

Program Transcripts

June 2022



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

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Topics subject to change without notice

JUNE 5 – TRIUMPH OVER TEMPTATION

All of us face temptation, which tests our character and our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. God's word teaches us how we can triumph over the temptations that come our way. We can win over sin with the Lord's help.

JUNE 12 – ENRICHING MY PRAYER

One of the greatest privileges of life is the blessing of prayer to God our Father. What can we do to make our prayer time a great blessing to ourselves and to those we love. God is waiting to hear from us, let's pour out our hearts to Him.

JUNE 19 – GOD OUR FATHER

When Jesus taught us to pray, He asked us to address the God of Heaven as "our Father." God is our father who protects and provides for our needs, but He longs to draw close to us. We are going to look at what it means to have God as our Father.

JUNE 26 – THE SACRED WRITINGS

What is the single greatest spiritual problem facing our world today? What can help us face and overcome this great challenge? The answer lies where it has always been; it lies in the sacred writings that come from the God of heaven.

Triumph Over Temptation

All of us face temptation, which tests our character and our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we are exploring how we can overcome our temptations. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Psalm 5 and verse 4 describes our God: "For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you." God's word helps us to understand the great struggles of our lives. Temptations are all around us, and we must become aware of their challenges and how we can overcome them. God blesses us in Scripture with the strength and the strategies that we need to fight through our temptations and remain pure in thought and in life. We must trust God's wisdom, for He knows not only the ways of the devil but also how to defeat their seduction. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Temptation by its very nature is a trial or test. God doesn't tempt us, but this world holds many temptations. When we're tempted to sin, we're choosing either to follow the Lord or to fall to all of the schemes of the devil. Hebrews 12:14 says, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." With the Lord's help we can win this personal struggle. We must be prepared for this moral and spiritual battle, because we're fighting for our souls.

Paul urges us in Ephesians 6:10 to 13, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."

Our reading today comes from James, chapter 1, beginning in verse 12. And we'll be looking at how we are being tested, and how we should live for the Lord. "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I'm being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he's carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." Yes, temptation and sin is a big deal.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father help us in those times of testing, that we may do what is right. Father we know that our own pleasures tempt us, help us to do what is right when it is difficult, but help us to love You and to serve You always. In Jesus name, Amen."

To overcome our temptations, we must first understand temptation and how it works. The tempter, the devil, uses our passions and pleasures to blind us to the true cost of sin. Sin will deceive you, enslave you, harden your heart, and cost your soul. Make no mistake; sin is your enemy and doesn't want you to serve God or to be saved. Satan promises you temporary pleasures but robs you of God's eternal promises. The devil may promise you the world, but he wants to steal your soul. The devil is never your friend.

Temptations are tests. We're tempted by our desires, but we choose whether to give in to temptation. Now being tempted is the test but not the sin. Giving in to the temptation is the sin. Hebrews 4 and verse 15 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." Many give in to temptation with no struggle and sin against God, but like Jesus you can choose righteousness over sin. You can overcome your desires.

If you wish to overcome, first take responsibility for yourself. Stop blaming God, stop blaming others, stop blaming nature, and stop making excuses. Until you're honest with yourself before God, you'll continue

to lie to yourself. And when you ignore your spiritual battle with your own desires, you're allowing your desires to defeat you. 1 John 1, verses 8 to 10 says, that "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Second, stop associating with things that will lead you astray. Control your heart, your eyes, and your thoughts. If you walk through mud, you'll get muddy. If you flirt with sin, you'll start practicing it. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 33 says, "Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals." Proverbs 22 and verse 3, says, that "The prudent sees danger and he hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it." Don't flirt with sin or let it draw you in. James 1:14 says, "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire." And so we must use our heads, and count the cost of giving in to our desires.

Third, if you wish to overcome temptation, fill your heart and soul with Scripture. Psalm 119 verse 11 says, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." Again, Psalm 119 verse 114, he says "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word." The best guard against the devil's lies is to know the truth found in Scripture. Satan's whole history is one of lying. He lied to Adam and Eve saying "You will surely not die!" Jesus said in John 8:44 that the devil was a liar from the beginning. And Satan lies in order to seduce people into sin. He wants you to believe his lie and to make you think that God is keeping you from the happiness that you deserve. Frankly, it's the devil who robs you of happiness. God wants to bless you, but He wants to bless you in righteousness, not sin.

Many believe some common lies that Satan spreads. Now don't be deceived. You'll hear things like: "There is no God." "We can't know if God exists." "Or, God doesn't care." "Or the Bible isn't trustworthy." "Or the church is only interested in what it can get out of you." "Or Christians are hypocrites." "Or there is no hell; or everyone will be saved eventually." "Or you can sin and get away with it." "Or God won't judge us."

