

2021

Elul and the Season of Teshuvah

ACROSS ALL
BOUNDARIES CHRISTIAN
CHURCH AND OUTREACH
MINISTRIES

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WEEKLY MEDITATIONS

*Where the Lion Roar
Lives Begin to Cha*



ELUL

The month of Elul teaches us to examine ourselves. The word "Elul " means "search," which is appropriate, because this is a time of year when we search our hearts.

Elul is regarded as the appropriate time for analyzing the past year. This means we seek out our own frailties and confront them. We examine the mistakes of the past year in order not to repeat them. This means taking an honest look at what has restricted us, captured us in bondage and prevented us from moving forward. By reflecting on the previous year, we are better able to enter the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) ready for improvement, which manifests itself with an enhanced spiritual performance, as well as an increased yearning for spirituality.

WEEK 1 – SELF EXAMINATION

Scripture Reference: “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. (Isa. 55:6-7)

Prayer: With my whole heart will I seek you O Lord, may I turn around and see you. May I experience your compassion and your forgiveness as I seek to walk upright.

Points of Meditation:

- The theme for the month of Elul can be found in the appeal from the Prophet Isaiah when he says to seek the Lord while he may be found. During this season of Elul, God is in the midst of his people.
- This is a good time to seek, enquire, search for answers while he is near. We are asking Yahweh to reveal in us those things that we may have overlooked in our lives that are offensive to God so that we can turn and return to the Lord.
- This month teaches us the necessity of being willing to repent; being willing to turn around. The Hebrew word that reveals this understanding is “teshuvah”.
- The word actually means “to return”. How can it be that we find ourselves back to back with God when this is supposed to be the month when God is more accessible than ever, when He is waiting for us to greet Him, when He is there for us in the “field” of our everyday lives?
- So let us examine our lives and turn and return to the Lord
 - Let us examine our ways and test them and let us return to the Lord. (Lam 3:40 NIV)
 - But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. (1 Cor 11:31)
 - Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else. (Gal 6:4)

Write your Meditation Moment Below:

As you search your own heart, Ask yourself, "Am I willing to change who I am today to become a different person?" "Do I want to become that person that is different and improved from who I am right now?"

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WEEK 2 – TESHUVAH (REPENTANCE)

RETURNING TO THE LORD

Scripture Reference: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.” Psalm 51:1-3 (NIV)

Prayer: My rebellion wipe out oh Lord, according to your vast compassion, according to your faithful love! O GOD, show me your favor!

Points of Meditation:

According to teacher, John P. Parson, there are four steps of Teshuvah

- Forsake the Sin (Prov 28:18) – Sincere repentance
- Regret the breach (Psalm 51) – godly sorrowful for the breach you have caused between God as well as relationships with people
- Confess the truth and make amends (Prov 28:13; I John 1:9) Admit to God and to others and purpose to make amends
- Accept your forgiveness (Phil 3:13-14; I John 1:9) move forward with God through faith
- Teshuvah means not just to return, but acknowledging that you have made a wrong turn and are returning home to the place you should have never left.
- Psalm 51 is often called the Chapter of Repentance. It is the well-known story of how David, who after he had committed an awful transgression against the Lord, acknowledged his sin and returned to the Lord for cleansing and forgiveness. This lesson from David’s life lets us know that we also can return to the Lord because of the Lord’s great compassion.
- The King (our Creator) is in the field and no matter how we may feel, He has never had His back turned. All we need to do is turn ourselves around to realize that He is there and waiting for us.
- The “back-to-back” position that we experience in the beginning of the month is based on our misperceptions, our fears, and our assumptions. Only when we turn around do we realize the truth, the inner essence, and then we are “face to face,” which does not only mean that we can finally look at each other, but more so, that we can look in each other—for the root of the word for face, panim, is the same as pnimiyut, which means “innerness.”
- By working on ourselves during this month, by being willing to turn around and make changes, we come to realize that our Creator has never had His back turned. He has always been facing us, and just waiting for us to turn around.
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David had sinned, having had an affair with Bathsheba, and arranging for her husband to be murdered. (See 2 Samuel 11-12) After being confronted by Nathan the Prophet, David wrote this Psalm of confession. It is a good pattern for us to follow.

