

"Another Generation"

Many people question what has happened to our culture and why has our morals and values changed. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." This isn't the first time people are confused at change. Well, stay tuned and see why.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible reveals to us God's history of humanity. It reveals how God has perceived the events and changes through the ages. It's easier to understand the present, when we see what happened in the past from God's perspective. It's clear that our present day has abandoned many of the morals and values that were held to be sacred in the past. Many have lost any sense of sacred or holiness. The morals of our day seem turned upside down, where good has become bad and bad has become good. Our young people are left very confused morally and spiritually with little sense of direction. A return to the teaching of God's Word is needed more today than at any time that I can remember! Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Perhaps you feel a little like Rip Van Winkle, Washington Irving's character that fell asleep for twenty years and then woke up to find that his world has changed. The government changed the money changed. And things he took for granted were no longer the way he remembered.

Well many problems are actually spiritual problems that affect our daily lives. When the hearts of people change, and when people forget God, their moral lives change too. God revealed through Isaiah 5verses 20 to 21, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" Many today think that they have outgrown God, or outgrown the Bible, or outgrown the church; but they're deceiving themselves. You can't reject God, follow your heart's desires, and expect to remain in good God's favor.

Now if you want to study more, we offer this lesson 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, you can 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 Judges 2:6 to 10, and then explore the changes of our time.

Our scripture reading today comes from the book of Judges chapter 2 verses 6 to 10.

"When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel."

That's a lot about life. One generation passes and another comes along that may not know what the first one knew. Let's pray together. Oh Father we're grateful that You have loved us and given us Your word so that we might understand so much about life from Your prospective. Help us to be good students of Your word and may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

Many of our older preachers used to say that we are just one generation away from apostasy—that is, a falling away from the Living God! As long as selfish ambition and evil exist, Christians will face the temptation of pulling away from God to live life on their own terms. Adam and Eve wanted to know good and evil and be like God. In Noah's day, the Lord "saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6 and verse 5). Then God brought a flood to destroy the world, because of the people's corruption and violence.

God told Noah and his descendants to multiply and populate the earth in Genesis 9 and verse 7. However, in Genesis 11 the people rebelled against God's command to multiply and fill the earth and instead built the tower of Babel. And God confused their language and scattered them through the whole earth. Life changed rapidly when people could no longer communicate with each other. People set out on journeys to establish their own nations.

Joshua and his contemporaries served the Lord faithfully, but another generation arose "who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. They abandoned the Lord, that is the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. And they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And this provoked the Lord to anger" (Judges 2 verses 10 to 12). Now as you read the book of Judges, you see how God punished Israel for their idolatry by putting them into the hands of people who plundered them. Israel found itself abused and unable to stand before their enemies. When they repented and called out to God, God then sent them a judge to relieve them of their misery. Sadly, after the judge died, Israel would turn back to idolatry and act more corruptly than their fathers did. When people refuse to listen and obey God, they find themselves in misery.

In my lifetime of 65 years, I've seen many changes to the morals and values in society. Many of those changes have forsaken Biblical morals for a secular way of life that leaves God out and brings human passions in. I would never have imagined some of these changes in the 1960s. I've seen the morals and the values of the family erode. More than 40 percent of children are now born to parents who are not married. Nearly 40 percent of adults in America say marriage is now obsolete. Two thirds of Americans now say that divorce is no longer sinful, and divorce plagues more than a fourth of all adults. There have been nearly 60 million abortions since Roe v. Wade took place in 1973. And this is a greater number than the population many nations of the world.

Television, movies, and the internet are plagued with nudity, violence, and gross profanity. Some are willing to embrace every form of corruption. One survey revealed that 13% of Americans say that the word "sin" is obsolete. People no longer regard many things that the Bible calls sin as even a moral issue. For instance, 58% say that cohabitation is moral; and 36% say getting drunk is okay; 37% would say profanity is not a sin; and half the people in America say watching a sexually explicit movie is morally acceptable; and 43% say reading pornographic magazines is okay. Because faithful Christians admit these things are sinful and oppose them, many of those who accept them have decided to bash and persecute Christians. These moral changes have led people to stop worshiping at church, because they don't want to hear the will of God.

Over the last fifty years or so, we've seen four trends take place. First, we must become secular, according to some, and to silence God's voice. They don't deny that God exists; they just don't want Him to have any voice in their lives. Second, they decide to do what's right in their own eyes and make their own moral rules. Third, if everybody can do what is right in his own eyes, then we can all become

pluralists who say everybody is right to do whatever he pleases. Well this religious pluralism, and moral pluralism means there's no longer any standard of right and wrong no longer a standard of morality. So, fourth, we end up with a confused blend of relative morality and relative truth and relative spirituality. Know when we follow God, we have a firm and unchanging truth and we have unchanging morals; but when we follow these trends, we end up with confusion and chaos and misery.

