

# *It Is Written*

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## Seeking The Face Of God

By Mike Johnson

Many think David wrote Psalm 27 when fleeing from Saul, which is likely the case. Earlier in the Psalm, he expresses strong faith and confidence in God, but Psalms 27:8-9 reflect him apparently facing difficulties. In these verses, he addresses God saying, "When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide Your face from me; do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.'" David says he will seek God's face and asks God not to turn His face from him. This may have been at a time when David was struggling with himself or God. Perhaps he felt God had not responded to his prayers as quickly as he would have liked and had turned His face away. What does the concept of God turning His face from someone mean? We will look further at this concept and see what we might learn.

To begin with, the concept of seeking the face of God or God hiding His face from someone appears several times in the Scriptures (Job 13:24; Psalms 13:1; 44:24; 69:17; 88:14; 102:2). Someone may say, "But, God is a spirit and does not have a face." References to the "face" of God is a figure of speech called "anthropomorphism," which means attributing human characteristics or behavior to a god, animal, or object. God turning His face toward a person entails receiving His protection, presence, guidance, and favor. God hiding His face from someone would mean being without these things.

Next, we see in our text that God took the initiative, asking the Psalmist to seek His face. His statement tells us that the Lord wants to have a relationship with us; He wants everyone to be saved (II Peter 3:8-10). So often, rulers and others of importance are not interested in having contact with the people. This attitude is not the case with God, as He wants us to seek His face. David's response was like an echo as he said he would seek God's face. Then David, perhaps expressing frustration, asked God not to hide His face from him.

How do we seek the face of God? How do we keep God from hiding His face from us? Various passages tell us how to do this and the benefits which will follow. Note II 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." This verse shows that seeking God's face involves humility, praying, and turning from wicked ways. God will then "hear from heaven," and we will receive forgiveness.

Consider Psalm 105:104. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore!" This verse shows that one must give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name, and make known His deeds, among others. We must also sing psalms to Him, talk of His wondrous works, glory in His name, and seek His strength.

Note another passage. "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face" (Psalms 24:3-6). From these verses, we see that seeking the face of the Lord involves having clean hands and a pure heart and not having worshiped idols or having sworn deceitfully. As a result, we will receive blessings and

righteousness from God, who will save us.

Are we seeking the face of God? Is God hiding his face from us? We must always seek the face of God!

## What Is Tolerated Today Becomes Accepted Tomorrow

By Dick Millwee

Many years ago, I read a quote that I found to be true. This was the quote: "What is tolerated today becomes accepted tomorrow." Whoever said that said a mouthful and hit the nail on the head. Let me give a couple of examples.

In 1939 a movie was made that had one curse word in it. History tells all that moral leaders and church pulpits all over our country raised a sustained cry against it being released for public showing and almost succeeded in their efforts.

However, Hollywood turned a deaf ear to the protests and patiently waited until the hubbub died down. After the protest became old news, Hollywood released the picture, "Gone With the Wind." Forty years later, in 1979, Hollywood produced and released a movie that had only one curse word in it (the same word used in *Gone With The Wind*), and parents all over the land breathed a sigh of relief and said, "Finally a movie that we can let our children go see." It was *Star Wars*. This gradual "toleration creep" has led to most of the movies released today being filled with vile, filthy language that would have made a drunken sailor blush in 1939!

In 1953, a new magazine was about to be released for publication and a volcanic protest by churches and various organizations erupted. The publisher and court officials turned a deaf ear to the protests and, hence, "Playboy" magazine became an American institution. This led to the publication of similar magazines. This, in turn, motivated Hollywood to begin releasing movies of a vivid sexual nature which lead to the necessitation of a rating system. Over time there has been "rating creep" so that what used to be X-rated is now R-rated, R-rated is now PG-13 rated, and PG-13 is now rated G. The slow graduation of "Toleration Creep" has desensitized us to the point we are now accepting as O.K. that was tolerated with anxious misgivings a few years ago.

Sadly, many Christians have become so desensitized to this media filth that they, with their money and attendance, have succumbed to this "wile" of the devil. God tells us through the apostle Paul, "do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but, instead, expose them" (Ephesians 5:11).

It is sad to see many Christians (even though it bothers them) allowing their children to watch TV programs and moves that promote this moral filth. The danger for their children, for the most part, is that they will feel it is acceptable for Christians to do this because their parents did not speak out against it or restrict them from involving themselves with this moral tragedy when they were in their formative years. Sadly, in some cases, the children learn by example when they see their parents rent or buy these movies and play them on their DVD sets at home.

"Be not deceived, for whatsoever we sow that is what we shall reap" (Galatians 6:7, 8). Brethren, young and old, let us take the high road of God and take a stand against these things. Let's not succumb to this moral creep. Beware, it is a device of the Devil to ensnare our souls.