**1. Motivate**

In what ways have you observed a rapid shift in culture?

* church attendance

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://tinyurl.com/zdbpb4dz> If you do not have wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video file to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/5a67rhuf>

* no Sunday PM services
* acceptance of Christians going to movies
* acceptance of Christians and dancing
* hem lines going up and down
* disappearance of wearing of neckties by men
* blatant use of foul language
* general acceptance in society of homosexuality and gender confusion
* social media so prevalent
* use of technology in education

**2. Transition**

Culture may change, but God does not.

* God blesses those who humbly look to Him.
* This is true for us as individuals and as a nation.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 God’s Glory, Our Humility

Listen for results of God’s presence.

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 (NIV) When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. 2 The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it. 3 When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."

What manifestations of the Lord came at the conclusion of Solomon’s dedicatory prayer?

* fire came down from heaven
* the burnt offering sacrifices were consumed
* the glory of the Lord filled the temple – could have been brilliant light and/or some kind of cloud of smoke

Note their significance:

* Fire can be considered a personal encounter with God in a way that can be observed
* Glory denotes the manifestation of the presence of the Lord with power

What affect did they have on the people?

* priests couldn’t enter because of the manifestation of God’s glory
* people knelt on pavement, faces on the ground
* worshiped – declared God’s worthiness – “He is good; His love endures forever”
* gave thanks

What questions might you like to ask about God’s glory filling the temple?

* wondering what it was like
* brilliant light, suffocating cloud,
* maybe a feeling like bringing two magnets together with the same poles, they repel
* whatever it was, they could sense that it was so powerful and awesome, they couldn’t be there
* God is so Holy and separate from what we are that they couldn’t exist in His presence

How is their response different from the way we enter our church sanctuary for a Sunday service?

* we come in talking and laughing
* we want to greet one another and make the rounds
* all good things, but seem to be more of a human experience rather than experiencing or expecting God’s presence in a service
* makes you wonder what it would be like to come to the doors of the church sanctuary and feel repelled as sinners by God’s righteous and powerful presence
* even if not repelled, to be powerfully impressed by God’s holiness as we walk in

When have you been moved to worship because of something God has done?

* saw someone respond to preaching and surrender to God
* someone healed, right there before our eyes
* protection in a precarious situation
* when a person or family is dedicated and sent forth to a ministry
* in a spiritual celebration of someone’s life after they have died
* viewing something amazing in God’s creation – flowers, a sunset, majestic mountain, power of the weather

3.2 God’s Promises, Our Repentance

Listen for God’s revelation to Solomon.

2 Chronicles 7:12-16 (NIV) the LORD appeared to him at night and said: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. 13 "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. 16 I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

God answers prayer in His time and now we see on His terms, His conditions … what are the four conditions?

* humble yourself
* pray
* seek God’s face
* turn from your wicked ways

What is required to “humble” oneself?

* not trust in your own wisdom – you don’t think less of yourself, you think of your self less
* admit confidence in your own skills, accomplishments, possessions, positions will fail
* realize your own limitations, be honest in assessment of your own resources

What do you think it means to “seek God's face”?

* it is a conscious act by a person with a specific goal in mind
* implies searching for something that is absent in one’s life
* pursuing the presence of God
* implies much more than, “Hey God, if you’re out there …”
* like when we want attention from a business
* we want to talk to the manager, face to face – nothing less will do
* What a concept … God *wants* us to *come straight to the top*!!!

What are the results when we meet God's conditions?

* God hears from heaven
* God forgives sin
* God heals the land

When God “hears” it means more than sound vibrating someone’s eardrums

* It implies that God is acting upon our prayers
* God is doing something

How might this affect people at a *family* level if they met the conditions listed above?

* relationships healed
* children back on track
* stability, unity
* finances in order
* God is honored and glorified by what is said and done in the home

How might this affect people within a local church body if the met the four conditions?

* lack of infighting, politics, harmony, working together
* having a positive outreach into the community
* gifts of the Spirit being demonstrated, the Body of Christ being edified
* people finding Christ as savior
* young people being called into the ministry, into missions

3.3 God’s Blessing, Our Obedience

Listen for God’s commands to Solomon.

2 Chronicles 7:17-20 (NIV) "As for you, if you walk before me as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe my decrees and laws, 18 I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel.' 19 "But if you turn away and forsake the decrees and commands I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, 20 then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.

What condition did the Lord establish for Solomon and his descendants?

* “walk before” God
* live as David did, “a man after God’s heart”
* obey God’s commands
* observe God’s decrees and laws
* refuse to serve and worship other deities

What are some "gods" people serve today rather than following the one true God?

* materialism
* popularity, power
* sex, gay pride, sexual “confusion”
* we sacrifice unborn children to the deity of convenience
* humanism – man becomes the deity

Note the results if Solomon was faithful and obedient.

* Establish his throne, his rule, his authority
* The line of David’s kingship would be intact

What would happen if he and his descendants were *not* faithful and obedient?

* uproot the people of Israel from the land
* reject the temple so recently consecrated
* make the people and the land a byword (an example of what happens to people who reject Jehovah)
* make the nation an object of ridicule

How do these promises and warnings compel us to pray for our church and our nation?

* We have many blessings we enjoy in our country
* the nation (we the people who make up the nation) can easily take these blessings for granted
* we see the shift in general attitudes towards God
* we often complain about these trends, but we need to be praying fervently about these concerns
* we would be wise to pray for revival … not only for our nation and its leaders, but for ourselves and our churches

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Be humble.

* Embrace a posture of humility in your relationship with God.
* Recognize your own imperfections and acknowledge your dependence on Him.

Pray.

* Make prayer a priority in your daily life.
* Seek God’s presence, guidance, and will for your life in every situation.

Invite.

* Encourage others to join you on this journey.
* Reach out to offer encouragement for keeping the faith.
* Together, seek to experience the transformative power of humble prayer and sincere devotion to God.

Double Puzzle

This two part message came from our Interpol offices in Sima Zamsaintras. Local pastors spirited these papers out to their brethren in the west. Unscramble the clue words *which come from your Bible Study passage*. Then use the numbers to determine the letters in the message. When you decrypt the message, pass it along to your Prayer Chairman. Help (and the Crossword) are found at <https://tinyurl.com/5a67rhuf>