Or the devil might say as he tempts us, "Well just a little won't hurt." "Or no one will know." "You aren't responsible for your sins; you were born that way." "Or an unborn baby is not a person but mere tissue." "Or God didn't create us; we evolved from lower forms of life." You see, lie after lie comes our way, and many naively swallow it rather than take responsibility for their behavior.

The way to the truth so that you can refute the devil's lies is to know and use the Word of God. Paul said in Acts 20, verse 32, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Bible study is not merely to know God's will; it protects us from lies and reassures us of the truth. Psalm 119 verse 24 says, that "Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors." Again Psalm 119:104 says, "I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path."

Fourth, take control of what your mind focuses upon. Philippians 4, verses 8 to 9 says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you've learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." What you focus on is what you treasure. If you focus on sin, you'll look for opportunities to sin, but if you hunger for righteousness, you'll be filled with the blessing of God. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." So focus on God! Love and respect Him! Treasure Him!

Isaiah 51 verse 7 says, "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and the quarry from which you were dug." We came from God and we belong to Him. Joseph overcame his temptation by remembering who he was and how he belonged to God. Genesis 39:6-9 says: Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time his master's wife

cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he's put everything that he has in my charge. He's not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Awe, he knew the cost of sin.

Job 28:28 says, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding." Scripture often speaks of "fearing the Lord." Well this is a positive respect for the holiness and glory of God, realizing that He means what He says. It's the kind of respect that does not try God or fail to take Him seriously.

Fifth, guard your heart. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Psalm 15 verses 1 and 2 says, "O LORD, who may abide in Thy tent? Who may dwell on Thy holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart." The Lord Jesus helps us to understand how the heart affects our lives and our souls. Jesus said in Luke 6:43 to 45, "For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit; nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what's good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."

Two kinds of birds fly over the California deserts: the hummingbird and the vulture. Now all the vulture can see is rotting meat because that is what it looks for. It thrives on that diet. But the hummingbird ignores the carcasses and the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, it looks for the tiny blossoms of the cactus flowers. It buzzes around until it finds the colorful blooms almost hidden from view by the rocks. And each bird finds what it's looking for. What are you looking for? Better still what are you finding? What you're finding tells what you're really looking for. Your expectations will determine your outcome.

Sixth, resist the devil. James 4:7 to 8 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God (that's the foundation). Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Double-minded people have never fully submitted to God. They have half their mind set on the flesh, while the other half is on God. They want to serve both and are most unhappy, because they know they can't please either one. We must decide to serve the Lord and resist the devil. We must cleanse our hands and purify our hearts. We must honestly look at ourselves and correct our ways.

1 Peter 5:8 to 10 encourages us, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." When we draw close to God and resist the devil, we'll come out better in the end. And no matter how we may suffer now for our faith, the God of all grace will reassure our hearts and souls. So have faith when you're tested. God will be with you.

Seventh, and last, never forget the power of prayer. We must never sell short the power of prayer. You'll remember the Lord Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." It's difficult to give in to temptation when you're fervent in prayer to God. Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:13, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

The Lord explored in Luke 21:34 to verse 36, this idea of watching ourselves and praying. He says, "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation (that is loose moral living) and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon

all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Yes, we live in a challenging time, that tempts us and tries to separate us from our God and our faith. Many of our children are deceived by the world and they're leaving the faith. Many churches are weak and closing their doors. Morally speaking, our culture is confused about the most basic matters. Our culture breeds the idea that there's no such thing as sin. And Satan has certainly pulled out all the stops attempting to defeat everything that Christians stand for, and everything that is good. He's indeed a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Sadly, many no longer know what the word of God says or are willing to follow God. They have souls that are in peril of being lost.

You're fighting temptation alone. 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 13 says that God though, is with you. “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but will with the temptation also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

Let's pray together. “Father we're thankful that in times of temptation You stand with us, and You help us, and You give us the strength and the wisdom to know how to defeat it. Help us Heavenly Father each day. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Our greatest defense begins with a knowledge of God's word and prayer. Let's begin studying God's word daily and praying fervent prayers. Isn't it time that we got down on our knees again? We can't be the salt of the earth until we humble ourselves and revive our faith, our love for God, and our commitment to righteousness. We'll never defeat the devil who is battling us for our souls until we become “strong in the Lord.” We can't save our children, if we're losing our own fight for our own souls. Hosea 4 verse 6 says, that “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, (God says) I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”

These aren't the times for weak prayers and complacency. We must humble our hearts and bow our knees to God. We must get serious about our faith and our commitment to God. Every moral and spiritual problem comes from a rejection of God's word and the failure to seek His face for the truth and for what is right. If we forget God, God will forget us.

