

"A New Spirit"

Do you ever wish that you could start over and leave your past behind? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to talk about what God can do to give you a new start. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God the Father is the God of hope and promise. He's the one who causes us to be born again to a new and better life. We don't have to be enslaved to sin and feel ashamed of ourselves. The greatest threat to our self-respect doesn't come from our appearance, or our education, or our health. No. What kills our self-respect arises from sin. We lose respect for ourselves when we realize that we're the kind of person who could do evil things. God offers a way to change and to have a clear conscience, which gives us peace and hope! Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Even though some people act like there's no such thing as sin, they must live with their choices in life and the sin that corrupts the heart and mind. Titus 1 verse 15 says, "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." Now a defiled conscience stings and makes one feel small and unworthy. And even those who don't know God and even though they may not know God they know the pain of guilty conscience.

Since we cannot go back and change the past, God has provided the way of forgiveness that allows us to overcome our past and to set a new course in life. We don't to remain enslaved to bad habits and evil ways that condemn us. God can set us free from sin and open the way to heaven, to peace of mind, and to self-respect. If you look in the mirror and you don't like what you see, God offers you forgiveness and the opportunity to be born again with a clear conscience!

Now we're here to give hope, and we offer this material free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you 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, 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 Romans 6 verses 16 to 18, and then explore what it means to have a new heart and spirit.

Our reading today comes from the book of Romans chapter 6 verses 16 to 18.

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Oh what a passage filled with hope. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for the hope that You give us in Your word. That we can be different that we can change our lives and become the kind of people that You want us to be, free from sin. And Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

There's a Native American fable about a young brave who happened upon a nest of golden eagle eggs. And deciding to have some fun, he took one of the eggs and he placed it in the nest of some prairie chickens. Well the egg hatched and the changeling eagle grew up with the brood of prairie chickens.

Well, believing himself to be like everyone else around him, the eagle behaved accordingly. He clucked and cackled and scratched in the dirt for seeds and insects to live on. He never flew more than a few feet off the ground, since prairie chickens don't rise any higher.

Well time passed and one day the young eagle was scratching along with one of his older prairie chicken brothers when a fleeting shadow passed over them. Well they looked and saw, high in the sky, the soaring form of something gliding on the currents of the wind. "What a beautiful bird!" the young eagle exclaimed.

"That's an eagle," the older brother informed him, staring upward. "A golden eagle. And he's the king of the air. No bird can compare with him." And then he lowered his gaze and added, "But don't give it a second thought; you could never be like him." And back to scratching they went. Indeed, the young eagle never gave another thought to that soaring sight. According to the fable, he died as he lived, never rising any higher than a prairie chicken.

Tragically, we see this same story repeated in too many lives. The devil whispers in our ear, "You can't change. You'll always be what you are now." My friend, that's a terrible lie, it steals our hope. And if I could stand on the highest hill and speak with the loudest voice, I would tell everyone you can change! Frankly, people change every day!

The Bible gives us opportunity and hope that we can repent. When Paul spoke to a group of Stoics and Epicureans, philosophers in Athens who knew nothing about God, he urged them to repent. And Paul said in Acts 17 verses 30 and 31 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Repentance is not a punishment or impossibly hard to do, though it's sometimes difficult. Repentance provides an opportunity to become what we long to be. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change in behavior. The more one loves and trusts the Lord, the more likely he is to change his life. Love for God and for others is a powerful motivator to do what is right. When we consider our sins and how Jesus suffered for us, it causes us to grieve over sin. Well that grief also leads us to change our ways. 2 Corinthians 7 and verse 10 says that "godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and without regret." When I grieve over sin and want to do right, I don't regret changing and leaving the old life behind.

The Bible emphasizes our opportunity to become new. This newness is not just a new point in time, it's also in point of quality. It is new and different with different promises and different results. We can change, and we know from Scripture that people caught up in sin changed their lives. 1 Corinthians 6 verses 9 to 11 says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (and then he points his finger and he says and) Such were some of you; (that the church in Corinth) but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Well how do we become new? Well first, our spiritual life begins with a new birth. John 1:11 to 13 says that Jesus "came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

Jesus spoke of this new birth to Nicodemus in John 3 verses 3 to 5. Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Well Nicodemus said to Him, well "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The new birth is a birth of water and the Spirit; this refers to being baptized into Christ Jesus.