Because many have gotten used to the moral decline of our time, they've become desensitized to sin. They don't think sin is wrong or feel guilty or ashamed for the sins that they commit. The things that they used to despise, they no longer think is any big deal. And they regard those who oppose sin as more wicked than those who commit it. Our postmodern society has portrayed Christians as hypocrites, and mean-spirited, ignorant, and judgmental. This day in time it's unacceptable to offend anyone except the Christian who wants to live a righteous life.

The best-known passage of scripture in the New Testament is Matthew 7 verse 1, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged." Now Jesus spoke this to a Jewish culture that was given to judging people by their own human standards rather than by Biblical law. Now Jesus also taught in John 7:24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." Realistically, everyone makes judgments in life. Even those who don't want anyone to judge them, find themselves judging others. False judging is indeed wrong, but some things demand judgment. Victims of sin and crime deserve justice.

God warned Israel through the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5 verses 20 to 23, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, And valiant men in mixing strong drink; Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!"

So we ask in a culture that doesn't always understand or appreciate us, "What can we do to keep faith with God?"

First, we should become better Bible students. Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." God blesses those who hear and obey Him. Acts 17:11 says of the Bereans, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so." They were not afraid to check the Scriptures for themselves rather than depend on others to do it for them.

Now you can find the truth for yourself by studying God's word. Paul told the young preacher Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 verse 15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." Now whether you're a preacher or not, be diligent to study God's Word, so that you can handle the word of Truth accurately. When you know the Scriptures, you won't be deceived by foolish doctrines.

I tell you christianity is NOT a blind leap in the dark, no; it's a faith built on solid evidence from the word of God! If Jesus is the Son of God, He is Lord. And if Jesus is Lord, then His Word is inspired and true. And if the words of Christ are inspired and true, then they have authority in our lives. And if the words of Christ have authority in our lives, then we are accountable, yes accountable. Hebrews 4 and verse 12 and 13 says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature (no creature) is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

Second, you need to know who your real enemy is. Your enemy is Satan. 1 Peter 5 verses 8 to 10 says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. (because) Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Now the devil has never been your friend; he only wants to ruin your life. James 4 verses 7 to 8 says, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (so) Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Whenever we allow Satan's lies and schemes to deceive us in the following after the world, we make a big mistake. Instead, let's draw near to God and His teaching.

The Devil has always been a liar, and he confuses and deceives people to gain their souls. The Lord Jesus said to some rebellious Jews in John 8:44, He said to them "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

Now for this reason we must fight against the devil and his ways. Eph. 6 verses 10 to 13 says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." So stand firm in your faith and be strong in the Lord.

Third, change your heart and life. Ephesians 4:17 to 24 says, "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 is 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 is not the way 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."

Last, share your faith. Don't be afraid to speak the truth. Teach your neighbors, your friends, and your children. Tell the story of Jesus to anyone and everyone who will listen. Help them understand why we believe what we truly believe. Open the Bible and read about the death, and the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Read not only His commandments, study also His promises. I recommend also to everyone to study Christian evidences, so you may know the reasons for your faith. There are now hundreds of books available to help parents and teachers provide the information needed by seekers to build their faith in Jesus Christ, in the resurrection, in the Bible, in creation, and in the existence of God. Oh the more you know about Jesus, the more you'll love Him and the more you'll want to serve Him. Let's pray together. Oh heavenly Father help us come to know You and love You from full hearts and Father help us to open up the minds of the generations to come. That they may come to know Your Son Jesus and may come to love You. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

You can choose to live a moral life; you can go to heaven; you can return to God in faith; and you can live for God. You don't have to be fooled by the confusion that's in our culture. Now all is not lost; God is giving us time each day to get right with Him. The changes in our culture should call us to a greater commitment to Christ, to the truth, and to godliness. Even if we live in a culture that doesn't

understand us, we can still draw near to God and love Him. God's grace in Christ has appeared to give us an opportunity to change our lives and to serve the Lord.

Titus 2 verses 11 to 14 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works." The cross of Jesus is calling us all to forsake sin and to live godly lives.

So place your trust in Jesus Christ and in His teaching. Because you love and believe in Him, turn from everything sinful to follow Jesus Christ. Now repentance isn't always easy, but following Christ is liberating. Loving the Lord ought to lead you to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Through baptism, God washes away our sins, adds us to the church, makes us His child, and gives us newness of life. Now if you're tired of the chaos and confusion of our postmodern culture, come to the Lord Jesus in faith and obedience. You'll never regret doing what is right!

Well we hope that today's lesson has stirred you to consider what God says. If you live in the United States and you 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 or a newsletter, and you can do it online, at our website: www.searchtv.org. You can also watch SEARCH anytime you want to on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And tell a friend about it. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area, on our website www.searchtv.org. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. If you take one you'll really enjoy it and appreciate it. Well don't worry, if you get a hold of us, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you 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. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us. And again we ask that you 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.