

LET GOD ARISE!

*Revival
Prayer Guide #6
Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis*



Seek the Lord: Revival under Asa 2 Chronicles 14-16

Seeking God First

Terry Ousley

If your life has been shattered,
Broken and torn from the storms of life
Begin to seek God first,
While you're searching for your answers
Chase after God
Let God's blessings follow you

I can ask, and it shall be given to me
If I seek, Jesus said that I would find the answer
If I knock on the door, it shall be opened
If I'm seeking God first
Then these things will be added to me

Alleluia, let us sing
Forever let God's praises ring
Alleluia, alleluia
Seek God first above all things

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Ps. 145.18 - The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Zeph. 2.3 - Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord.

Ps. 148.14 - He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the Lord!

Ps. 105.4 - Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!

2 Chron. 30.17-20 - For there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves. Therefore the Levites had to slaughter the Passover lamb for everyone who was not clean, to consecrate it to the Lord. [18] For a majority of the people, many of them from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than as prescribed. For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, "May the good Lord pardon everyone [19] who sets his heart to seek God, the Lord, the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary's rules of cleanness." [20] And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

Isa. 55.6-7 - Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; [7] 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.

1 Chron. 28.9 - And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.



Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)

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Job 8.5-7 - If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy, [6] if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation. [7] And though your beginning was small, your latter days will be very great.

Ps. 14.2 - The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

Ps. 27.8 - You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek."

Ps. 32.6 - Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

Ps. 95.7-9 - For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, [8] do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,[9] when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

Isa. 45.19 - I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in vain.' I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right.

Jer. 29.12-14 - Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. [13] You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart, [14] I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.



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Amos 5.6 - Seek the Lord and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel.

Matt. 7.7-8 - Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [8] For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Ps. 22.26 - The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!

Ps. 25.8-9 - Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. [9] He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

Ps. 105.4 - Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!

2 Cor. 6.1-2 - Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. [2] For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Heb. 3.13 - But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ■

MUST THE fuel of genuine revival always and only be times of adversity and trial?

Students of revival will immediately see that revival under Asa is different than most of the revivals that took place in the Old Testament economy. Often, the people of God were moved to revival only after they experienced a time of adversity, decline, or even despair. These times of shadow and



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difficulty were the “dry wood” to ignite the flames of revival, usually through a leader or group which used that occasion to rediscover the need for God’s glory and holiness to be restored among his people. In Asa’s case, however, the revival comes not at a time of tragedy, but a time of reformation, not at a time of despair, but a time of deliberately seeking the Lord.

As Walt Kaiser rightly concludes, a reformation movement is not the same as a revival. While reformation may lead the people of God to hear afresh the Word of God and take action upon it, revival is the literal presence of God infilling and impacting every facet of our lives. It is nothing less than the very life of God, the Spirit of the living God so moving on the hearts of his people that we are led to repentance, to contrition, to cleansing, to transformation, and to spiritual deepening. Reformation leads to helpful amendment, revival leads to deepened transformation.

We read of the revival under Asa’s reign in 2 Chronicles 14-16. Asa began his efforts with genuine reformation:

2 Chron. 14.1-6 - Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David. And Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days the land had rest for ten years. [2] And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God. [3] He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherim [4] and commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment. [5] He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars. And the kingdom had rest under him. [6] He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest. He had no war in those years, for the Lord gave him peace.

Asa “did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God,” (v. 2), putting down idolatry, desecrating the places associated with foreign gods,



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and commanding the people to seek God and to keep his Word. What is significant about Asa is that he did not require a time of tragedy, discipline, lack, or adversity to get him to get his priorities of seeking the Lord right. God gave Asa favor because he had ordered his loves aright; he sought God because God was worthy of praise and obedience. He did not respond *because he was driven to it by tragedy*. On the contrary, Asa sought the Lord because God was worthy of his worship and honor.

As some commentators on Asa have suggested, Asa's significance for understanding the nature of revival comes from a single phrase in this OT section dealing with his life and work: Asa sought the Lord. Look below at the texts which show this trait of Asa's heart and life:

2 Chron. 14.4 - and commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment.

2 Chron. 14.7 - And he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the Lord our God. We have sought him, and he has given us peace on every side." So they built and prospered.