To get right with God, believe with all your heart in Jesus Christ. Let Him be the Lord of your life by turning to Him and turning away from sin by repenting. Confess Jesus Christ as God's Son, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you're baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ, God will wash away your sins (Acts 22:16). He will add you to the church (Acts 2:47). He will make you His child (Galatians 3:26 to 27). So do it today!

Well, as always we say to you that we love you, and we pray that God will bless you, and that comes from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.

Enriching My Prayer

One of the greatest privileges of life is the blessing of prayer to God our Father. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." How can I make the most of my prayer time? Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's word not only teaches us what we need to know to be saved; it also teaches us what is important in the Christian life. The more we grasp the teaching of Scripture, the more we'll understand the love and grace of God. Scripture helps us treasure the wisdom of our Father in Heaven, the One who hears our prayers. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

God speaks to us through His word, and we speak to Him through prayer. Prayer is a good habit, but only praying by habit is a very poor habit. We need to pray from our hearts. And such, that's habitual prayer really misses the point; it's a waste and a delusion. It shows a spiritually dwarfed life and a lack of faith. A faithless prayer gets no results; it doesn't reach God. And God doesn't hear, and we miss the benefits of our prayer.

When we bow our knees and humble our hearts before God in fervent and heartfelt prayer, we can have confidence God is listening and will answer our prayers.

What God told Daniel in Daniel 10 verse 12 should encourage us all, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words." God hears His people who are humble and seek to understand His teaching. Proverbs 15 verse 8 says "the prayer of the upright is His delight."

Before you say the first word, stop and think for a few moments about the One to whom you are praying. Remember, you're praying to the One who created you and knows all about you. You're praying to the One who loves you and wants you to abide in His grace.

We'll now worship in song, read from Matthew 7:7 to 11, and explore how we can enrich our prayer lives.

Our reading today comes from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 7, verses 7 to 11. And here we learn about how good our God is to us. "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" Yes we have a good God in heaven who hears our prayers.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You love us so much, and that your grace and mercy has blessed us. And Father we're thankful that You hear our prayers and that You open doors for us. Give us strength to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

It's a great blessing to come away from prayer having shared my heart, my burdens, my fears, and my concerns with my Father in heaven. Because He is my Father, I know He cares. I know He listens, and I know He can do something about my concerns. 1 Peter 5:6 to 7 says, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

The Scriptures teach, however, that there are some essential elements necessary for God to hear our prayers. We should keep in mind that God will not hear some prayers. God set the conditions for the prayers

that He hears. First, God expects us to pray with faith. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 11:22 to 24, "Have faith in God. 'Truly I say to you, that whoever says to this mountain, "Be taken up and cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.'" Faith is essential to our Christianity in every way. Hebrews 11 verse 6 says, "And without faith it's impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He's a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Second, if we wish for God to hear our prayers, we must think about our motivation for praying. James 4:1 to 3 says, "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and you do not have; so you commit murder. You're envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." There is certainly nothing wrong with asking God to meet your true needs; but when people pray for God, and they only seek blessing to spend it on their pleasures, they aren't really giving themselves to God. James 4 and verse 4 says, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Third, if we wish to be heard, then we need to keep God's commandments and ask Him to bless us and others according to His will. 1 John 3:21 to 22 says, "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."

Again, 1 John 5:14 to 15 says, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." We not only need to practice the will of God, we also need to pray according to His will.

Many people expect God to grant their requests and yet have no intention of listening to Him or following His commandments. God wants to grant our prayers, but He also wants us to live righteous lives. Psalm 66 and verse 18 says, that "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear." Isaiah 59:1 to 2 says, "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." When you put wickedness before God and sin against Him, rebelliously, you separate yourself from Him and end your friendship with Him. He hides His face from you and He won't hear your prayers. Now that's a great loss. But when we reconcile with God, we also enjoy a loving relationship where God is concerned with our needs.

Next, let's explore the values of prayer. First, prayer is how we connect with our Father in heaven. We can connect with Him anytime, anyplace. We need God every day and every hour.

In prayer we have an intimacy with our Father in Heaven; and in prayer we focus on God Himself. The value of prayer doesn't lie in the number of prayers we pray or their length, but it finds value in that we are privileged as children of God to talk to Him, make requests of Him, and to shower our love and thanks toward our heavenly Father. We need the strength of just being with God, by retreating into prayer. This activity fine tunes our lives, it adjusts our attitudes, and helps us function properly. God is leaning forward not just to listen but to have fellowship with me and with you.

Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father." God is a loving and compassionate Father who is to be revered and loved. Our Father asks us to come to Him with our hurts and troubles because He cares. And prayer is a great reminder that we do have a "Father" not a stranger in heaven. The Lord Jesus assures us in Matthew 6 and verse 8, "for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him." We don't have to beg to get our Father's attention. He invites us to pray! You remember, the Lord Jesus urges us in Matthew 7:7 to 11, "Ask,

and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 'Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!'" We have a gracious Father, a good Father, in heaven. Now God is ready and willing to hear our requests and to fill our needs. And prayer is man's response to God's willingness. Prayer honors God, since we show our dependence upon Him and we come to Him.

Second, nothing is more reassuring than seeing prayer answered. When we look back and see all that God has done for us in the past, we draw reassurance that God will continue to be with us and bless us. Prayer can do anything that God can do. The power is not in our praying but in God's willingness and His power to answer those prayers. The object of asking is to receive what we request. And the aim of seeking is to find. The goal of knocking is to have the door opened. God invites us to ask, seek and knock. And He promises we will receive, find, and have an open door. Believing in God means that my prayers matter!

That God will act if and when I ask Him is a great blessing. And I know that He will act in ways that He would not have acted if I had not asked Him to do so. Now divine solutions are always the best solutions, the wisest solutions, and the right solutions for everyone. God sees and knows everything. He sees what I can't see and He knows what I can't know. And when He acts, He does so with a bigger picture in mind than I'm capable of understanding.

Prayer releases the power of God. Paul said in Ephesians 3:20 to 21, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." God can do more than we can, more than we can imagine – more than we can think – more than we can - and He can do it abundantly more! God can do more than we can ask Him to do--exceedingly, abundantly more!

In 2 Kings 19, Hezekiah and Jerusalem were surrounded by the powerful king of Assyria Sennacherib and 185,000 troops. Hezekiah prayed to God for deliverance and God answered. 2 Kings 19:35 says, "Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out, and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead."

Does prayer work? Of course it does! Israel sinned grievously against God in the wilderness; Moses prayed and saved a nation. Joshua prayed and the sun stood still. Hannah prayed and God gave her a son, Samuel the prophet and priest, was that son who was given to Hannah. When Samson was blind and in chains, he asked for strength and he pulled down the house of Dagon, killing 3,000 Philistines. Solomon prayed for wisdom; and God made Him the wisest of all mortals. Elijah prayed that it might not rain, and it didn't rain for three years and six months. He prayed for fire to come down from heaven and consume a sacrifice, and it did. He prayed for rain, and it rained that very day! Hezekiah prayed, and God gave him 15 more years of life. Daniel prayed and God rescued him from the lion's den. Jesus prayed, and God raised Lazarus from the dead. Peter prayed, and God raised Dorcas. The disciples prayed for Peter to be released from prison, and Peter showed up at the door.

I tell you, when you pray, focus on God. Give Him your complete attention. When we pray, we need humility and a willingness to listen to God. We need to pray with Samuel's heart. He said in 1 Samuel 3 and verse 10, "Speak, for your servant is listening." God speaks today to us through Scripture. And if we want God to hear our prayers, we need to hear what He says in Scripture.

When we pray, we need to have the heart of Jesus. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed saying, "Father, if You're willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22, verse 42). Now commitment to God means a willingness to accept the will of God for our lives. God's will may

not be what we want. Loving God with all our hearts and souls means wanting what God wants, even more than what we want.

Now if you're asking God to forgive you, let Him know that you have a godly sorrow for your sins and you're repenting of them. If you're asking God's forgiveness, then be willing to forgive those who've sinned against you. If you're asking for daily bread, then be willing to work, so that you may give to those in need. Jesus worked many miracles by giving the person to be blessed something to do. The blind man washed at the pool of Siloam and came back seeing. Yes, God answers prayer, but not just for you. He blesses us so that we can be a blessing for others.

Once you've prayed, thank God for answering your prayers, whatever they are. Thank Him for willingly bearing your burdens and anxieties. Thank God for caring about you, your requests large or small. And thank Him for meeting your physical needs and spiritual needs. Thank God for being near when you needed Him. Psalm 145:18 says, "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth." Let the time you've spent with God make a difference in your life.

God does indeed care for us, and we need to trust in Him. Proverbs 3 and verse 5 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight." God will answer our prayers. Let's humble our hearts, turn from wickedness, and seek His face.

