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Hide & Go Seek
Jeremiah 29:13
8 We Gather Together
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One night many years ago we decided to lay the cares of life aside and spend some time together as a family. So taking a pole... the kids decided that we should play a game of **Hide-and-Go-Seek**.

So Denise was it... and went off to count while the rest of us... hearts pumping and minds racing ran quickly off to hide... because we knew that it wouldn't be long (especially the way some people count) before we'd hear the shout... Ready or Not here I come!

Scooping Micah up in my arms for expediency sake... off I ran to find both of us a good place to hide... However not together... I've played the game often enough to know that two hide harder than one and one like Micah makes staying hid... less likely

So I found him a snug little place up in a pine tree and ran off to seek my own solitary hiding place... Then we heard it... those words that send a shudder of excitement and anticipation down your spine... as you're hoping **NOT** to be found... "Here I Come"

But the tingle that ran down Micah's spine was different... when those words

rang out... "Here I come"... so did Micah's giggle of excitement and anticipation... you see he doesn't quite understand the object of the game yet

So he giggled aloud with expectation... of actually being found... so as Denise passed by the tree in hot pursuit of those in intentional concealment... Out rang Micah's un-harnessed giggle of excitement that made his whereabouts obvious....

Then he tried to tell her where I was

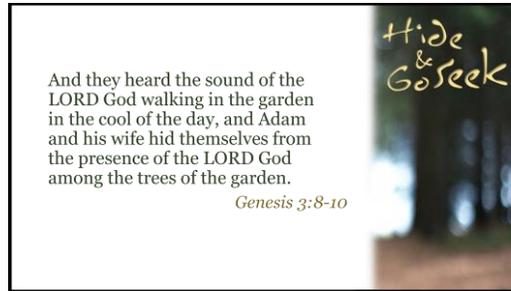
Hide-and-Go-Seek... it's a fun game

Have you ever felt as if you were playing Hide-and-Go-Seek with God?

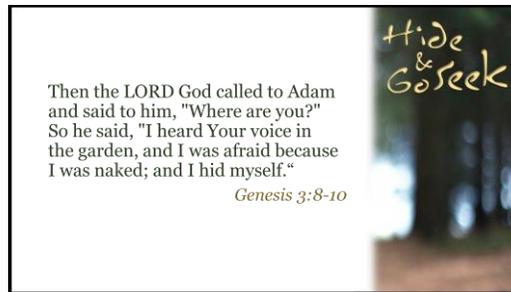
Who's "it"?... Who is doing the seeking and who is hiding?

I think of a time in scripture when God was the one doing the seeking... it took place there in the garden of Eden following Adam and Eve's disregard for You shall "not to eat from that tree"

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Notice that it was God... that was looking for them...

However, sin... their sin... caused them to be afraid... of the one they... used to enjoy communing with

Sin brought about... the awareness of their nakedness... in the sight of God... and sin made them paranoid... of being in His presence

Like Adam we also... have the tendency... to try and cover our nakedness

I think it's still... the same today... from Adam and Eve... we inherited... not just a tendency toward sin... but a tendency toward hiding

And to pass... the blame off... on others and circumstances

When God's Spirit... calls out to us... and wants to commune with us... we have a tendency to hide

But God is not deceived... "all things are open and naked to his sight."

When we've been... involved in sin... we're not hiding... like Micah was... in eager anticipation of being found Especially if... we are enjoying our sin... when we hear the Spirit... call to us... a shudder of fear... traverses our spine... and we seek to hide...

He knows... where we are hiding... and what we've done... and

He's not calling so... He can punish us... He's calling because... He wants to clothe us... properly with the garments... of the sacrificed lamb.



There's a story... of a little girl... who was always getting mistreated... by her classmates
Being picked last... for every game... at recess and so on...

So one day... the school kids... wanted to play Hide-and-Go-Seek

You're "it" Sallie... they said jeeringly... so off they ran to hide

Sallie counted aloud... "One...Two... Three"... then finally... "Here I come"...

But Sallie never came... all the kids that day... spent their whole recess Hiding from someone... who wasn't looking for them.

The devil wants us... to believe that God's... a little like Sallie... Tired of us... not doing as He wants... He simply doesn't care any more...

He's got better things... to do than to look... for or listen to you... So He's simply... not looking

But scripture... testifies otherwise... God has gone... to great lengths... to get Man's attention

To illustrate to Him... that He is not to be feared... and that He wants... to restore the broken relationship... that sin has caused

God wants....nothing more than... to find us... and restore us... to the relationship...

