

## "Only One Life"

You have only one life; what are you doing with it? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Does your life matter, or are you chasing after the wind?

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible teach us how to live an abundant life. And it helps us to distinguish what's wise from what's foolish, what's important from what doesn't matter, what's good from what's evil. You can search the world over and never find a book that will bless you like the Bible. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Living without God's teaching in your life is like sewing with a needle that has no thread or like writing your biography with a pen empty of ink. Some years ago psychologist William Marston asked 3000 people, "What do you have to live for?" He found that 94% were simply enduring the present while waiting for the future. They were waiting for something to happen someday. They wanted to finish school, or watch their children grow up, or take a long vacation, or retire. They were waiting, not realizing that all anyone ever has is today, because yesterday is gone and tomorrow is only a hope.

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 2 and verse 11 "Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun." Now you might look at your life and wonder what difference you've made in this world. Is your life merely a striving after wind?

C. T. Studd nearly a hundred years ago wrote two lines that make one pause and consider what matters in life. He wrote "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." Because there's more to life than the here and now, we must consider our eternal destiny and what matters when this life is over.

Now we offer this lesson about life free. And 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. And that number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Ephesians 5:15 to 21, and then we'll explore what matters in this life.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 5 verses 15 to 21.

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray. Oh Father help us to be kind and be kind to others to be wise in the way that we live and to be careful how we walk. And Father to be a blessing to

everyone that we know. Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

God gives us life one day at a time, and it's brief. Jacob, when he was 130, 130 years old, told Pharaoh in Genesis 47 and verse 9, "few and unpleasant have been the years of my life." One hundred and thirty years still seems long to me, but Jacob called them "few." David said in Psalm 39 verses 4 to 5, "LORD, make me to know my end And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath."

Well how we live matters, and whether we remember God through our lives is crucial to how we spend eternity. The Preacher, Solomon, wrote in Ecclesiastes 11 and verse 9, "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things."

We must take notice of God's word in Ephesians 5 verses 15 to 17, where he says, "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." I'd like to suggest some things that we must take time to do:

First, take time to listen. God said through the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 55 and verse 3 "Incline your ear, and come to Me: hear and your soul shall live." You know above else, and above anyone else, we must listen to God and hear His voice in all matters. The psalmist said in Psalm 119 verse 24 "Thy testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors." Now God's Word always gives the best counsel, because God has no limits to His wisdom. God's Word is also a blessing in hard times. Psalm 119 verse 50 says, "This is my comfort in my affliction, That Thy word has revived me." Again in verse 52, "I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O LORD, And comfort myself."

Psalm 1 says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by (the) streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

Now the Scriptures also encourage us to listen to others, wise people. Everyone needs a listening ear at times. And listening is the first step to loving. Listening encourages, solves problems, it brings comfort and it brings healing. Your life will be richer by far the more you learn to listen. Proverbs 11 and verse 14 says, "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory." Again Prov. 15:22 says, "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed." Getting godly and wise advice can make the difference between success and failure. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

Second, take time to learn. I don't know everything that I want to know, for sure; but I suspect you feel that way too at times. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path." I want to know what God says. Psalm 119:98 to 99 says, "Thy commandments make me wiser than my

enemies, For they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation." God gives us true wisdom that guides us now and leads us to eternal life.

Psalm 119:133 says, "Establish my footsteps in Thy word, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me." We need to know what will bless us and what will hurt us.

The Lord Jesus promises in John 7 and verse 17, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." Now the more you put God's word into practice, the more you realize the Bible truly is from God Himself.

The Scriptures teach us how to think, how to deal with others, and how to behave. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 1, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." Could you say that? Could you encourage others to live like you live, to think like you think, or to treat others the way you treat them? When we follow Christ, we know we're doing the right thing. You can study many things, but only knowledge of God can give you eternal life. How sad to think that many people are brilliant when it comes to earthly things but know nearly nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

Third, take time to laugh and rejoice. Prov. 17:22 says that "A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones." Many people have forgotten how to laugh or enjoy life. Their lives are sad, dreary, and drab. We should learn to laugh at ourselves, to enjoy others without embarrassing them, and especially to rejoice in the Lord! Paul, while in chains, wrote in Philippians 4 and verse 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say, rejoice!" You see he found a way to find joy in life even in the harshest of circumstances.