Now, because we are born again, we, second, have a new way of life. Through repentance, I die to sin, and through baptism the Father buries and raises me up with Christ to walk in newness of life. Romans 6 verses 3 to 7 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, (listen closely now) that our old self was crucified with Him, (that is when we were baptized) in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." Now I'm no longer a slave to sin and no longer living like I used to live. I have new life in and with Christ.

God gives me this new life. In Colossians 2 verses 12 to 13 the bible says, "having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in (through faith) in the powerful working of God, (the 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, (that is with Jesus) having forgiven us all our trespasses." Now God takes a person dead in sin and makes him alive by uniting him with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. Oh, we truly are raised up in baptism to walk in newness of life.

Third, when a person has new life, he is a new creature. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. (a new creature) The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." When one is a new creature, all the old life is gone! Paul explains in Ephesians 2 verses 8 to 10, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, (God's working on us) created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." Now as new creatures, we have been created by God in Christ for good works rather than the old ways of sin. Paul said in Galatians 2 and verse 20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Now faith in Christ changes everything!

God promises us that we can have a new heart. And God said through the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 18 verses 31 and 32, He said "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." Our new heart and spirit now loves God, it fears God reverently and it wants to do God's will. When you have such a heart, to have that would no longer be burdened by rules and hating to obey anything but rather it wants to obey. He doesn't see God's commands, when he has that new heart, as something that he 'ought to do' but something that he 'gets to do,' and 'wants to do.' Because of his love for God.

Fourth, as new creatures we have a new identity! I love 1 Peter 2 verses 9 and 10 it describes Christians: he says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (He says) Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." I tell you God doesn't see us the same now that we're in Christ. And we don't see ourselves the same way. Everything is changed.

Fifth, with a new identity we also have a new citizenship. Philippians 3 verses 20 to 21 says, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform (change) our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." Now as children of God, we are citizens of heaven. And we have the hope of everlasting life. That is our hope and our goal: to love God eternally.

So, no matter who you are, you can repent and you can change. And God will help you make those changes in your life. 2 Corinthians 5 verses 14 to 15 says, "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, (Jesus died for all of us and) therefore all have died; and He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised." Love motivates us to change our lives and to live better lives.

John said in 1 John 3 verses 1 to 3, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He (that is Jesus) appears (when He comes again for the second time that) we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure." That's what I hope for each of you. I hope first of all you'll see the love of God and that that will make you want to live pure and holy lives. I hope that you will give up a way that makes you ashamed and start living a life that you know pleases your Creator and your Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:1 through 4 makes this promise: he says, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." I tell you hope gives the power to purify our lives and our souls. And when you begin looking to things above, your life will change. Your desires and your values will change. And you'll wonder how you could have wasted your life with the old ways. You'll take the greatest delight in the new life that God has given you. I cannot think of any greater joy than knowing I am right with God and will live with Him through eternity. What is your joy? Let's pray together.

Oh Father we're thankful for the hope and the promise that You give to us in Your word. We pray Heavenly Father that the love that You have shown us will motivate us to want to change our lives and to serve You. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

When we tell ourselves "I can never change," or "That will never happen," we presume too much and believe too little. We can change! God would not have asked us to repent, if it were not possible. Our own weaknesses tells us we cannot change, and presumptuous thinking says that we're hopelessly stuck in sin. But when we obey the Lord Jesus, God opens closed doors, God takes away the old man of sin, He brings resurrection, He reveals possibilities, God reclaims the lost, God liberates the cursed and possessed, and God changes the unchangeable.

Let's not sell God short. He can do great things in our lives. We can repent and change. And we can become what God made us to be. David earnestly cried out to God in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a

clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.” God heard David’s cry, forgave his sin, and gave him that clean heart. Do you need a clean heart and a right spirit?

You know having a clean heart starts with faith in Jesus Christ, who died for you so that you can have the forgiveness of sins. A look at the cross will cause you to love the Lord Jesus, to trust in Him and to turn away from sin. You can’t change your life without faith in Christ, and you can’t have a new life until you repent of your sins. Once you have confessed your faith and repented, you’re ready to be baptized. In baptism the Lord causes you to be born again, added to His family, the church. In baptism, that’s an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ, God washes away your sins (Acts 22:16). And if you want a clear conscience and you love the Lord, be baptized into Christ. And don’t wait.

Well we that hope today’s study about a new spirit has given you hope and promise. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, then 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. Now you can download these lessons, a study sheet, or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can now watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry.” We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses by mail. Now if you get a hold of us 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. 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. 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.