

"Six Searching Questions"

Some questions are more important than others. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to look at six of the most important questions that we'll ever ask! Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. And we do search the Scriptures diligently, contextually, and humbly. We want to be sure that what we believe and what we teach are true. We know God will hold us accountable for the things that we teach. And God will also hold us accountable for what we believe. We want to make sure what we believe follows the Scriptures, because we can count on God's holy word to be true. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Questions are important; and that's how we learn. Asking good questions and finding the correct answers are essential to life. Some people never ask or search for the answers, and they remain without the knowledge that they so desperately need. Some ask and hear the wrong answers, and are deceived about many things. Some find the right answers but reject them because they don't like what they hear. Some diligently search for the truth and find the right answers. Though the truth is sometimes hard to hear, they rejoice in the truth of God! God's truth tells it like it is, and this gives us hope for the present and for eternal life.

I hope and pray that you have a curious heart that is willing to search out the truth. There's so many voices saying so many things that it's easy to be deceived. The noble Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17 verse 11). And God will count you as noble if you too search the Scriptures to determine what is true. Don't be content to read the passages you like or those that you agree with, or that you think they say what you want it to say. Rather search diligently all that God has to say on the subject. You might find that what you thought differs from what God says.

We offer this study free on six searching questions. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and 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.

We'll now worship in song, read from Proverbs 2:1-6, and explore the answer to six searching questions.

Our reading comes from Proverbs 2 verses 1 to 6. And in this passage a father is encouraging his son, to incline his heart to the wisdom of God. "My son, if you will receive my words, And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD, And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding." That's a great encouragement from the heart of a father to his son, about the wisdom of God.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You have given us Your Word, that You have blessed us in so many ways, and we exalt Your Name because we know that You're more wise than any man or any group of men. Father help us to listen to You, and to study from Your Word diligently. This is our prayer, in Jesus name, amen."

We always appreciate the singing of the church at Edmond. Today we're exploring the six most important questions of life. And thankfully, the Scriptures give us the answers, so that we may understand what really matters. Now each question gives us insight into ourselves, our purpose, our accountability, and our destiny.

First, we ask, "What are we as humans?" Well we're certainly more than an advanced animal. Though we have physical characteristics similar to mammals, we have many differences. The Scriptures make clear that only man is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26 to 28). And like God, we can reason, communicate, and make decisions. Like God we're endowed with an innate sense of morality; we instinctively know there is right and wrong. We also realize we are responsible for our conduct. Romans 14:12 says, "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God."

This moral sense develops all through life. The Bible is a marvelous moral educator. That we can read, we can learn, and can evaluate ourselves show that we are not like animals. Consciences are always at work but must be educated. Conscience by itself doesn't give us all that we need to know about right or wrong. Now our consciences can become dull or hardened if we ignore them or if we allow them to be affected by the world. Paul said in Acts 23:1, "I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day"; but he committed some of the terrible sins and called himself the "chief of sinners" in 1 Timothy 1:15. You see, Paul sinned in ignorance, and God forgave him as an example for us all of His grace.

This leads to our second question: "Where did we come from?" Well much has been said about the origin of the species. There is just one satisfactory explanation. We came from God. Genesis 2 and verse 7 says, "Then the LORD God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being," that is a living soul. Paul said in Acts 17:28, that "In him [that is in God] we live and move and have our being." We are created in His image and in His likeness.

Only an all knowing, all powerful God could create and design this marvelous world and us. We're extremely complex, physical beings with trillions of cells, each of which possesses purpose and amazing abilities. The incredible design of our bodies demands an intelligent, power Designer. And He made us not only physically but also emotionally, spiritually, and morally.

Well, this leads us to our third question, "Why are our lives on earth temporary?" Well, our bodies were not made to live forever, yet we're more than a body. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12 verse 7, "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." God made our bodies from the dust of the ground. The body goes back to the dust of the ground. God breathed into our bodies the breath of life. And at death the spirit returns to God who gave it. Death is the separation of the spirit from the body (James 2 and verse 26).

Death is the end of the body, but there's more in our future than dying. We have an appointment at the judgment seat of Christ. Now this is a serious, solemn thought: "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Hebrews 9 verse 27.) "For we shall all appear before the judgment seat of God" (Romans 14 verse 10). 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 tells why, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Now God judges our earthly lives to see where we will spend eternity.

So, we ask a fourth question, "What is our responsibility?" We must listen to God and live such lives that please and glorify Him. God declared from heaven on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17 verse 5). There

was a time when folks were to hear Moses and the prophets, but now God speaks to us by his Son. Hebrews 1:1 to 2 says, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." To believe we must listen to Christ, if we're going to believe the right things. Romans 10 verse 17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of [God, or the word of] Christ."

Now our responsibility is to believe the gospel. We believe Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He arose from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." We must do more than hear or listen, we must believe what we've heard, believe the truth, and whenever we've heard it to embrace it, to take in into our hearts. Hearing is not only listening; it's also responding to what we are told. Our duty is to obey the gospel. Hebrews 5 verses 8 and 9 says, "Although He [speaking of Jesus] 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."

