

"Christian Values"

You can tell a lot about people by looking at their values. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to explore Christian values and what they mean. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Lord Jesus promised in Matthew 24 and verse 35 that "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Nearly 2000 years have passed since the first book of the New Testament was written, and today we have billions of copies. The New Testament has been translated into more than 500 languages, and parts of the New Testament into more than 2000. Though governments have tried to destroy every copy of the Bible they could find, the Word of God continues to be the most treasured book of all time. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

People often talk about family values or moral values, but they sometimes assume everyone shares their values. The word "values" can mean many different things; and this word is often overused and sometimes confusing. Not everyone thinks alike or shares the same moral and spiritual beliefs. Our culture loves to redefine words and make them mean things they never meant before. You may speak of a value and mean one thing, while your neighbor's values are entirely different.

Because we love the Lord, we learn to give value to the things that God values. God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. God said in Isaiah 55 verses 8 and 9, "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." The things that people think are so important may not be important to God. We may invest our whole lives in things that will not matter. How sad it would be to live a life that fails to lead to heaven!

Now if you want to study more, we offer this study on Christian values free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and live in the United States, 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. Or, you call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Matthew 6:19 to 24, and we'll explore our Christian values.

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus Himself, in the sermon on the mount, Matthew 6 verses 19 to 24. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. That's a reading from Jesus Himself. Let's pray together. Father we're so grateful that You have given us Your word that You've given us the ability to come to know You and to know what Your will is for our lives. Help us heavenly Father to put You first in all things. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Today we're talking about Christian values. And what matters to Christians? What do they hold sacred? The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6 and verse 21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart

will be also.” Now our values capture our hearts and set the path for our lives. We cling to the things that we love; we nourish and protect them. So, let’s consider the things that really matter to Christians who love God.

First, they value God and His Word. Strong Christians trust God and believe what God says. They enthusiastically teach their children about the deity of Christ, about the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, and about the resurrection. They don’t apologize for taking the Word of God seriously, when it speaks about sin and the judgment.

Strong Christians take God’s grace and His promises seriously. They realize that apart from the grace of God, they would have no blessing, no salvation, and no hope of heaven. They point to Ephesians 2 verses 8 and 9 that says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” They realize that God saves us, and we cannot save ourselves by earning our way to heaven. They also apply God’s plan of salvation rather than argue with God over what He asks of them.

If you ask me why I am a Christian, I would point first to the cross of Christ. Jesus loves me; this I know, for the Bible tells me so. I tell you no one ever loved me like Jesus. He suffered great pain and humiliation; He shed His blood to wash away my sins and save me. Because of the love and the grace of God, I’m willing to devote my life to Christ. And I pray that you are too!

Now Christians also realize that God will day to day give them what they ask, help them find what they seek, and will open the door when they knock, Matthew 7 verses 7 to 8. They “know” God causes all things to work together for good, when they encounter rough days, Romans 8 and verse 28. And they cast their cares on God, because they know that He cares for them, 1 Peter 5 and verse 7.

Second, they value truth. The early church devoted itself to the apostle’s doctrine, Acts 2 and verse 42, and faithful Christians today will do the same thing. Proverbs 23:23 says, “Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.” Strong Christians realize the necessity of standing strong in the truth. Paul knew the day would come when men with itching ears “will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths”, 2 Timothy 4 verses 3 and 4.

The Lord Jesus said in John 8 verses 31 and 2 that “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” To stay in God’s Word means we’ll be true disciples and know the truth. We have no desire to depart from the Scriptures into human traditions or self-made religion. We want the truth!

Third, they value the church. Now if the church were not important, Jesus would not have purchased it with His own blood, Acts 20 and verse 28. Because the church was so important to Jesus, it should be important to us. Christians that love the Lord support the church with their presence, their money, and their energy. They’re interested in the church growing, and so they tell everyone they know about the Lord Jesus and His love. They point to the cross and to the resurrection. They want everyone to have the hope that they enjoy. They consider being a member of the church, that is the body of Christ, as the greatest privilege of life. They see the church as the very family of God. Christians are brothers and sisters with God as their Father and Jesus as their Lord.

And the Scripture exhorts us to “love the brotherhood”, 1 Peter 2 and verse 17. Now congregations that plant other congregations in nearby areas produce fruit for generations. The churches of Macedonia and Achaia helped the needy saints in Jerusalem, 2 Corinthians 8 verses 1 to 5. Christians love one another and support each other throughout the world.

Fourth, they value souls. Now every person has a soul, and that soul will spend eternity either with God or without Him. God loves every person, and so do we. Because every soul will spend eternity in heaven that is with God or in hell without God, you and I both will all spend it somewhere. And so Christians take souls seriously. Now nothing is more important than having a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And in 1 Timothy 2 verses 3 to 4 Paul says, "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God wants you to be saved, and so do we.

