

## "What God Wants for You"

As parents Jackie and I wanted to give our children the very best that we could, because we loved them. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders and this is a Bible study, "In Search of the Lord's Way." And in the same way our Father in Heaven wants to meet our needs and to give us the best life possible. Now only in Christ can we find the abundant life, and that's what we'll explore today.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way, where we search the Scriptures to find the Lord's way to be saved and to live the Christian life. Thanks so very much for studying God's Word with us. We love hearing from you that you're watching or listening to this program. And we definitely want to be a part of your life each and every week.

When God, your Father, created you, He created you with love in His heart. God said to the nation of Israel in Jeremiah 29 verse 11, "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'" God has plans for our lives too! He wants to bless our lives and meet our needs. 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."

All the physical blessings we enjoy, however, there not going to make up for what our spirits need. We're spiritual beings with souls, and the physical things of this life will not provide for the things that we need inside our hearts and souls. We need God in our lives. He's the difference between wisdom and foolishness. He's the difference between existing and an abundant life. He is the difference between chasing after the wind and living with meaning and purpose. God knows what is best for us and He wants to provide the things that we need most for our souls.

For thirty-five years In Search of the Lord's Way has offered the information on this program free. And if you'd like a printed copy, or CD of today's lesson, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, if you like, call our toll-free telephone number. We'll pay for the call. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond Church will now sing a hymn of praise to God. Then we'll read from Romans 8 verses 31 to 39.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 31 to 39. "What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather He who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." A great reading from the Word of God. Let's pray together. Oh Father, we're thankful that nothing can separate us from Your love. We're thankful that Your love helps us through every challenge of life. And we pray Father that Your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

God is our Father, and like any good parent He wants what's best for us spiritually, because He loves us and He knows that our spiritual well being is vital. In this lesson, I want us to explore ten things that God wants for our lives. And I'm so thankful for the Bible, because it's the Bible that helps us understand the very heart of God. The more we know God, the more we'll love Him and want to follow Jesus Christ. Here are seven things God wants for our lives.

First, God wants you to be saved. The Bible says 1 Timothy 2 verses 3 to 4, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." There's nothing in this world worse than being lost in sin. God says in Ezekiel 18 and verse 4 that the soul that sins will die. Now He's not here speaking of physical death but spiritual death, which is far worse.

Sin is a terrible thing. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 10 verse 28, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." Sin will separate you from the love of God and from His blessing. But God has a plan for us to save us from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, when we believe in Him and obey His commandments.

Now some people think God made up His mind long ago who would be saved and who would be lost, but this simply isn't true. God gave us the truth, which teaches us how to be saved; and He gave us free will, which allows us to choose to follow Him or to reject Him. God, however, wants us to choose Jesus and to be saved. He doesn't want anybody to be lost.

The Bible says in Ezekiel 18 verses 30 to 32, God is speaking, He says, "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. 'Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,' declares the Lord GOD. 'Therefore, repent and live.'"

Second, God wants you to come to know the truth and to be free. The Lord Jesus promised those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31 and 32). Now God gave us His Son Jesus so that we might come to know and understand His love for us. The Bible says in John 1:17 to 18, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." Now this is from the New American Standard Bible.

Some people say they believe there is a God in heaven but we don't know anything about Him. Oh, but we can and do know something about Him. We can know God through looking at Jesus. The Lord Jesus once said to the apostles, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.' Philip said to Him, 'Well Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' And Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (this is from John 14 verses 7 to 9). You see, we know the Father by knowing the Son!

Third, God offers us the privilege of prayer. In fact, God wants to hear from us. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7 verses 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!”

My friend, we don't have to beg God to let us pray to Him; the Lord invites us and wants us to bring our requests to Him. Just as a father loves his children, so our Father in heaven loves us. He wants to hear from us and to have a relationship with us. The Bible is how God speaks to us, and prayer is how we speak to God. God loves us enough to hear our words and our hearts. He will always answer with what is best for us, not always with what we want, but always with what we need.

Fourth, God wants us to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age. The Bible says in Titus 2 verses 11 to 14, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

God wants only what is best for us. Living sensibly, righteously, and godly blesses our lives and blesses those who surround us. God's grace and forgiveness opens an opportunity for us to leave a sinful and destructive lifestyle for one that is godly and productive. The gospel of Christ transforms lives from selfish to loving, from hurtful to helpful, from dishonest to devoted, and from troubled to trustworthy. God's grace works through the Word to teach us to hate what is wrong and to love what's right.

Fifth, God wants you to have an abundant life. The Lord Jesus said in John 10 and verse 10, “The thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy; (but He said) I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.” Everybody wants to be happy, but “the abundant life” is far greater than merely just being happy. It has real, inner joy, real life. It is a complete life; it's a life “to the full.” Christianity is a way of life that doesn't lack any worthy thing that we need.

