

Program Transcripts

November 2021



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

November 2021

Topics subject to change without notice

NOVEMBER 7 – GOD IS AT WORK IN BAPTISM

God is still very much at work in our world, and we need to think of what God does in the salvation of each individual. What does God do to save us and what part does baptism play in that salvation?

NOVEMBER 14 – WHAT LOVE MEANS

The highest calling of life is to love God and other people, but what does it mean to love? Is love merely a feeling? Is love merely liking someone? Or could it be that love is something far more involved?

NOVEMBER 21 – THIRSTING FOR GOD

Why do some have lives filled with hope and zeal, while others muddle through life empty? Why do some Christians seem to lack zeal, while others pursue their faith with passion and unlimited commitment?

NOVEMBER 28 – IS THE TRUTH IMPORTANT?

Most people think that religious truth is relative and determined by what people think. Surveys say only 22 percent believe in absolute truth. This means most people don't think the truth is very important. Is it?

God is at Work in Baptism

God is still at work in this uncertain world, and He's busier than you might think. Today, we're going to explore how God works in our salvation. God isn't dead; He's not even sick. He's not like a man who must sleep. God is at work all day, every day. The Lord Jesus said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). God cares for us enough to hear our prayers, and God cared enough to enrich our lives with His inspired word, the Bible.

James 1:17-18 says, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." God gives us the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. God supplies our needs, because He cares for us.

We can thank God every day for the hope that He gives us, giving us new life that will last eternally. First Peter 1:3-4 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." God prepares us in this life for the life to come. God causes our new birth in Christ, so that we can be His children forever.

Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Colossians 2:12-13. This passage discusses God's working in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and God's working in our salvation, and shows how that they are put together.

Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

Aren't you thankful that Jesus was willing to die, that how God raised Him from the dead, and how He forgives our sins.

Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful that You have done so much to bring about our new birth, that You've done so much to send Jesus to pay for our sins, and that You've given us hope in raising Him from the dead and forgiving our sins. Father, bless us and be with us today as we study, and may Your will be done. In Jesus' name, Amen."

I sometimes hear people say baptism is a ritual. Some think of a ritual as a customary practice or religious formality that people go through in a prescribed way. They believe that rituals are works of men and mistakenly think of baptism as an act of "righteousness based on works." They think baptism has nothing to do with salvation. No one believed this until the 16th century. Prior to that time people understood that God grants forgiveness at the time of baptism. People often think of baptism as something we do. In reality, baptism is something that God does!

Colossians 2:12-13 explains, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." Who buried us with Christ in baptism? Who raised us up with Christ in baptism? Who forgives us? In baptism we're responding in faith to the working of God!

Baptism is indeed a response of faith in God's power, God's working. It's a response to God's love, to Jesus's sacrifice, and to God's power in raising Christ from the dead. In baptism we submit ourselves to God's work and to His will. If God could raise Jesus up from the dead, He can forgive our sins. We're showing our faith that He can work on us!

God causes us to be saved and to be born again. The apostle John wrote, "He came (that is, Jesus) to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). God gives a new birth to those who receive Him. To receive Him is to accept what He says about being the Son of God is true. To believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God means you're willing to follow Him.

When Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus and confessed that He was a teacher from God, Jesus told him, "'Truly, truly, I say to you, that unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3-5). Without a birth of water and the Spirit, we cannot enter the kingdom and be saved. All of the ancient writers said that this passage was speaking of baptism, which unites water and the Spirit in the new birth.

From John 1, we learned that we have to have faith to be a child of God; and from John 3 we learned that we must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. How does the Spirit work in our new birth? First Peter 1:22-23 says, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." The Holy Spirit inspired the word and works through the word of God; the gospel is given to us to save us and to cause us to be born again. James 1:18 explains, "In the exercise of His will God brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."

The Spirit works through the word to cause our new birth. How then does the water unite with the word? Ephesians 5:25-27 reveals how Jesus sacrificed Himself to cleanse those who enter the kingdom, which is the church. He said, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her (that is, make her holy), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." We're cleansed and sanctified by the washing of water with the word. The love and sacrifice of Christ works through the washing of water with the word. The washing of water is a reference to baptism, and the word to the gospel which teaches us to be baptized.

