

Seek the Lord and Live
Blake Stanley

*F*or thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: “Seek Me and live.” (**Amos 5:4**) When Amos spoke those words to the children of Israel, they were far from the Lord. The people of the northern kingdom had long ago given their hearts to idols. They had abandoned the law. Their leaders ignored the poor. They were steeped in sin. God’s call to them was to seek Him and live.

This call harkens to the promises of God given with the Old Law. In the book of Deuteronomy, among other places, God establishes a link between following His word and the children of Israel maintaining their blessed life in the promised land.

Deuteronomy 4:1 – “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you.”

Deuteronomy 5:33 – “You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.”

There are more examples, but these make the point: the children of Israel’s life in the promised land was tied to their following God’s commandments. This was the covenant that He made with them.

Ultimately, God knew that later generations would fall away. He spoke of this in **Deuteronomy 4**, and in that passage, He gives the same remedy that He would speak 100’s of years later through Amos. In **verses 28–29 of Deuteronomy 4**, it reads:

And there you will serve other gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Here is the same call: “Seek Me and live.”

Life comes from the Lord. This is true in several ways. Life is granted through His creation. He breathed life into the nostrils of Adam, and each of us is a descendant of that breath. For Israel, life in the promised land was tied to their obedience.

And beyond that, when the Lord is followed, the result is a life richly and meaningfully lived. That was one of the great lessons of the wandering in the wilderness. In **Deuteronomy 8:3**, Moses said:

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

God’s word—His commandments, His statutes, His laws—gives life. The laws and statutes that God gave the children of Israel were not random or arbitrary. They ordered their society and their lives in such a way as to give them safety, prosperity, health, and purpose. The Law was for their good. Again, Moses

speaks in **Deuteronomy 10:12–13**: *“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good.”*

For their good—that is what the law was for. And its provisions make that clear. Within this law, you have provisions for property rights, protection of life, instruction for an impartial judicial system, laws governing commerce, and social safety nets for the poor or the disabled. This ordered society so that people could live their lives freely. It was good for them.

Through the law, God also gave them purpose. He created a community that connected them through a shared heritage and brought them closer together through shared experiences in remembrance of where they had come from and what God had given them. He taught them love, mercy, and grace. His law brought them to good works toward their neighbor, the poor, the destitute, and even the foreigner.

It also outlawed sins that are destructive to society but also to the soul: stealing, adultery, covetousness, hatred, murder, taking advantage of the poor and the weak. Participating in those activities—and other sins—is suffocating to life. Sin weighs on its perpetrator. It may feel good for a moment, but it leaves a person unfulfilled, empty, damaged, and anxious. God steered His people away from those sins, for their good.

While the law has changed, those facts remain. Just as the children of Israel were given a beautiful life in following the law, a Christian has a beautiful life following the Lord. A life of peace. A life with community. A life knowing they are loved and valued. A life with purpose. This doesn't mean a life without troubles. Bad things will happen. Everyone stumbles; everyone struggles. That is true regardless of the path people choose. But with the Lord, with what He has given, with the family He has provided, life is also enriched with all that is valuable and good for us. And beyond this life, we have something so much greater to look forward to. Seek the Lord and live.