2 Chron. 15.2 - and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: 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."

2 Chron. 15.4 - but when in their distress they turned to the Lord, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them.

2 Chron. 15.12-13 - And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul, [13]



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but that whoever would not seek the Lord, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman.

2 Chron. 15.15 - And all Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought him with their whole desire, and he was found by them, and the Lord gave them rest all around.

2 Chronicles 16.12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe. Yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but sought help from physicians.

Throughout Asa's life and reign, his most memorable mark was his personal seeking of the Lord, his exhorting of the people to seek the Lord, and his leading of the nation to seek the Lord. This focus on seeking God, on pursuing him, consulting him, of focusing the attention and efforts of the nation upon God's business and concerns, is a distinguishing mark of all true spirituality. In one sense, the idea of seeking God can be used as a synonym for authentic spirituality, for no one can legitimately seek God for himself sake and not also do the things that correspond to that seeking.

This is evidently true from the testimony of the end of Asa's life, which is recorded soberly in 2 Chron. 16.12-14:

In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe. Yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but sought help from physicians. [13] And Asa slept with his fathers, dying in the forty-first year of his reign. [14] They buried him in the tomb that he had cut for himself in the city of David. They laid him on a bier that had been filled with various kinds of spices prepared by the perfumer's art, and they made a very great fire in his honor.



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Ironically, the principle which underlay virtually the entire life of Asa was abandoned before he died. Only at the end, when Asa was nearly 40 years into his reign of the Lord's people, when perhaps fatigued and ill, did he seek the help of men (i.e., his physicians) instead of the help of the Lord. This punctuation reveals how central seeking God is to not only revival, but every facet of spiritual life and service. We must never tire of seeking the Lord. *Where we seek our aid and help, from whom we seek our counsel and support, tells everything about us, and ultimately, will determine our usefulness and fruitfulness to the Lord.*

Let us this month, therefore, stir up our hearts to seek the Lord afresh. Regardless of how tired, sleepy, or numb our seeking has been in the past, we can seek the Lord passionately today. Nor do we need to compare ourselves with others, or even ourselves (i.e., where we are today versus where we ought to be). Right now, right here today we can turn our hearts to the Lord and begin to seek his face, to focus on his Word, to concentrate on his priorities and purposes, to stir ourselves after his glory and works. Asa's life and work show the truth of God's statements summarized in 2 Chronicles 6 and 7, and summarized so powerfully in chapter 7 verse 14:

2 Chron. 7.14 - if my people who are called by my name 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 ourselves, pray, seek his face, and turn from our wicked ways—this is the recipe for God's revival in our time. The results of this are plain in Asa's reign: the Lord brought them peace in their assembly (14.2-7), an overwhelming sense of his own dear presence (15.2-7), and consistent victory over their enemies and their plots to do them harm (14.9-15; 16.1-10). I find no reason for us not to expect that the same God who cannot lie (Titus 1.2) will not even today respond to his children by faith in Jesus Christ who reorder their priorities to make Christ Lord of their lives,



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to allow God to be the central organizing power and being in their lives, and to seek his face continually. In this posture, in this longing, in this pursuit we can find God, and in seeking him in this way, he will allow us to find him.

Who knows what is possible when we seek the Lord with our whole hearts again? What may our gracious Lord elect to do in and through us if we were only to seek him as our end, and not merely his gifts and blessings, not his benefits and riches? Like the magi of old, do not the wise still seek the living God in the person of his dear Son? ■

Example of Seeking the Face of the Lord Wholeheartedly: David

Ps. 105.4 - Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!

Ps. 27.8 - You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek."

Ps. 145.18 - The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Biblical Principle of the Month

Revival occurs when we seek the Lord with our whole hearts, not for his benefits and help in time of trouble, but also for himself as our source and exceeding great reward. We are to seek his face continuously and passionately, and we will find him if we seek him with our whole hearts.

Jer. 29.12-14 - Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. [13] You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart, [14] I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.



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