Now sinful pleasures may satisfy for a moment, but they cannot give you the lasting joy of the Christian life. Sinful pleasures are deceptive; they promise much but destroy those who pursue them. Sinful pleasures are addictive, enslaving, and destructive. God wants something better for His children than slavery to sin. He offers the spiritual, which is so much better than the fleshly. God's word says in Ephesians 1 and verse 3 that the Father “has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ.”

In Christ we have God's amazing grace to sustain us, God's abundant love to comfort us, God's hope of heaven to give us endurance, and God's Word of wisdom to guide us. In Christ we've become God's holy and beloved children. Being God's child is the greatest privilege. Nothing else compares.

As part of the abundant life, that God gives us, He gives us the church as a family. As part of the local church we have brothers and sisters who know us and love us, who encourage us and watch for our souls. As part of a local church, we have a place to worship and to grow as children of God. God gave us the church to bless our lives and to help keep us strong in our faith and love for Him. Living as a part of God's family, the church, and serving Christ gives us a great sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Number six, God wants you to find peace. The Bible says in Philippians 4 verses 6 to 7, “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.” God knows that we often come on tough times. Just like any Father who loves His children, He puts His arm around us and says, “Let me handle it.”

When we put ourselves into God's hands, He sets a guard around our hearts and our minds and protects us from doubts and fears. He replaces all our worries and uncertainties with His perfect peace. Isaiah 26 verses 3 to 4 says, that "The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD, *we have* an everlasting Rock."

In Philippians 4 verses 8 to 9 God's Word says, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there's any excellence and if there's anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things that you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." When people think good thoughts and live righteous lives, they can go to sleep at night with a clear conscience, knowing they're right with the living God. The peace that passes understanding is truly, truly a blessing!

Number seven, God wants you to come home to live with Him forever. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:1 to 3, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also."

The Lord has prepared and reserved a place with your name on it. God intends to bless us in ways far beyond our understanding. In Ephesians 2 verses 4 to 7, the Bible says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (and then he says, by grace you have been saved), and He raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." God wants to give you a marvelous, amazing home forever in His house as part of His family.

Now these are only seven things God wants for you and for me. There are many more. To enjoy them God wants your heart and your life. You can't please God and remain on the fence or apathetic. You have to come to that point where you make a commitment to God from this day forward and forever. The Bible says in 2 Peter 3 verse 9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." God wants you to find His love by changing your life. You must leave the old way of sinful pleasures and follow Him into the abundant life. And today is the best day to get started on a new and better life! Let's pray together. Oh Father, we're thankful for all that You have provided for us. Help us to put You first in everything, and to love You with all our heart. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

The most important thing that we can do in response to God is to love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength. A person who loves God will act upon that love by placing their faith in Christ (John 3:16), repenting of every sin (Acts 2:38), confessing the name of Jesus as the Christ the Son of God (Matthew 10 verses 32 and 33), and by being baptized (that is, immersed) in water for the forgiveness of their sins. When a penitent, believing person is baptized, the Lord washes away his sins (Acts 22:16), adds him to His church (Acts 2 and verse 47), counts him as His child (Galatians 3 verses 26 and 27), He buries him and raises him up with Christ (Romans 6 verses 4 and 5), and He saves him (1 Peter 3 and verse 21). And this is why it's so necessary to be baptized. You see that's when God acts upon you. Now baptism is not something that we do, it's something that we have done to us, God is the one who acts in baptism.

My friend, God wants you to live with Him forever. And the way to live in His house forever is to come into His family in this life. Now the church is God's family (1 Timothy 3 and verse 15). And as His child, you will want to be with other members of God's family, by attending church regularly. Now God has designed the church to meet your spiritual needs and to provide the loving family that you desire.

Now God's arms are open wide, and He longs for you to come home to Him and to the family He has on earth. No one will ever love you or ever bless you the way God loves and blesses you, when you become one of His people. No one else can provide a home reserved in heaven for you. No one else can give you a Godly, loving family like Christ does. Won't you come to Him, won't you serve Him, won't you live with Him? If you're looking for a close, loving, personal relationship with God, why not visit one of the churches of Christ near you? They're loving brothers and sisters who want to help you to go to heaven. My friend, you'll never regret doing what is right, but you'll forever regret passing up the gifts of God. God wants you to act in this life, so that you can enjoy the blessings of the life to come.

We hope you've been blessed by today's study. We feel blessed just to be able to spend this time with you. Now if you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, "What God Wants for Me," mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org).

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The church of Christ loves people, they love guests who visit, and their looking for people just like you who want to follow Jesus. Now, if you're looking to grow as a Christian, they'd like for you to visit this Sunday. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.