Let's pray. "Father, we're thankful that You love us and You hear our prayers. Father, we humble ourselves and we look to You for our needs knowing that You're a great God who loves us. Help us heavenly Father to love You, and to serve You all of our days. In Jesus name, Amen."

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." We live in tumultuous times with moral confusion, the uncertainty of war, political and cultural controversies, and broken homes and lives. If ever we needed God, we need Him now. We need His word to guide and teach us, and we need to humble our hearts in prayer. God promised Solomon if Israel ever strayed from following Him and suffered for their sins what they could do to be reconciled to God in 2 Chronicles 7 verse 14, it says "and (if) My people who are called by My name 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 will heal their land."

God will hear us, if we will humble ourselves, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways too. These are serious times! And if we want a better world, we must start with ourselves. Each of us must determine to humble ourselves, give up our wicked ways and follow the truth found in the Scriptures, and to seek God's face in prayer. Will you commit to praying fervently every day for as long as it takes! We must pray fervently without quitting. James 5:16 says, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

If a righteous person's prayer can accomplish much, and it does, let me ask you, are you righteous? If not, then you need to come to the Lord. God's grace is available to those who believe Jesus Christ is God's Son and are willing to confess it, it's available to those who repent, and to those who are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2 and verse 38).

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. And you need a church family. Remember, we love you and God bless you, from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.

God Our Father

When Jesus taught us to pray, He asked us to address the God of Heaven as “our Father.” Hello, I’m Phil Sanders and welcome to our Bible study, “In SEARCH of the Lord’s Way.” God is our father who protects and provides for our needs, but He longs to draw close to us. Stay with us to learn more about your Father in Heaven.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord’s Way. Our Father in Heaven loves us and gave us His Word to save us and to teach us how to live righteously. Every word in the Bible is true and God’s gift to us. So we want to know more and more about God’s way for us. Thanks for tuning in today. We want to be part of your life each week.

I lost my earthly father on June 12, 1985. I loved my dad, and losing him left an incredible emptiness in my heart. Dad loved me, provided for me, corrected me, and encouraged me all my life. I miss him to this day. But after losing my father, I became acutely aware of my heavenly Father who is still with me.

The Lord Jesus characteristically referred to the God of Heaven as His Father. He taught us to pray, “Our Father who is in heaven.” The Heavenly Father knows what we need even before we ask. He feeds the birds of the air and clothes the grass of the field, and the Father in Heaven will also take care of us.

The Lord Jesus said, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” The Father sees what we cannot see and knows what we do not know, so we must learn to trust Him. We must do the will of our Father in heaven if we’re to enter into heaven. The Father wisely teaches us what we need to know to have eternal life and to be His children. Jesus promised to prepare a place for us in heaven in the Father’s house. Our Father wants to bless us with His mercy and love forever. And how blessed we are to have a Father in heaven!

Larry Owsley will now lead the Edmond church of Christ in song, and then we’ll read from Philippians 4, verses 4 to 7. And encourages us to look to God.

Our reading today comes from Paul’s epistle to the Philippians, it comes from chapter 4:4 to 7. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Oh what a wonderful promise that God would guard us and help us.

Let’s pray together. “Father we rejoice in the love that You have shown to us and the grace that we have. We know that You are a great God and merciful. And Father we pray that You will help us to focus our hearts and our minds on You. And we’re thankful Father that You grant our prayers. In Jesus name, amen.”

Psalms 103 verses 1 to 3 says, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; Who satisfies your years with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.” We must never let anything cause us to forget our God, our Father and all that He has done for us.

God's care extends to all. God cares for those who don't know who He is and what He's done for them. God even cares for those who want nothing to do with Him as their God and Lord. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:43 to 45 that “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

By caring for everyone, God shows His goodness. And even though people forsake Him, He still provides for their needs, hoping one day they will turn their lives around. God our Father wishes the wicked would see their sins and turn to him in repentance. When people continue in sin, Paul asks, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2 verse 4)

Some become so busy, struggling to get what they want, that they forget everything that we have comes from God. The Bible says in James 1:17, that "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." Many grumble about all the things they don't have and forget what wonderful things our Father has done for us.

Our Father in heaven is not selfish, but opens His heart and His grace to all who turn to Him. The Father gave His Son Jesus for our sins, so that we could live an abundant life here and have eternal life in heaven. Romans 8:32 says, that "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" God indeed has blessed us richly in Christ Jesus.

And so Paul can confidently say in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." He certainly will supply our needs when we put ourselves into His service. God never puts us to work for His cause without giving us the means to do His will. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9 verse 8, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed. When we put God first in our lives, God provides what we need to work for His glory. God is able. In providing for us our heavenly Father not only gives us what we need at the proper time, he satisfies the desires of every living thing.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:25 to 34: "For this reason I say to you, don't be worried about your life, as to what you'll eat or what you'll drink; (or) nor for your body, as to what you'll put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more than they, worth more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?

