

## Weekly Reflection – Seek the Lord (Isaiah 55:6-9)

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SEEK THE LORD?**

#### Calling upon Him.

***“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;” (Isaiah 55:6 ESV)*** If you set yourself to seek the Lord, the first thing you will do is call on the Lord. The religious word for this is "pray." But many people feel that they can't pray. They feel that it takes a lot of Bible knowledge to know how to say things just right; and that it takes a certain way with words. The word here is "call". And that is part of our everyday language, just like it was then. We call the waiter. We call a friend on the telephone. We call for help on 911. The first thing we do to seek the Lord is call to Him. We might use words like: "God, help me!" Or: "God, if you are really there, show me!" Or: "God, I need you, come and save me, forgive me, make me new." Or: "Father, I need your guidance, show me the way to go." You don't need a high school diploma to call for help. A child can do it. And that is the first step in what it means to seek the Lord.

#### Forsake your ways and your thoughts.

***“let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;” (Isaiah 55:7a ESV)*** To seek the Lord means to forsake your ways and your thoughts. If you call out to God, "God, I need you, help me!" one of the very first things that will happen is God will answer. When God answers we must respond. We must turn from our way of doing life and our way of thinking and turn to God's ways and thoughts. When God answers your call and you refuse to forsake your ways and thoughts, then you cease to seek God, and your words become empty. Seeking the Lord means forsaking the ways and the thoughts that are displeasing and dishonoring to Him. You can't seek Him where He is not found, in your ways and thoughts.

#### Looking to God alone for everything.

To seek the Lord means to look to God alone for everything. God is not an add on, He is not an insurance policy, He is not a backup plan. To seek God means you look to Him as the one and only source for everything you are and everything you need. I want to mention two sources' people turn to besides God alone: the occult and human wisdom.

To seek the Lord means to steer clear of psychics, astrology and other occult means. Here are a few things the Word of God says:

- ***“So why are you trying to find out the future by consulting witches and mediums? Don't listen to their whisperings and mutterings. Can the living find out the future from the dead? Why not ask your God? (Isaiah 8:19)***
- ***“When you arrive in the Promised Land you must be very careful lest you be corrupted by the horrible customs of the nations now living there. <sup>10</sup> For example, any Israeli who presents his child to be burned to death as a sacrifice to heathen gods must be killed. No Israeli may practice black magic, or call on the evil spirits for aid, or be a fortune-teller, <sup>11</sup> or be a serpent charmer, medium, or wizard, or call forth the spirits of the dead. <sup>12</sup> Anyone doing these things is an object of horror and disgust to the Lord, and it is because the nations do these things that the Lord your God will displace them. <sup>13</sup> You must walk blamelessly before the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 18:9-13)***

- **"I will set my face against anyone who consults mediums and wizards instead of me and I will cut that person off from his people. (Leviticus 20:6)**
- **"So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse." (1 Chronicles 10:13-14)**

Seeking God means steering clear of astrologers, fortune-tellers, psychics, séances, mediums, channeling, ouija boards, or any other effort to tap spiritual and psychic powers not prescribed in God's Word. "Seek the Lord while He may be found," means consult Him and turn aside from these age-old counterfeits of divine counsel.

To seek the Lord means to ask for His guidance and put our trust in Him rather than human strength and wisdom. **"Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!" (Isaiah 31:1) "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5) "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God." (Psalms 20:7)** How many times have we faced decisions and made them with a quick estimate of our resources, but did not seek the Lord's counsel at all? The implication is that it is sufficient to seek God alone. And it's an offense when God's Word and His Spirit are treated as inadequate for the guidance of His creatures. Seeking the Lord means pausing before a decision and looking expectantly to God in your heart and waiting to see how He might lead.

### **WHY YOU SHOULD WANT TO SEEK THE LORD**

#### Our thoughts and ways Vs. God's thoughts and ways.

You should want to seek the Lord because until you seek the Lord, your ways and His ways and your thoughts and His thoughts are as far apart as heaven and earth. Most of the time verses 8–9 are quoted out of context: **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."** This is often quoted to show that some circumstance that puzzles us is no puzzle to God. His ways are higher than our ways. That, of course, is wonderfully true. But it misses the point of this text. Why does verse 8 talk about the thoughts and ways of God? Because verse 7 talked about the thoughts and ways of men. Listen to the flow. Verse 7: "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord. . . ." Why? Verse 8: Because God's thoughts and God's ways are not wicked and not unrighteous. In fact, they are as far above our thoughts and our evil ways as the heaven is above the earth. The point of verses 8 and 9 is to stress the tremendous need that we have of seeking God. So, the first reason we should want to seek the Lord is that until we do, we won't think like God, and we won't act like God. Our mind and His mind are as different and as far apart as heaven and earth.

#### Not punishment but pardon.

You should want to seek the Lord because when you do, what you find is not punishment but compassion and abundant pardon. **"let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah 55:7)** God wants people with wicked ways to come to Him. He wants people with unrighteous thoughts to come to Him. The thought that you are too bad to come to God is a thought straight out of hell. God wants us to know that this is what He loves to do. His heart overflows to

pardon. He rejoices to pardon. He delights in it. He loves to show mercy. He rejoices to pardon. And therefore, He does it abundantly, profusely, deeply. In other words when you seek the Lord, you find pardon for the worst sins you have ever committed and the pardon is so abundant you are given a Helper called the Holy Spirit, He protects and helps and guides and brings you to the fullest life possible. And on top of that He is the most wonderful Person to be with in the world.

The nearness of God in this moment.

You should want to seek the Lord because He is near at this moment and He may be found. ***“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;” (Isaiah 55:6)*** There is a window of opportunity, and you do not know when it will shut. It is open in this moment. Everybody needs to call upon the Lord, to seek the Lord right now while He may be found. Some need to call on Him for salvation. ***“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)*** Some need to call on Him for help in overcoming an evil way or an unrighteous thought. And some need to call on Him for counsel and guidance.