Words like "lost" and "saved" seem strange to many people. And sadly, many people don't know their souls are lost and need to be saved. Now to be lost means that they'll spend eternity without God. People are lost, because they've sinned. Now sin takes place when someone breaks God's laws or fails to keep what God wants them to do. 1 John 3 and verse 4 simply says that, "sin is lawlessness." When a person ignores God's law and goes outside of them, he becomes lawless. James 4 and verse 17 says, "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." When people sin they break God's law, and also, God's heart. God is gracious and doesn't want anyone to be lost.

People speak about big sins and little ones, but in God's eyes all sins matter. Every sin is offensive to God. God is utterly holy and cannot approve sin, any sin. God said in Ezekiel 18 verse 4, "Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die." Again, Romans 6 verse 23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now this death is not physical but spiritual. Death is a separation. Physically, death is the separation of the body and the spirit. Spiritually speaking, death is the separation of man from God. Sinners are no longer in fellowship with God. The prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 59 verses 1 and 2, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; 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." Spiritually dead people stand outside the grace and favor of God.

Now Christians talk to the lost about their souls, why, because they love them. They teach people the good news, the gospel, about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why, because they love them. They challenge them to believe and obey the Lord. They ask them to give up their sins and to turn to the Lord. Evangelism is both confrontational and persuasive. Christians speak out about sin, because they know the consequences of sin. Christians try to persuade people to forsake their sins and to come to the Lord, because they value their souls. Now Christians aren't your enemy because they ask you to repent of sin. They teach you the gospel because the gospel opens the door to your salvation from the consequences of sin. Someone who teaches you the gospel of Christ is your friend!

Fifth, they value righteousness. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Oh, how I wish people today not only knew what righteousness is but would practice it! Faithful Christians understand that God Himself not culture, God Himself ultimately defines righteousness, holiness, and morality. Christians recognize that they are accountable to God not man for their eternal destiny. They realize that God has the last word in all matters. And that no one can silence, change, or overrule His voice. Now you can disagree with God, you can propose a new theory about things, you can even act as if God does not exist; but in the end God will have the last say.

Hebrews 12 and verse 14 tells us, "Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." If you wish to see the Lord, you must turn from sin to live a holy life. 1 Peter 1:14 to 16 says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former

ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." The world has always been, well..., "worldly." It's always followed its own desires.

Now Paul explained in Ephesians 4 verses 17 to 24, "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that's in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that's not the way that you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." Because Christians value holiness and the world doesn't, we must be lights in a dark world, hoping to lead everyone to Christ.

Sixth, they value serving others. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15 verse 58, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." Christians view serving others as if they were serving the Lord Jesus personally. Jesus said this about inviting in the stranger, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick: He said "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me" Matthew 25 and verse 40.

Serving others builds character in the servant and produces thanksgiving in those that they serve. While no one wishes for disasters like a tornado, a fire, or an earthquake, such events provide outstanding opportunities for Christian service and compassion to those in need. They open doors that might not open otherwise.

When hurricane Katrina destroyed much of the Gulf Coast, churches of Christ in many states responded quickly to the needs of the people. Congregations not only sent financial aid but also thousands of workers into the devastated region. In the wake of the disaster, workers planted five new congregations. These Christian servants not only blessed a devastated region, they also built up their home congregations as well.

And last, they value their relationships with other people. They value their homes and families. The greatest wish of any Christian is for God's blessing to come upon all the people that they love. They take seriously the command to love one another. The Lord Jesus said in John 13:34 and 35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Because Jesus loves us, we learn how to love one another and even love our enemies. Wouldn't you like to have Christian values in your life? Let's pray together. Father we're so grateful for the joy that You bring us in Christ. And for the values that are so sacred and holy. Father help us always to do Your will. May it be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Do you love the Lord and value the Jesus? Do you value what He did on the cross, His grace, and His teaching? Do you value Him enough to give yourself to Him fully and freely for the rest of your life? We must be God's people, doing God's work God's way, so that we may one day live with Him in glory. Paul said in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I think of the old song, He is my everything; He is my all, and that's the way it should be. I don't want to spend one day without Christ as the center of my heart and life. Loving Jesus means listening to Him and obeying Him. Jesus said in John 14:23, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will

come to him and make our home with him." Now if you want to live with God in the next life, you must be willing to serve God in this life.

To become a Christian, believe in the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Repent of your sins! Turn from them and turn to the Lord in love and devotion. Confess your faith in Jesus and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. Colossians 2:12 to 13 says, "having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses." You see in baptism we are buried and raised with Christ through faith in God's power. When we are baptized God forgives us of all our sins. I hope you won't wait another day to enjoy God's grace and forgiveness. Oh become a Christian today!

We hope and pray today's study about "Christian Values" has stirred you to consider your soul. Think about what God says. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, 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. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! And we ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So we ask that you keep searching God's Word with us and do tell a friend about this program and invite them to watch. And as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.