In Titus 3:3-7 Paul explains, "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we've done in righteousness, no, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

We are born again, and when we're born again the Lord adds us to His church. In Acts 2:41, the Bible says about those who responded on the day of Pentecost, "So those who received his word were

baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” The baptized were added to the apostles. Acts 2:47 says, “And the Lord added to their number (speaking about the church) day by day those who were being saved.” This number is a clear reference to the number that’s in the church. The Lord adds you to His church when you are baptized. That’s when you are forgiven and when God saves you. Being born of water and the Spirit allows us to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). We’re not born of our will; we are born again by the will of God, when we receive the Lord and are obedient to His will. When we are baptized, the Lord adds us to His church. Sometimes people talk about “joining” the church, but people by their own will do not join the church. If you’re in the Lord’s church at all, it’s because the Lord Himself added you.

When we are baptized, God unites us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This is not merely a ritual; it is the dynamic working of God! Baptism is God’s work on us. Romans 6:3-5 says, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we’ve been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we’ve become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” We are baptized into Christ, into His death, buried with Him, and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

The word “united” in verse 4 is translated in the King James Version as “planted together.” It says, “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” Things that are planted together grow together, produce fruit together, and live together. When we’re baptized into Christ, God plants us together with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. We are planted in Him, and He is planted in us. Through baptism God unites us with Christ; and we are branches on His vine. Baptism is no empty ritual, it’s when God plants us together and unites us with Christ.

Galatians 3:26-27 says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Until you’re baptized, you’re outside of Christ; and once you’re baptized into Christ, you’re clothed with Christ. There’s a great difference, an eternal difference, between being in Christ and out of Christ. God unites us with Christ and makes us His children when by faith we are baptized and clothed with Christ.

Through baptism God causes our old self of sin to be free from that sin by doing away with our sins. Romans 6:6-7, speaks about what happens in baptism, “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.” By being united with Christ in His death, you come into contact with His blood which cleanses us from sin. In baptism our body of sin is done away with, and God does that, and we are free! We’re no longer slaves to sin!

Later in chapter six, verses 17 and 18, Paul says, “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” By God’s grace we can change. We can leave a life that’s enslaved to sin and become slaves of righteousness. We change when we’re obedient from the heart. When we lovingly submit to God’s instructions, God frees us from sin and makes us His servants. You can’t save yourself by yourself; God must save you! He saves us when we in faith and love submit to the standard of teaching that He gives us. The idea that we’re set free by faith alone without any obedience simply ignores this passage.

There can be no doubt that God causes a change in our lives at the time we obey Him in baptism. That's when we're united with and clothed with Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 it says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." When God raised you and me up with Christ to walk in newness of life in baptism, everything changes. The old way of life is gone and now we are free to serve the Lord, to live in righteousness, and to enjoy all the blessings of Christianity. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." It matters whether you are in Christ or not! In Christ we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We have an abundant life.

Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). When we're baptized, God washes away our sins. Paul had been praying for three days according to Acts 9:11, but he still needed to be washed from sin (Acts 22:16). Baptism is how we call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. First Peter 3:21 explains, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of the dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." When we are baptized, God saves us and hears our appeal for a good conscience. He cleanses our souls from sin and gives us that clean conscience. What a great God we have!

Let's pray. "O, Father, we're thankful that You have a plan that can wash away our sins and make us Your children and add us to Your church. Help us Father to be faithful and to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen."

When God commands us to believe, we do the believing. When God commands all people to repent, we do the repenting. When God commands us to confess Jesus Christ with our mouths, we do the confessing. When God commands us to love Him with all our hearts, we do the loving. When Christ commands us to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily to follow Him, we must act. But when God tells us to "be baptized," that's something that we respond to by letting someone else act upon us. Physically someone else baptizes us, and we submit to it. Spiritually God acts upon us; and we submit to it. God works on us in baptism.

God forgives us. God saves us. God sets us free from sin. God unites us with Christ. God causes us to be baptized into His death. God buries us with Christ. God raises us up with Christ to walk in newness of life. God causes us to be born again by His will. God makes us His children. God adds us to His kingdom, the church. All this takes place when we're baptized into Christ.

When someone says, "Well Phil, we don't have to be baptized to be saved," they reveal they have embraced a 16th century doctrine of faith only and missed the point. The New Testament never conceives of a child of God who has not been baptized into Christ. Why not confess your faith in Christ, repent of your sins, and from the heart obey the Lord by putting Him on in baptism. When you do, God will wash away your sins, and make you His child, and add you to His church, and give you newness of life. Won't you consider being baptized today?

We do ask that you focus your heart on God and worship at church today. You need a church family, and there's probably a church of Christ in your area. Now if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.

