

"What Lack I Yet?"

Many years ago a young man asked, "What am I still lacking?" Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." We may all lack some basic spiritual convictions or skills that we need to grow. So stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The inspired word of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. And God is able to take a man where He finds him and then transform his life into the likeness of Jesus Christ. The Bible provides us with everything we need to know about life and godliness. It helps us make the most of this life and then opens the door to eternal life. There simply is no greater treasure than the word of God. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

We are all in a state of development. We didn't enter this world full-grown, and we enter the church also as babes in Christ. It takes time to mature, and we all lack some things. We all have room for improvement; God is not finished with us yet. Paul said in Philippians 1 and verse 6, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." God has been working in our lives through His word, answering prayers, providing our needs, and working in ways beyond our understanding.

Paul said in Philippians 3 verses 12 to 14, "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. (he says) Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Paul hadn't stopped growing; he wanted to keep developing as a Christian.

We offer this study on spiritual development 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. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free online at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Matthew 19:16 to 22, and then we'll explore our need to be complete.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 19 verses 16 to 22. And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." Then he said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to Him, (well) "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

Must have broken Jesus' heart for this young man to walk away. Let's pray together. Father we're grateful for the love of Jesus. We're thankful that He died for sins. Help us to be willing to follow You all the days of our lives and to give up whatever we have to in order to be Your servant and Your children. Any may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

The rich young ruler seemed to have everything going his way. He had youth and money and power. He had connections and respect. Mark 10 verse 21 says that Jesus looking on this young man loved him. When the young man asked what he still lacked spiritually to have eternal life, the Lord Jesus told him in Matthew 19:21 well, "If you would be perfect, (or complete, you) go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Well the young man went away sorrowful. He counted his possessions as more important than following the Lord. Let's consider what some are lacking today.

First, some lack knowledge of God. I'm shocked at the number of people who have never read the Bible from start to finish. I hear many quote a passage here or there but have little idea what the specific book they quote is all about. Many want to speak out about this or that, but few want to listen to God. Hebrews 2 verses 1 to 3 says, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, (and then) it was confirmed to us by those who heard,"

You know even many churchgoers, this day, have stunted their growth when it comes to the Bible. Going to church and knowing God's word is not the same thing. Many know much about popular religion but little about the theology found in God's word. The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 5:11 to 14, "Concerning him (speaking of Melchizedek) we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

Second, because some don't know the word of God, they lack faith in God. If you wish to grow your faith, the single most important thing you can do is to read your Bible. Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Because people have not heard what God says, they cannot develop the strong faith in God and in Christ that they need. The Bible gives us many reasons to follow Jesus Christ and to put Him first in our lives.

John tells us specifically what he hoped to accomplish by writing the gospel according to John. John 20 verses 30 to 31 says, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Now the Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." That's why we must read, study, and take to heart the words of Jesus found in the New Testament!

Now some folks lose their faith by falling away from God and then they become hardened by sin. Hebrews 3:12 to 13 warns us, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But (you) encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." You know when our, our minds and our hearts stop studying the word of God and they start listening to the worldly pleasures, then we lose sight of God and we begin to follow the world.

Paul warned in Colossians 1:21 to 23, he said, “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.” Oh, I tell you we must hold fast to our faith.

Third, because some have little faith, they also lack hope in Christ. Paul reminds us of our lives before we became a Christian. He said in Ephesians 2 and verse 12, “remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” Outside of Christ, there simply is no hope of eternal life or an inheritance in the eternal kingdom.

1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 13 says, “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.” In Christ, people have hope for the future. They know Jesus will one day return for them. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 to 17 says, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.” Oh I tell you we need hope. Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” I tell you we have an inheritance in heaven. Let’s never, never lose our hope.

Fourth, some lack love for God and for other people. Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:17 to 19, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

The more we know God, the more we understand how great His love is. 1 John 4:7 to 8 says, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” I tell you every good thing we have comes from God (James 1 and verse 17); and 1 John 4 and verse 19 simply says that, “We love, because He first loved us.” I would hate to lack compassion for others, to be ungrateful, to be apathetic to other people’s needs. 1 John 3 verses 16 to 18 says, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

Fifth, some lack the virtue that God desires. 2 Peter 1:5 to 11 says, “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, (or virtue) and in your (virtue) moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities, is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these

things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.”

Paul reminded Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 19, “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal,(that) “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.” Paul recommends in verse 22, “Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” My friend where is your heart? Is it on the fleshly things or on spiritual things?

People find ways to justify what they want to do. Some people in Paul’s day thought they had liberty to do anything. He tells what they were saying in 1 Corinthians 6 verses 12 to 13. Where he says, “All things are lawful for me,” but then he answers, “but not all things are profitable.” They would say, “All things are lawful for me,” and he would answer, “but I will not be mastered by anything. (Then he says) Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, (that is fornication) but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.” Many people lack peace in their hearts, because they realize that they lack moral virtue and are guilty of sin. Guilt will cause great anxiety and rob you of your confidence before God.

Sixth, some fail to serve God. Ephesians 2 and verse 10 says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” God created you to serve and to do good works. He gave you talents and skills to use for His service. In 1 Peter 4 verses 10 and 11 the bible says, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Oh we need to be like the five-talent and the two-talent servants. Because they worked hard and sacrificed, the master said to them in Matthew 25 and verse 23, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.” We can’t be like the one-talent servant who fearfully buried his money; you know that’s what a talent is in this story, it’s money; and he just returned it to his master. And the master told him in verses 26 to 30, “You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to (the one) him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” God doesn’t expect the impossible out of us, but He does expect us to use whatever talents or skills we possess and to do it to His glory. My friend what do you lack? What do you lack? Let’s pray together. Father help us to begin to grow in those areas that we most need to grow. To develop to be Your children. To love You and to believe in You and to have hope. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus’ name, Amen

Each of us needs to take a close look at ourselves and ask, “What am I still lacking? What areas of my life need improvement?” It could be one of the things we’ve mentioned or perhaps something we’ve not mentioned. Paul urged the Christians at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” Now if you looked at your heart and you looked at your life, would you see Jesus living there?

Would you be willing to pray what David prayed in Psalm 139 verses 23 and 4? He said "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." God already knows our hearts; but wouldn't it be enlightening to see what God sees? It would be like a spiritual MRI, that looks far beneath the surface into our inner being. When God chose David to be king, He looked upon David's heart to see what kind of man he was.

Now if you're lacking salvation, what should you do? You need to get right with God. For those who are outside of Christ, my friend, you must become a Christian to get right with God. Jesus is the only way to the Father; and we can never take Him for granted. To be a Christian place your trust in Him, repent of your sins and turn your heart to the Lord, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized, that is immersed in water, so that your sins will be washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. Might be that you're a member of the Lord's church but not right with God, well why not confess those sins, repent of them, and ask God to forgive you. Do it today.

We hope that today's study about getting developed for Christ has stirred you to consider your soul. And to think about what God says. 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can also download these lessons or a newsletter online at: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Why not subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area, on line. 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 get to heaven.

We do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well as always, we say to people we'll be back next week, Lord willing. And we ask that you keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. Let them know that you're watching. And encourage them to watch and get involved and to go to church. 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.