:10** *"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it."*

*"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do..."*

**Conclusion:** Good things are in store for you today, this week and for the rest of your life if you will - *"Set your heart to seek the Lord"*

*2 Chronicles 19:2-3 "And Jehu the seer (prophet/preacher) went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat...good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God."*