Why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they don't toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!

Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So don't worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Worry or anxiety disturbs our faith in the Father. Worry causes our hearts to be split between faith and fear of the worst. Your Father in heaven knows what you need and will provide for those needs if you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Many people play at their Christianity and never make it a priority; and then they wonder why they don't get much from it.

God has blessed us with an abundance of his blessings. And most of us have more than we actually need, but we're never satisfied. Sometimes people expect the wrong things of God. Our Father doesn't promise to give us everything we want; He promises to provide what we need. Some people want more and more and lose sight of what God has done for them already.

God blesses us by providing for our greatest needs. Now our greatest need is not a bigger house, a bigger pay check, or more worldly goods. Our greatest need is spiritual: we must have a close relationship with God. By our murmuring and complaining, we show really an ingratitude to God. God could rightfully withdraw

His bountiful hand completely from us. God could rightfully destroy us for our sins and our ingratitude. But God is better to us than we deserve. God forgives us and continues to open his hand toward us.

Psalm 103:8 to 13 says, "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He's not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him."

Now God is a wise father and knows how weak and immature we are, so He works with us and in us to help us grow spiritually. Sometimes God has to discipline us out of love, just as a father disciplines his child. The Bible says in Hebrews 12:5 to 9, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you're reprov'd by Him; For those whom He (the Lord) Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives. "It's for discipline that you endure; and God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father doesn't discipline? But if you're without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you're illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. Now all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who've been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

God, as a good father, disciplines us to shape our character and help us to endure. Discipline may hurt for the moment, but it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. God sometimes permits and sometimes causes hard things to happen in our lives for our best interests. He doesn't do this to be mean to us but to build strength of character and to train us in righteousness. Now we've all seen undisciplined children who turned into spoiled brats. They got their way early and did what they wanted to do, but spoiled children don't develop the maturity to say no to temptation. Now this fault in their character will cause trouble for their whole lives.

As Christians we're children or sons of God. And God's greatest desire for us as His children is to be like Him. Again, the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:44 to 45, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." Now God our Father is a model of righteousness and He's kind. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:14-16, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance (that is when you didn't know God), but as he who called you is holy (that is God who calls you as holy), you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

God wants us to love as He loves, to forgive as He forgives, to be righteous as He is righteous, and to stay away from sin as He stays away from sin. He wants us to love what is right and to despise what is wrong. The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, "but test everything; hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." He doesn't want sin to keep us from coming home to Him in heaven.

Now God as a father is doing everything He can to bless us without violating our ability to choose. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. He gives us this marvelous book, the Bible, in order to educate us spiritually. And the Bible contains all that we need to live righteous lives. The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 to 17, that "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Now when you're born into the family of God, and that takes place in baptism, you get God as your Father and the church as your family in Christ. Now we're called through the gospel into fellowship with God's Son Jesus Christ. And being in Christ, we're kin to all our brothers and sisters in Christ. God gives us

the church to keep us strong in faith and love and to help us get to heaven. Family in Christ is such a blessing. And I wouldn't want a single day to go by outside of the fellowship of my Father in heaven, my Lord Jesus Christ, and my spiritual family. And that's why I worship regularly with my brethren. I know they'll keep me close to my Father in Heaven. And I hope that you will worship regularly with a church near you. And if we can help you find one, we'll be happy to do so.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that we can come to You as our Father, knowing that You will hear our prayers and that our concerns matter to You. Father, we're thankful for all of our blessings, help us to count them regularly, and to devote ourselves to You in love. Be with us and help in every way. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen."

Jesus helps us understand the fatherly nature of God in the parable of the prodigal son, who wasted his estate on immorality. When a famine came and he was hungry, the Bible says in Luke 15 that he came to his senses and said, "I'll get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I've sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I'm no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" I can only imagine how guilt-ridden, humiliated, and lonely this foolish young man was. He was even a little afraid.

But when the ragged, hungry boy came home, the father saw him, felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. The son began his penitent confession to his father, but the father stopped him. He told his slaves, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found." And they began to celebrate" (verses 22 to 24).

God will show His marvelous and undeserved love towards us too, if we come to our senses and humble our hearts before Him. He wants to forgive and to bless you; He's watching and waiting for you. And you know what, He'll run for you, if you will come to Him.

