

## "Do Works Matter?"

If we're saved by grace and not by works, does it matter how we live? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Does God take notice of our behavior after we become Christians? Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Now if you wish to enter the kingdom of heaven, then you must do the Father's will. The Scriptures teach us His will, and that is the reason we study them from week to week. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

You know if there's one thing a Christian can affirm, it's this: that we're saved by grace. Our salvation comes as a gift from God and cannot be earned. Ephesians 2 verses 8 to 10 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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." God saves us to transform our lives and to lead us in the paths of righteousness. We are His workmanship; and He transforms us so that we can live godly lives and perform good works.

What happens, then, when a Christian presumes upon the grace of God and thinks he can live as he pleases? What happens when he fails to change his life? Do our works matter? Will God judge our behavior? Can a Christian lose his inheritance and fall away from God's grace? If the grace of God is a gift, how does God expect us to respond to that gift? Well, to hear some talk, you'd think, salvation has no conditions and makes no requirements. Well, what do the Scriptures say? We want the mind of Christ to teach us.

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The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Hebrews 5:7 to 9, and then we'll explore how God looks at our deeds.

Our reading today comes from Hebrews 5 verses 7 to 9. It takes us back to the garden of Gethsemane. And the prayer of Jesus and His willingness to submit to the will of His Father. Let's read.

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

And that shows the great love and the great willingness to be obedient that was in our Lord Jesus and what we need as well. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us in our own lives to be as obedient to You as Your son Jesus was. And Father we're thankful that You love us and that You watch over us. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

There are two things about works that can never save us. First, no one can earn his salvation. No one can say to God that He is obligated to us. Romans 4 and verse 4 says, "Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due." Well, we're saved as a gift; and even if we served

for a thousand lifetimes, we couldn't earn our salvation. We've sinned against God, our salvation is because of His grace. Titus 3 verses 4 to 5 says, "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, (no) but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and (the) renewal of the Holy Spirit." We cannot save ourselves by ourselves. It's the grace of God that provides the only way that anyone can be saved.

Second, we can't be saved by the works of the Law. Now Paul wrote in Galatians 2 and verse 16, "yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so (that) we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified." He adds in Galatians 2 and verse 21, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, (speaking of the law of Moses) then Christ died for no purpose." Paul was here specifically referring to the Jews binding the Law of Moses upon the Gentile Christians.

Now Paul explained in Romans 7 and verse 4, "Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law (that is speaking of Moses' law) through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God." Now you might ask well what Law was he speaking about. Paul answers that in verse 6. He says, "But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we (may) serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written (letter or the written) code." Now here he was speaking of the old covenant or Old Testament law, the Law that said, "You shall not covet" (Romans 7 and verse 7).

Well, if we belong to Christ and are freed from the Law of Moses, are we under any law as Christians? The answer to that question is yes. Galatians 6 and verse 2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." There's also a law of Christ that we have to think about! Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 9 verses 19 to 22, "For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not myself being under the law) that I might win those under the law. That is, the law of Moses. To those outside the law, (speaking of Gentiles), I became as one outside the law (then he says) not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some." You see, Paul respected and obeyed the law of Christ as he tried to win people to Christ.

James also recognizes a law of Christ. James 2 verses 10 to 12 says, "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." (Now) If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under (and then he says) the law of liberty." Unlike the Law of Moses, the law of Christ was a perfect law, a law of liberty, a law that liberates us to serve in righteousness. We must obey the Lord Jesus.

Now our obedience to the Lord matters. Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says, "Although he was a son, (that is the son of God) he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." There's simply no promise for those who do not obey the Lord.

In fact the bible says in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 to 9, "and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might." You see when people fail to know the Lord or fail to obey what the Lord says, they suffer the consequences of removal from the presence of God. Yes, it matters whether we obey!

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16 and verse 27, "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds." 2 Corinthians 5 verse 10 says clearly, "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." Revelation 20 and verse 12 reveals the judgment scene, "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done." Yes, God will judge us by our works. And the Lord makes that very clear!

We don't want to lose God's blessing. Paul demonstrated by his life how he valued the grace of God. He said in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 8 to 10, "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, (Paul says) I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me." Paul demonstrated his love and his gratitude for the grace of God by working harder than any of them. Let me ask you, how have you responded to God's grace?

Yes, how we live matters. Romans 2 verses 3 to 11 says this, "Do you suppose, O man—(that is) you who judge those who practice such things (talking about sinful matters) and yet (you) do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality." My friend, don't imagine that you are the exception and that God does not see how you live.

Now some will argue with Jesus at the judgment, thinking that they will be saved because of their religious activity but ignoring the Lord's teaching and instructions. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 to 23 that, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" You see their religious activity didn't exclude them from obeying the will of the Father. Now iniquity is lawlessness; it's the setting aside of God's instructions so that you do as you please. They were rejected for this reason.

The Lord Jesus also recognizes how we treat others and whether we're willing to forgive others. The Lord said in Matthew 6 verses 14 and 15, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, (then) your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Perhaps you recall the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18. Now even though the king had graciously forgave him his debt of ten thousand talents, huge

amount of money, he ruthlessly refused to forgive a fellow servant's debt of only 100 denarii. The Lord said in Matthew 18 verses 32 to 35, "Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. (Then he says) So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." God treats us the way we treat other people.

James 2 verses 14 to 19 says, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, '(You) Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!" You know just because someone claims to believe doesn't mean that his faith is alive. He must show his faith by his works.

James 2:20 to 26 continues, "Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."

Does your life demonstrate your faith and love for God? Can people see by the way that you live that you have a commitment to the cause of Christ? Faith without works is dead. My friend is your faith alive and well? Please don't presume upon the grace of Christ, if you're not willing to put your faith into practice. Let's pray together. Oh Father we pray that You will help each of us to have a deeper stronger faith and a living faith that serves You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. And Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

On judgment day, I want to hear my Lord say what the master said in Matthew 25:23, "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." Will the Lord say "well done" to you? You see how we live demonstrates what we are and whether we believe. Don't, don't tell me you believe, if your life doesn't demonstrate your faith. You see that's from the Scripture.

The apostle John talked about how we walk or how we live in his first epistle. John said in 1 John 1:6 to 7, "If we say (that) we have fellowship with him (God) while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." How you choose to live will determine whether you are in fellowship with God and whether the blood of Jesus will cleanse you from sin. Please do not presume upon the grace of God and live like it does not matter. You see, people who go on sinning willfully there comes a point in time according to Hebrews 10:26 and 7, that the sacrifice of God no longer matters.

Oh, we need fellowship with God, and people get into that fellowship when they hear the gospel and put their faith in Jesus Christ. Their faith and love lead them to repent of their sins, to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of

their sins. Now our baptism into Christ is through an immersion in water. At that time God washes away our sins through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus. Now, as long as we walk in the light and remain faithful, that blood continues to wash away our sin. Should we turn from the light and walk in darkness, we cease to have God's fellowship and forgiveness. My Friend are you walking in the light?

We hope that today's study about how we live and how our lives matter and the works that we do matter, has blessed you. If you live in the United States and you 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 also download lessons from this broadcast or a newsletter, you can do it online at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). Or you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We do ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and watch it every week. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area on line at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you write to us don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven. We're in the helping people go to heaven business.

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. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So 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.