1. APPEAL FOR GOD'S MERCY VSS. 1-2
2. ACKNOWLEDGE MY SIN VSS. 3-62
3. ASK FOR GOD'S CLEANSING VSS. 7-14
4. ABIDE IN GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS VSS. 15-19

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WEEK 3 – FORGIVENESS

Scripture References: The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him. Daniel 9:9.

They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and, in their rebellion, appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore, you did not desert them. Nehemiah 9:17

Prayer: Because of your mercy, you offer forgiveness and faithfulness to those who seek forgiveness and to those who call Your Name. I seek and ask for you to forgive me of all my sin. I sincerely regret doing the things that I have done. Please accept this my prayer of forgiveness. In Jesus' Name. Amen

Points of Meditation:

- The month of Elul teaches us about forgiveness. It is seeking forgiveness from God and also from others whom we may have offended and caused pain. One Hebrew word for forgiveness is Selach lanu. It comes from selichah meaning "pardon." To ask for pardon is to say to the one we have injured: "I am sorry for what I did; I sincerely regret having done it, and I will never do it again."
- Another Hebrew word for forgiveness is Machah meaning to "wipe out". Here, we are asking the one we've injured to wipe away the transgression as if it never happened, and restore the relationship (if at all possible) to the former level of warmth and intimacy. See Scripture Reference in Isaiah 43:25-26
- Additional Scripture References on Forgiveness:
 - Micah 7:8-9;
 - Luke 17:3-4;
 - Ephesians 4:31-32;
 - 1 John 1:9

Write your Meditation Moment Below:

Ask yourself: Have I sought the forgiveness of God for missing the mark? Have I sought forgiveness from those whom I may have offended? How have I responded when someone has come to me asking forgiveness? Have I forgiven others as completely as I want people to forgive me?

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WEEK 4 – "I AM TO MY BELOVED AND MY BELOVED IS TO ME"

*ACCEPT YOUR FORGIVENESS AND MOVE FORWARD WITH
GOD THROUGH FAITH.*

Scripture References: I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is Mine (Song of Songs 6:3).

Prayer: Circumcise my heart, O Lord so that I may love you with all my heart and with all my soul and live the life of freedom in you.

Points of Meditation:

- Elul gives us the key to unlocking the inner and most potent meaning of the heart. The Hebrew letters that make up the word "Elul," aleph, lamed, vav and lamed, are an acronym for the phrase from the biblical Song of Songs which means "I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me." This beautiful and romantic phrase is that which represents our relationship with our Creator, which is often paralleled to that of a husband and wife, a bride and groom.
- Elul is the month that begins back-to-back and ends face-to-face. At the beginning of the month, we may have forgotten about the reality that "I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me." However, by working on ourselves during this month, by being willing to turn around and make changes, we come to realize that our Creator has never had His back turned. He has always been facing us and is just waiting for us to turn around.
- During Elul the connection to the Lord becomes an invitation to reflect upon that relationship. It is the time that all your thoughts should be directed towards my Beloved (God) then, my Beloved is also to me; my Beloved helps, assists, and cares for me. It is the time to forget those things that are behind and to move forward with God.

Write your Meditation Moment Below:

Ask yourself: Are my thoughts directed towards Yahweh? What are my thoughts to God? What has he revealed to me during this month? How have I benefited from this time of seeking the Lord? Am I ready to move forward in the new year?

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PSALM OF MEDITATION FOR THE ENTIRE MONTH

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION PSALM 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. 4 One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. 5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. 6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. 7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. 8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. 9 Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. 10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. 11 Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. 12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. 13 I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. 14 Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Write your Meditation Moment Below:

What does Psalm 27 reveal?

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