Now to enter into a relationship with the Father, you must believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Confessing Christ, you must turn from your sins in repentance. Luke 13:3 says, that "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Now you can't put sin first and still please God. Then you must also be baptized, that is, immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Romans 6 and verse 3 says that we're baptized into the death of Christ, where the blood was shed. God washes away our sins in the blood of Christ.

Now perhaps you're a member of the church of Christ but have wandered off like the prodigal son. Come to your senses about sin and come back to your Father in heaven. He's waiting for you.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. They love guests, and you'll be glad you visited. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be glad to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. And as always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.

The Sacred Writings

What is the single greatest spiritual problem facing our world today? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore something missing, something we badly need. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We search Scripture, because the Bible is God-given. We can rely on Scripture for the truth and for what is most relevant. We can distinguish right from wrong and good from evil, because of God's teaching in His written word. God's word is specific and does not leave us in doubt about sin. Let's give thanks that we have God's holy word. We appreciate you for taking time with us today. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

If we asked what the single greatest spiritual problem of our time is, what would you say? You might speak of war or our current moral decline. You might suggest the breakup of the home. There can be no doubt that we are a confused culture, an angry and divided culture, and a supremely selfish culture. Paul described his world in Titus 3 and verse 3, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another."

Well how does this happen? How can we be so confused about the most basic things and be so divided and angry? Well I'll tell you, we have lost our sense of the sacred. We no longer know what it means to be holy, nor do we separate the holy from the profane. We've become like the pagans who do not know God. We acknowledge there is a God. And society gives Him a seat at the table as long as He keeps quiet and doesn't speak. Our culture no longer treats Him as holy or His word as holy. And this we find heartbreaking; and this tells us why our culture is so morally confused and chaotic. Scripture is the way of God to wisdom and light.

Larry Owsley will lead us in song, we'll read from 2 Timothy 3:14 to 17, and we'll explore the importance of the sacred writings.

Our reading today comes from 2 Timothy, chapter 3, verses 14 to 17. And this is right on the heels of a statement by Paul that evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse. And then he says in verse 14, "You, however, continue in the things you've learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

And that's the promise we have from God about what the scriptures can do for us. Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father we praise Your name and exalt You as the creator and the lover of all men. And Father we're thankful for Your Word, which can teach us and correct us and train us to be the kind of people that You want us to be. Father we pray that we may always love You and do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

The Lord told Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18 to 20, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die." The Lord makes a distinction between the true prophet and the false prophet, between the things He has commanded and the opinions and creeds from other sources.

God distinguishes between His words that are holy and the words of human origin. What is holy and divine, and what is human? Jesus once asked the chief priests and elders of the people a question, "The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" (Matthew 21 verse 25). Now this is not a trivial question. If we don't face the difference between what is from God and what is from man in this life, we'll have to face it in the life to come!

If a message is from God, then we ought to pay earnest attention to it. If a message is someone's opinion or even the proclamation of a group of men, it's human of origin. Many claim the Holy Spirit speaks to them today, but the Lord Jesus promised to the apostles in the first century in John 14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." The apostles didn't lack any teaching of the Lord in the first century. Again, the Lord promised the apostles in John 16:13, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth; the Spirit taught them all things. They lacked nothing of what Jesus taught or what would be revealed. All truth is not a little truth, some truth, or even most of the truth. It is all truth. Nothing was lacking. Jude confirmed this promise when he challenged Christians in Jude 3. He said, "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all (time, once for all) delivered to the saints." Now just as Jesus died once for all on the cross, the contents of the faith had also been delivered to the saints in the first century.

For this reason, we should look to the apostles and to the written word instead of early councils as an authority for the faith. The councils were just men who voted what they thought. We should look to God's holy word, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Nor should we look to reformation councils and creeds of the sixteenth century for the faith. The Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets delivered the "one faith" in the first century. Councils and creeds of human origin aren't divine. The message that contains all truth for Christians is the promised teaching given to the apostles and found in the written word of God, especially in the New Testament.

God has never permitted men to add to, to take away, or to edit His word. God's word is holy, tested, and true. To change it in any way would be disrespectful to God Himself; it shows a lack of faith in His wisdom and character. Psalm 12 verse 6 says, "The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times." God's words are holy and pure. Not only that, they are unchanging, just as God Himself is unchanging. Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens." The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." 1 Peter 1:23 to 25 makes it clear, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you've been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.' And this word is the good news that was preached to you."

Since God's word is truly settled in heaven, since it lives and abides forever, since it's the imperishable seed that causes us to be born again, and since it's the same good news preached in the first century, why would we ever want to change it? If you change God's seed, you won't get God's fruit. You'll get something different, and something that will keep you from being born again. False gospels and false teaching don't produce what the true gospel produces.