Rejoicing is not merely being happy. Rejoicing comes from something lasting and precious. Ezra 8 and verse 10 says that "the joy of the LORD is your strength." Now because we know the Lord, we can rejoice in all His promises and blessings. And this joy gives us strength, hope, and promise. Now after love, joy is the second quality of the fruit of the Spirit. The more we count our blessings, the more that we'll find joy in life. God is the giver of all good gifts. James 1:17 says, that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." God gives us every good thing that we need. Let's learn to rejoice every day. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

Fourth, take time to lift. There are many sad things happening all around us, calling for us to lend a hand. Mark 9 tells of the boy who was afflicted with a demon that made him deaf and mute. Well this demon often caused him to have convulsions and be thrown into the fire and the water. Well when Jesus commanded the demon to come out of him, well, the boy convulsed on the ground and lay motionless like he was dead. Verse 27 says, "But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up." Jesus gave him the help that he needed. Oh, Jesus forgave sin, gave sight to the blind, healed the sick, raised the dead, and gave hope to the poor (Luke chapter 4 verses 17 to 21). He blessed everyone He came in contact with.

And Galatians 6:2 urges us, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Oh, there are still many surrounding us who need a helping hand of kindness. Many people are too busy with personal pursuits and pleasures to lift the less fortunate; but the more we bless others, the more we find blessing. Send a note, make a phone call, give a compliment, smile, encourage, and show that you care! 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 11 says, "Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing." You have "only one life; 'twill soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."

Fifth, take time to love. 1 John 4 and verse 16 says that “God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” The man who doesn’t love is not alive—he’s just merely existing. Everybody needs love and be loved. 1 Corinthians 13 verses 1 to 3 says, that “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

Because Jesus loved us, we can know how to love others. 1 John 3:16 to 18 says, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

I have a dear friend lost his wife a few years ago. And each time that we meet, Jasper reminds me to treasure and spend time with my wife and my loved ones while I can. I know he’s right. Folks, it’s time to love our families and our neighbors as ourselves. Today is all you have. All any of us have. When you take time to love, you’re serving God. More than anything, we need to love God and love other people! Colossians 3:12 to 14 says, “And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

Beyond all, put on love. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Now if your life isn’t what you want it to be, today is the best day to change. You can begin today to listen, learn, laugh, lift, and love! You can become the salt and the light of the world by becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is “the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through” Him (John 14 and verse 6). The Lord Jesus came that you “may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10 and verse 10). Oh, don’t waste your life chasing after dreams in the here and now and then miss heaven. If you place all your hopes on your passions and your pleasures in this life, you know what, they will soon disappear; but if you place your hope in the Lord, you can find eternal blessings in this life and the life to come.

Isaiah 1:18 to 20 says, “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” I tell you in Christ we have hope, we have hope that we can be forgiven that we can transform our lives into the kind of people that God can use to bless the whole world. You only have one life, and it will not last on this earth forever. Serve the Lord and make the most of your days! Let’s pray together. Oh Father help us to always love You. To lift us others, to laugh and to learn. And Father to listen. And grow in our hearts a greater desire to serve You. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

The most important things in life are always expensive; but there is a far greater cost to doing nothing and being unprepared. Life is brief; and as we age, each year passes more quickly than the last one. This means what matters becomes more and more urgent. My friend, Cougan Collins, recently asked, “If you knew the day you would die, would that change the way that you live?”

Ah, there are many uncertainties in life; and we can’t foresee what the future holds; but you must prepare for at least one divine appointment. One day you’ll stand before the throne of God to give an

account for your life. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10). What do you see when you look at yourself? Are you the person that God could honor? Are you living for the Lord or are you chasing after the wind? Don't waste your life with the things that don't matter. Build your house upon the rock by listening to the Lord Jesus and doing what He says! Make your life count for eternity!

The best thing you can do is to place your faith in Christ Jesus, who created you. And since you're made in the image of God, let God work in and through you to make a difference in this world. Trust in the Lord and in His words and promises. Turn from sin and follow the Lord in repentance. Confess to everyone that you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and let others know that you belong to Him. Upon confession, be baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. (Act 2 and verse 38) Your commitment to follow Jesus will be the most important decision that you'll ever make. So do it today!

Well, we hope that today's study about life 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](mailto: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 online at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). And you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. 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 to know God and to get to heaven.

We do ask that you please get involved with one of the local churches of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a, Biblical and healthy church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.