He had... before sin entered the world... and

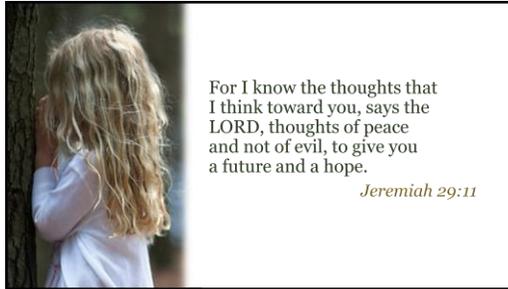
He gave... His very life... to secure the possibility... because He will not coerce us... the ball is now... in our court... to heed his call... and seek Him in faith

In our scripture reading today.... we see a little different twist... to the Hide-and-Go-Seek
Than what we... talked about so far

If you remember... we were here 2 weeks ago.... and we focused... mostly on verse 11... concerning God's thoughts for us

We said they were... Personal thoughts... Peaceful thoughts... and Prospective

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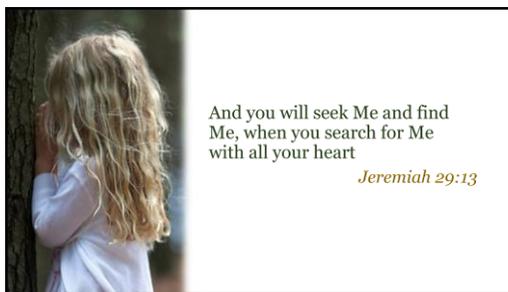
Then we talked briefly... that when we understand... that God is not seeking... to punish

But to restore... this should awaken... the desire to communicate... with Him

12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

But in our text today... **who is it... that is "It"** ... so to speak... Is it God... or us?

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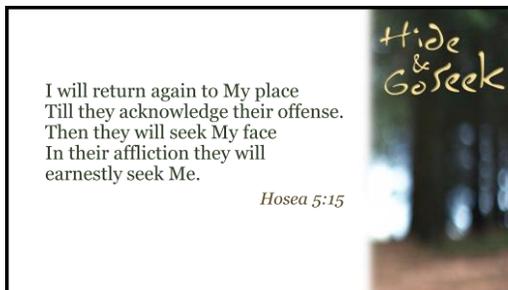
What we see here... is almost... a reversal of the way... it was with Adam and Eve in the garden

It was God... that was seeking them... it was God that... called out to them...

It was God... that initiated the open line... of communication... but it was sin... that set them to hiding.

Look what God said... concerning His wayward people:

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Here God says... when you finally... come to grips... with your situation...

When you realize... that it is your sins... your straying from me...

Your failing to follow... my commandments... that has landed you... in bondage and captivity

When you realize... that it's not me... who is out to get you... but your own selfish desires... then you will call

Then in faith... you will call out to me... You will open... the lines of

communication in prayer... and

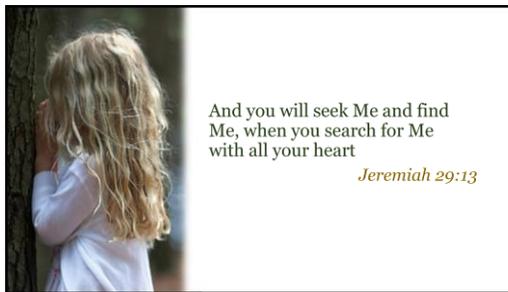
Then I will listen... because of your sin... you're "It"... I'm hiding... you come find me... when your ready...

But scripture teaches... that God is like Micah... up in that tree... giggling with excitement and anticipation That increases... with every step closer... because

I'm like the father... in the parable of... the prodigal son... in **Luke 15**... waiting for you to come home... waiting to put His best robe on you

What a beautiful picture... this is of God! ... waiting to pardon and forgive... with the covering of Christ righteousness... for all our sinfulness

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God is looking for faith... integrity... and sincerity... on our part... a diligent searching... with all the heart...

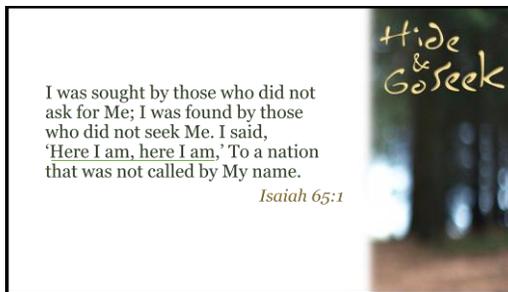
Jeremiah had recorded... these words as a message... to an unrepentant Israel

Who would soon... end up in Babylonian captivity

His people were... not only not... searching for Him... they were running... the opposite way

Now... look at this curious verse:

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God even says... that some who... aren't even seeking... stumble across Him...

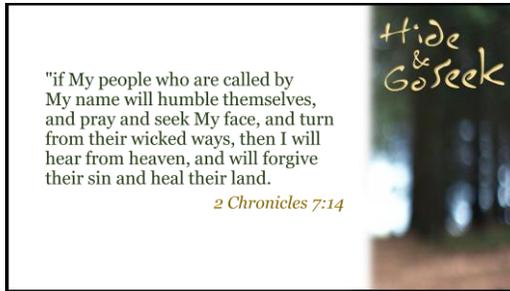
He yells out... Here I am

So how much more... if we look

God wants to call out... "All ye all ye... in come free!"

What is God looking for?

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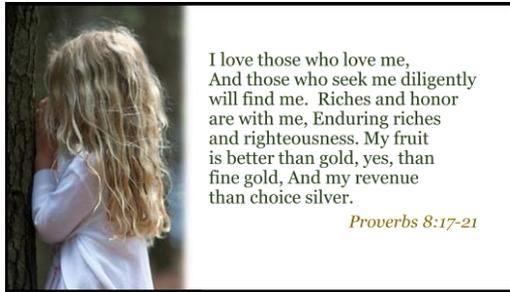


I want you to find me... I want to restore the Relationship... Are you looking?

