



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

September 8, 2024

Seeking—and Finding—the LORD

The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law, but when in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them. –2nd Chronicles 15:2b-4

Preachers have ways of getting your attention, and they're skilled at keeping it when thoughts start to wander. Sometimes, the secret to capturing an audience is timing—catching them at the right moment. During the early days of Israel's divided kingdom, a prophet named Azariah (meaning "the LORD is Help") got King Asa's attention the moment he came home from a victory over Ethiopia, and gave a generous "if-then" promise from God. *If you seek him, he will be found by you.* (2nd Chronicles 15:2b).

When the voice of the Lord calling in the garden made Adam and Eve aware that they were naked, they took off running. God has been pursuing humanity ever since. And the ready welcome He promises to anyone who seeks Him offers grace that allows this wicked world to go on day after day until the last soul has turned. God extended that same the grace to Israel through Azariah—grace He extends to us today.

We can learn wisdom today by following King Asa's response, when he determined to follow the Lord. First, he took courage and disposed of false gods—*the detestable idols from all the land of Judah* (15:8). Courage comes from faith in the One True God, and Asa's faith led him to tear down Israel's idols.

The One True God requires that His creatures trust and obey Him. People follow false gods so they can do what they want. Moral and social chaos ensues. Freedom gets jeopardized, as anything that may interfere with a person's pleasure gets shoved aside. God has blessed people with desires and drives that guide us and offer pleasure. But when desire takes control, it becomes destructive and harmful lust. Asa put an end to this plague in Israel.

But there's strength in numbers, especially when everyone's focused on the Lord. *Asa gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing with them* (15:9) and led them in worship of the LORD God of Israel. There in Jerusalem, people of every tribe renewed their covenant bond with the LORD.

Boundaries are essential to true freedom. The world has so much to offer, but it all comes from the One True God. Nothing is more confining than straying from Him. In a supreme act of love, God determined to bind Himself with His people Israel and to do them good. He gave them their own land and blessed their crops, their work, their families, and all their enterprises. Their obligation was to obey His good laws.

Asa led Israel in renewing their covenant with the Lord. The place of God's blessing is being in a binding covenant. Take marriage, for example. Within the marriage covenant, our sexuality becomes sacred instead of sinful. Husband and wife bond together. Father and mother commit to faithfulness to raise their children to follow the Lord as Godly, responsible adults. The confines of commitment bear abundant fruit in fellowship, character, security, and hope for the future.

Interestingly, being faithful to God led Asa to break from his own mother, because she *had made a detestable image for Asherah* (15:16b). The fertility cult of Baal's wife involved ritual prostitution and child sacrifice, which deeply grieved the LORD, led him to remove her from her position as queen mother. It's more important to please God than Mom.

Family finds its security within the confines of their faith community's commitment to God. By faith, Asa renewed Israel's commitment to the LORD their God. Asa's reign knew no war for 35 years but enjoyed abundance from God.

Want to live abundantly? Seek the LORD, and you will find.

To the praise of God's glory

Continued Daily Bible Reading

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible in 1 Year	2 nd Chronicles 1-3	2 nd Chronicles 4-6	2 nd Chronicles 7-9	2 nd Chronicles 10-12	2 nd Chronicles 13-15	2 nd Chronicles 16-18	2 nd Chronicles 19-21
Year 1	Romans 12	Romans 13	Romans 14	Romans 15	Romans 16	Job 1	Job 2
Year 2	Galatians 1	Galatians 2	Galatians 3	Galatians 4	Galatians 5	Galatians 6	Isaiah 1
Year 3	Ezekiel 4	Ezekiel 5	Ezekiel 6	Ezekiel 7	Ezekiel 8	Ezekiel 9	Ezekiel 10

Prayer for This Week

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, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:6-7).

Sunday (Our Church): Ask God to move in Northpoint so we will seek Him with all our heart and find Him, like He promised. *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:13).*

Monday (Your Home): Ask God to show you areas in your life that He desires to change, so He can draw you closer to Him. *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23-24).*

Tuesday (Your Work or School): Pray to be distinct from others in what you love, value, and in the standards you hold, so the effect of your faith on your life will be evident. *Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works (James 2:18b).*

Wednesday (Your Neighborhood): Times are tough economically, socially, and spiritually. Division is increasing. Draw close to God during this time of distress, and ask Him to work in these times to turn our society back to Him. *When in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them (2nd Chronicles 15:4).*

Thursday (Your Country): Pray that God will remove from leadership ungodly people who oppose His will and raise up godly people who will stand for truth and righteousness. *Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice (Psalm 72:1-2)! Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned (Psalm 34:22).*

Friday (Our World): Since we long for the return of Christ, let's pray to be able to hasten that day by proclaiming the gospel to every nation on earth. *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (1st Peter 5:5b).*

Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing): Rejoice that the Lord our God is holy! *Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory (Isaiah 6:3)!*

Prayer for Our Leaders

- Our Pastors and Directors:** Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Tamene Menna, Terilyn Brown, Steve Dahlgren, Amber McEwen, and Tyler Van Horssen; Interns: David Kludt, Noah Gauderman, Cade McRitchie.
- Our Lay Elders:** Woody Armstrong, Steve Flood, Doug Mazza, Perry Schaefer, Bob Stempson, Mike Rhodes, and Vinoj Zechariah.
- Our Church Staff:** Analiese Alfonzie, Michele Balga, Bob Brown, John Cordill, Carolee Jefferson, Corie Saunders, Dani Tiqui, Micah Valdez, Christina Vasquez, and Holli Worthington.