

1. We'll meet thru September & into October. Do you want to meet 10/10 (Columbus Day) or should we have a movie night instead? Shall we meet thru 11/21 (Monday before Thanksgiving) or 11/28, before taking a break for Christmas? Let's resume 1/9/23. Thoughts?
3. Next week's LifeLine is Proverbs 29:18.

LifeLines for September 12, 2022

Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

2 Chronicles 7:14

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

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT - Context is the key to understanding this verse. Then, we can determine if & how it applies to our lives today.

After Solomon dedicated the temple, the Lord appeared to him and gave him both warnings and reassurances. In verses preceding our LifeLine's verse, God had chosen the place for His temple but warned He might shut up the heavens, preventing rain, send locusts or plagues, depending on the people's behavior. Our verse was a warning, but it also gave them hope, assuring them that, *depending on their behavior*, God would forgive them and *heal their land*, rather than *cause destruction*. In verses 7:19-22, God told them to refrain from worshiping other gods, or He would make the temple a pile of rubble. He would not stand for being forsaken then, & He won't stand for it today.

In Deuteronomy, God entered into covenant with Israel, promising to take care of them & prosper them as long as they obeyed Him. The promise of divine blessing or divine punishment depended on their obedience. In this verse, God reminded Solomon of that agreement. The assurance of His judgment has always intended to lead His people to repentance. When God's people are humble, pray & repent, He delivers them from judgment.

God's prescription for repentance is one we must still follow today: humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, & turn from all sinful tendencies & ways. *Our verse is all about God's heartfelt desire to keep us close to Him; His desire for us obey Him out of our love for Him, & His desire to redeem us & have us with Him throughout eternity.* Let's remember that as we progress through our study.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS - This is the first time I've found *very little difference* among the versions we usually reference. Check your Bible. Feel free to share anything of interest that differs.)

AMP

(If I stop the rain, send locusts, pestilence & plagues...) and my people, who are called by My name, humble themselves, & pray & seek (crave, require as a necessity) My face & turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear (them) from heaven, & forgive their sin & heal their land.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

If my people who are called by My name... These Israelites were the offspring of Abraham & represented God's chosen people, the object of His love & blessings. They were supposed to live up to the honor of being God's children. Here's a question – if we consider ourselves to be called by God's name, are we living up to the honor? How or why not?

humble themselves, pray, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, ... God knows us & knows we will sometimes fall away. When we do, He watches to see whether we will humbly acknowledge our sin or be arrogant, trying to defend unrighteous behavior. He loves a humble, repentant heart. True repentance pairs naturally with turning from sin. As sincere believers, we don't purposefully sin, knowing we can simply repent & be forgiven. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit lives in us to help us live as we are called to live – a life pleasing to God.

Prayer & humility take the focus off of ourselves, so we can focus on what really matters. Might it be a good idea for us to do a little self examination occasionally to determine our true focus?

To seek God's face is to behold His glory & the fullness of His joy. This is what we seek. This is what God wants us to seek – His face.

then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land... What a promise – that God would hear them, hear us, hear their call, hear ours, forgive them, forgive us! Yes, He promises the same for us.

In the days of David & the kings who followed, one of the consequences of turning from God to worship other gods/idols was for the land to suffer. Droughts & famines would arise as a way for God to bring them to repentance. When they did, God was faithful to heal the land. In the same way, when we sincerely repent, God heals & restores us.

Today, there are still idols that try to draw us away, lure us away, from the true God. What are some of them?

SELAH

RELATED VERSES

Exodus 20:5-6, You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third & the fourth generation of those who reject Me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love Me & keep My commandments.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20, I call heaven & earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life & death, blessings & curses. Choose life so that you & your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying Him, & holding fast to Him; for that means life to you & length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac & to Jacob.

2 Chronicles 16:9, For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the entire earth, to strengthen those whose heart is true to Him.

Psalm 27:8, “Come,” my heart says, “seek His face!” Your face, Lord, do I seek.

Psalm 51, A Psalm of David & a beautiful Prayer of Cleansing & Pardon which you may want to read as homework. Many of the verses will be familiar to you, & you may have memorized them without realizing!

Psalm 60:17-20, I cried aloud to Him, & He was extolled (praised) with my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; He has given heed to the words of my prayer. Blessed be God, because He has not rejected my prayer or removed His steadfast love from me.

Psalm 81:11-14, “But My people did not listen to My voice; Israel would not submit to Me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. O that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways! Then I would quickly subdue their enemies, & turn My hand against their foes.

Psalm 91:14-16, Those who love Me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know My name. When they call to Me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them & honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, & show them My salvation.

Psalm 107:2-3, Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those He redeemed from trouble & gathered in from the lands, from the east & from the west, from the north & from the south.

Psalm 111:9, He sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever. Holy & awesome is His name.

Psalm 130:7-8, O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, & with Him is great power to redeem. It is He who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

Lamentations 3:57-58, You came near when I called on You; You said, “Do not fear!” You have taken up my cause, O Lord, you have redeemed my life.

Isaiah 44:22, I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, & your sins like mist; return to Me for I have redeemed you.

Isaiah 45:22, Turn to Me & be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, & there is no other.

Isaiah 55:6-7, Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake their way, & the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that He may have mercy on them, & to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

Jeremiah 29:12, Then when you call upon Me & come & pray to me, I will hear you.

Joel 2:12-14, Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, & with mourning; rend your hearts & not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious & merciful, slow to anger, & abounding in steadfast love, & relents from punishing.

Who knows whether He will not turn & relent, & leave a blessing behind Him, a grain offering & a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

Zechariah 1:3, Therefore, say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts: Return to Me, says the Lord of hosts, & I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.

Luke 18:13-14, “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast & saying, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Acts 2:21, Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 3:19-20a, Repent therefore, & turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Romans 2:4, Or do you despise the riches of His kindness & forbearance & patience? Do you not realize that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Romans 12:2, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good & acceptable & perfect.

1 Corinthians 1:18, For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

James 4:8, Draw near to God, & He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, & purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James 4:10, Humble yourselves before the Lord, & He will exalt you.

1 Peter 3:12, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, & His ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

1 Peter 5:6, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in due time.

2 Peter 3:9, The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, He who is faithful & just will forgive us our sins & cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

SUMMARY

The context of our verse is clear. Still, it’s difficult not to notice local & worldwide upheavals in recent years & ask ourselves if this verse might not be a prayerful cry for our awakened awareness as a nation of believers or as individual believers. In what ways do we need to humble ourselves? Do we need to seek God’s face more fervently? Do we need to pray more

intentionally to cooperate with God so His will will be done on earth as it is in heaven? A prayerful, repentant response is appropriate for individuals as well as nations.

God is always with us, for us, closer than the air we breathe. He wants followers who conscientiously seek Him & depend on Him rather than be self-reliant, self-seeking & arrogant.

God's gift to us of free will can be both a blessing & a curse. Have you found that to be true in your life? May we take this to heart as we examine our own lives & seek to grow closer to the Godhead through faithful worship & obedience. *Our verse reinforces God's heartfelt desire to keep us close to Him; His desire for us obey Him out of our love for Him; & His desire to redeem us & have us with Him throughout eternity.*

Thanks be to God for the gift of His Son, our Savior,
Jesus Christ, who has made our redemption possible! Amen.

*Let this verse be a **LifeLine** for you!
Let's Continue Learning More!*

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!

References: gotquestions.org; connectusfund.org; olivetree.com; 2 Chronicles 7:14 War Room.