God wants to be found...

Look what He said in Isaiah:

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Diligently seek me... says the Lord...

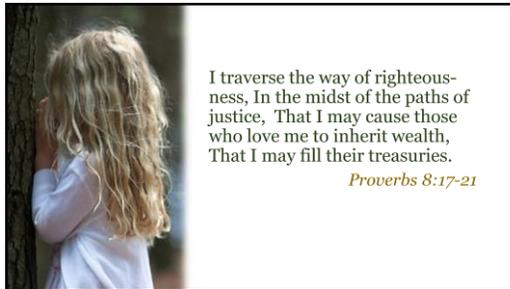
those who love me... seek me

diligently... and what do they find? ...

enduring riches... and righteousness...

and full treasuries.

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Story:

I remember once... when Jeshua was about 3... we were at a huge stadium... sale in California... and turning around... We discovered Him gone... Heart beating... adrenalin flowing... minds racing with fear... of the possibilities...

I sprinted... to the main entrance... to announce his disappearance... to security And set out a search party... soon someone found him... and brought him back to us... man were we ever happy to see him

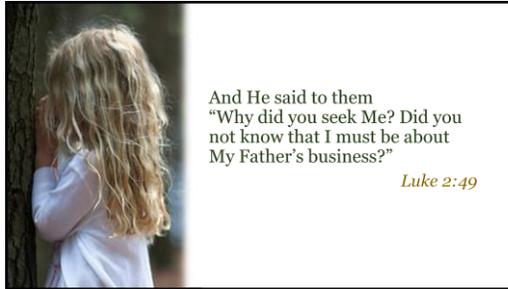
Once when Jesus... was a boy he played... Hide-and-Go-Seek....

with his earthly parents... So to speak... Jesus wasn't really hiding... They were seeking him... because they had been negligent... They had been careless... in their responsibility...of staying next to Jesus... and it had been two days...

That they assumed... he was with them But when they sought Him... he was no where to be found... Searching all around town... asking this person... and that person... Where Jesus... might be found... and where was he?

Right where he always is... How is it... that sin sends us... on a wild goose chase after God? ... Where is He?

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I think God... is waiting for us... to search for him... with the same diligence... and earnestness...

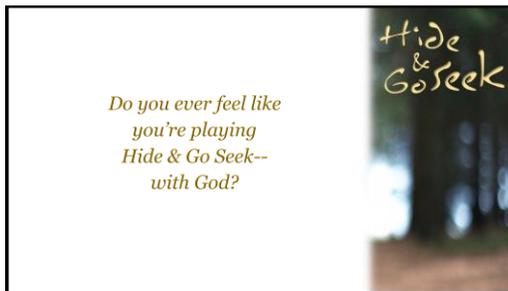
Yes maybe even... the fear that we might not find him... that Mary and Joseph had

They searched for Him... with all their heart... and yet when they found him... he asked them... the penetrating question...

That's were... we find Jesus... is about the Father's business... and if we get... about the Father's business... we will find him there.

Why did you look... so many other places... didn't you know... I'd be in God's house... the house of prayer... Didn't you know... that I would be... about my Father's business?

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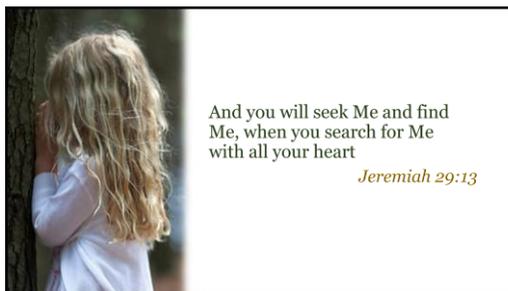


We don't have to count... up to a hundred... before we can go searching... We don't even... have to count by tens... Ready or not here I come

God's not scrambling... to get out of the way... He doesn't cheat... by moving to... another location... when our back is turned.

He wants to be found... He promises he will be

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Diligence... seeking with all your heart is what God wants... this is what those who love him do... those who seek for him as for hidden treasure... as for a lost son or daughter.

Diligence... in spending... quality alone time with Him in prayer and the reading of His word

Diligence... in turning from our sins and the deceitful attractions of comfort... easy and the wealth of this life.

If Denise... had stayed at her counting post... she never would have found anyone...

Diligence... in seeing God about the decisions you make

She had to walk around the yard... in search of us...and with a little looking... she found us all

Diligence... in Communion and Community with God's people being strengthened and working together as part of the body

She didn't give up... and cry in desperation... "All ye all ye in come free"

Diligence... in being about the Father's business... finding Jesus... by joining him in Sharing God's love in service to others

God has promised... to be found... with a little diligent searching... and I know He's like Micah... busting at the seams... waiting to be found... and he has promised He will be... and we can trust his promises

The whole heart... must be in the seeking –

God is not hidden from us...He wants to be found... but we must look... and not half heartedly...

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