We cannot earn salvation through meritorious works, but the grace of God does not save those who fail to obey. John 3 and verse 36 in the New American Standard says, that "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Now because of His grace we love the Lord. We show that love by keeping His commandments (John 14 verse 15). And Revelation 22:14 it says, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city." Well, God washes us when we're baptized into Christ (Acts 22 verse 16). And that's when we're born again and that's when we have newness of life, according to Romans 6 and verse 4.

We then ask our fifth question, "What are our dangers?" Well there are two great dangers confronting us. One is that we will neglect our salvation. 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?"

How shall we escape if we neglect? Well there is no escape if we continue to live outside the will of God.

Thankfully, God is patient with us. 2 Peter 3 verse 9 says, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." Now if we perish eternally, it won't be because God wished it. He wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. God, however, will not save us against our stubborn wills. Repentance is necessary for salvation. And this is true for the person who is becoming a Christian by obeying the gospel, and it's true for the Christian who walks, and maybe he decides to walk in sin, he needs to repent of it. Romans 8:6 to 8 says to the Christian, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it doesn't subject itself to the law of God, for it's not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Make no mistake: if we set our minds on serving sin, we're in danger of losing our souls. The devil would have us to believe that we're in no great danger, but the devil is a liar. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16:25 to 27, "For whoever wishes to save his life [that is his soul] will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits

his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 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.” Jesus wouldn’t talk about losing our soul if we were not in very great danger of doing that very thing.

This leads us to our last question, “What is our destiny?” There are only two destinies before us. One is heaven, where we will live eternally in love, and peace with God. We’ll enjoy His blessing and kindness forever. And those who are righteous and cleansed by the blood of Jesus will enter heaven. 1 Peter 1:3 to 4 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” Oh, I want heaven for my eternal home. I want to be with the Lord who loves me and has blessed me all my life.

The other destiny is hell, where there is punishment, weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Those who are unbelieving, unrighteous and rebellious will be taken there and eternally separated from God. The Lord Jesus who loves us mentioned hell more often than any other person in Scripture. He spoke of hell to warn us and to keep us from going there. Those who love you will warn you of dangers.

Jesus Christ did everything He could to keep anyone from going to hell. He suffered on the cross to keep us from having to suffer for our sins. But do not imagine that He extends His grace to those who rebel against Him or to those who will not believe what He says. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 10 verse 28, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Each of us is facing one of these destinies, either one or the other. Which will it be? Will you spend eternity in all the blessings of heaven, or will you lose your opportunity by rejecting the Lord? Remember Hebrews 9:27 says, “It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” And you must make your decision now in this life, while you have opportunity. Because after death, there will be no more opportunities.

We are indeed moral creatures made in the image of God and accountable for our words and our deeds. We need to appreciate that God created us and gave us life. And we must seriously and solemnly face the fact that we have perishing bodies and we’ll go back to the earth, but our spirits that will return to God. Let’s set our focus on the Lord Jesus Christ who has loved us so greatly that He would die for us. Let’s rejoice that He arose from the dead, assuring us that we too would have life after this life is over. May we hear, believe, and obey the truth in response to His love and promise, so that we may be free from our old sins. Let’s keep on hearing, believing, and obeying. By continuing in our faith and hope, we won’t neglect the great salvation.

Let’s pray together. “Father help us to be good listeners, to hear Your Word, to love You for what You’ve done for us. And Father to be obedient to Your Word. Give us strength Father to say no to the things of this world and to sin, and to say yes to the things that are right, and to Your Will. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

Our lives are filled with warnings and predictions of disasters. Everyone seems to tell us the sky is falling, and we’re living in fear. We’re warned to prepare for all kinds of political, economic, and health devastations. We hear warnings about everything. Well whether these things will happen, I don’t know; but I do know one thing! The Lord Jesus is coming again. He promised in John 5:28 to 29, “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, and those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”

Now if you aren't prepared for His coming, then you can't enjoy His promises. If you aren't under the grace of God in this life, you can't expect to have God's blessing in the life to come. God created you, so that you could live eternally with Him. He gave you a conscience so that you would avoid evil and learn to do what is right. He gave us His word so that we might know the truth and be saved. The Father sent His Son into the world to save us, to die on the cross for our sins, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

To be prepared, love the Lord Jesus, believe in Him, obey His commandments, and trust in His promises. Turn from sin and live for the Lord in righteousness. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and make Him your Lord. Be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, immersed in water in His name. When you're baptized into Christ, God washes away your sins (Acts 22 verse 16) and He counts you as His child (Galatians 3:26 to 27). There's no better day than today to prepare your soul for eternal life!

We hope today's study about six searching questions has stirred you to consider your soul. Now if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy 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. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We do ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry," all one word. And be sure to like the programs that you watch; this helps spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. 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.