Paul rebuked the Galatians for attempting to produce a different gospel. He said in Galatians 1:6 to 9, "I'm astonished that you're so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel that's contrary to the one which we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed." Preaching a different gospel will cause the preacher and the people who listen to him to be lost.

Changing the teaching of God in any way defiles God's word. Do you honestly think God will approve those who add to any command, take away any command, twist any command, or edit any teaching to suit our society? The Lord had Moses write in Deuteronomy 12:32, "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it." Proverbs 30:5 to 6 says, that "Every word of God proves true; he is a

shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.” Along the same lines, Revelation 22:18 to 19 says, “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and Revelation clearly teach we cannot ignore, add to, throw out, or change the teaching of Scripture. And God will punish anyone who thinks they can rewrite Scripture into the culture of the day. Those who twist the Scriptures will have to face God Himself one day. What God calls sin is still sin; what God calls holy is still holy. Time and culture will not change what is written in Scripture. People may attempt to twist the Scriptures into something that fits the culture, but God doesn't change with the whims of culture. You may feel something is okay when God's word says it isn't! Isaiah 55:6 to 9 says, “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. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Yes, Proverbs 16:25 says, that “There is a way that seems right (seems right) to a man, but its end is the way to death.” People so easily lie to themselves about their morals and desires. They imagine things are right when they only lead to death.

We can trust the words of Jesus Christ, because He took such care to tell us what the Father wanted us to know. The Lord Jesus said in John 7 and verse 16, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.” And He repeats this in chapter 12, verses 49 to 50 of John, “For I have not spoken on my own authority (or initiative), but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know (Jesus says) that his commandment is eternal life. And what I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.” God's commandment is eternal life, and our eternal destinies are tied up in what is said in the Scriptures. On the last day according to John 12:48, we will be judged by the words of Jesus. Now God's words are not only holy and sacred, they speak with final authority.

Jesus once asked in Luke 6:46, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” On another occasion, the Lord said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7 verse 21). Now when you change His commandments, you lose His promises. When you refuse to listen to Him, you are by that very act not treating Him as Lord.

The apostles understood how important it was to hear and keep the words of Jesus and not be swayed by the teachings of men. When several disciples in John 6 didn't like what Jesus taught, they left the Lord. And when Jesus asked the apostles if they would go away as well, Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6 verse 68). Now if you search for spiritual answers elsewhere, you won't find the words of eternal life. You might find something you like, but you won't find God's will outside Scripture. You'll find people's opinions and suggestions, but you won't find God's truth.

The Lord Jesus told Satan, “It is written, ‘You shall not live by bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” We all need what God says, every commandment, every teaching, and every promise. The phrase, “It is written,” means it stands written. God causes Scripture to remain written and binding even with the passing of centuries. God's teaching doesn't stop being true or authoritative. More than that, God's commandments are indeed sacred and holy; they rise above the beliefs and the mores of our culture. They're still binding on Judgment Day, but there's no Scriptural suggestion that the dictates of councils and creeds will judge us. Many people look to culture for spiritual guidance, but cultures are fickle and change with the wind. God's word, however, is eternal and settled in heaven.

Study God's word for yourself. Don't listen to opinions that lead you astray by twisting the Scripture. 2 Timothy 2 and verse 15 says, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You have given us Your sacred writings, Your Holy Word. And Father, help us to honor it as we honor You, to listen carefully, and to be obedient to Your will as we love You. This is our prayer in Jesus name, Amen."

Since the Scriptures are holy and sacred, they're in a category all their own. We must listen to them first, last and always. We must not add to them or take away from them. The Scriptures are from God, who knows all things and who rules all things. Since we'll be judged by the words of Jesus, let's go to His words for all things, knowing the Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth. Let's speak where God speaks and be silent where God is silent. Since God is holy, let's honor Him and His word as holy.

If you cannot find what you believe and practice in Scripture, then you may be following men and not God. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (what it really is)." Don't be content with the ways of the world and miss the narrow road that leads to life. Follow the will of God, which is good and acceptable and perfect.

To become a Christian don't depend on substitutions and innovations that arose in the centuries after the apostles. The New Testament knows nothing about sprinkling and pouring for baptism; nor does it know anything about baptizing infants. The disciples baptized by immersion in water in the book of Acts those who were old enough to believe and repent. People chose to be baptized that day and hour, because they knew their sins would be washed away in baptism (Acts 22:16). They didn't fuss about what to do; those who gladly received God's word were baptized (Acts 2 and verse 41). They heard what they needed to know and acted as soon as possible.

So we ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.