What Love Means

The highest calling of life is to love God and other people, but what does it mean to love? Today, we're exploring the meaning of love. The God of the Bible is the God of love, who loves us despite all our weaknesses. Let's be thankful for the Bible because it reveals all that God has done to bless us now and in the ages to come. God's Word records His plans for us and His promises. The more we know about God, the more we'll love Him. By studying God's Word, we'll grow in our faith and our devotion to Him.

Paul wrote, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I'm 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" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Love is the foundation of our relationship with God. Without love we're nothing and gain nothing. Without love, we're empty and lonely souls.

Imagine waking up in a world without love, a world where people don't care—and they don't care that they don't care. Small offenses would start fights because no one loved enough to forgive. People would become selfish and ambitious, stepping on others to better themselves. It's a world where the life of the unwanted is cheap, where children and the aged are forgotten, and where people sit silent while evil takes place. A world without love is without hope and filled with all the ugly substitutions that people find to take love's place.

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This is a very familiar passage and is frequently read at weddings, but actually it talks about every aspect of life.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

Let's pray together. "Father, help us to be more loving in our lives toward You, and in our lives toward others who are around us. Help us to love those who love us and help us to love our enemies and those who do not take thought of us. Father, help us to be the kind of people that when You look down You can be proud of. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

What does it mean to love? The love that we're talking about isn't the same thing as physical affection, though many call that love. No, "love," as it's used in the Bible, is the surrender of the self for the best interests of others. Love takes place when people put others' needs above their own. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Love is more than mere feelings, though love involves feeling. Love is an intentional act of the will; love determines to put self aside to bless the object of its love. Love sacrifices. Love pays whatever the cost, gives whatever gift, and runs whatever risk to do what is best for another. It gladly gives without complaint. Love will act even when difficult things are required. Love will bear the harsh and demanding load. Love is like a candle. It makes no noise but softly gives itself away to be a blessing to others.

Sometimes love is serving others. At other times love means allowing the kind will of someone else to serve us. Love knows how to give, but love also knows how to receive the love that others graciously give. Peter didn't want the Lord to wash his feet in John 13:8, but his objection to allowing the kindness of Jesus meant he had no share with the Lord. Love means allowing others to enter into our lives and to be kind to us.

Living without love means our hearts will be empty and indifferent. We won't care about anything but ourselves. We'll be like the priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan; we'll pass by on the other side of the road and leave others to suffer. A life without love means we'll turn inward to selfishness, wanting only to fulfill our own lusts and desires. We'll be like the rich farmer that was foolish, whose land provided abundantly but all he could think about was hoarding it up for himself. Living without love means we'll forget how to be thankful for what we have or how others have sacrificed to bless us.

Living without love means living without a relationship with God. First John 4:7-8 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." Living without love means living with bitterness. Without love we grow angry at every offense and plot to get even. Without love, hate will flourish. First John 2:10-11 says, "The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes." Hate fills everything with evil, fear, and violence. A world without love is miserable.

On the other hand, living with love means living with care and compassion. We see a need and we fill it, we see a hurt and comfort, and we see an opportunity to bless and seize it. God is the great example and teacher of love. So let's see how God loves:

First, God's love is sacrificial. John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only (some say only begotten) Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." The entire gospel comes to focus in this verse. God's love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. Here God sets the pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships—when you love someone dearly, you're willing to pay dearly for that person's responsive love. God paid dearly with the life of his Son, the highest price that he could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life that he had bought for us. When we share the gospel with others, our love must be like Jesus' love. We must be willing to give up on our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love.

Second, God's love is forgiving. Psalm 103:8-12 says, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He doesn't deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

We can understand a God who would forgive friends who ask for mercy. But a God who tenderly searches for sinners and then joyfully forgives them must possess an extraordinary love! This is the kind of love that prompted Jesus to come to earth to search for lost people and save them. This is the kind of extraordinary love that God has for you. If you feel far from God, don't despair. He's searching for you.

Third, God's love is eternal and beyond measure. Romans 8:38-39 says, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." These verses contain comforting promises. Believers have always had to face hardships in many forms: persecution, illness, imprisonment, even death. These problems could cause them to feel abandoned by Christ. But Paul explains these things cannot separate us from Christ. God profoundly loves His people.

Paul bowed his knees before the Father and prayed “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” (Ephesians 3:17-19). If we could but grasp—even a little—the immeasurable love of God for us, we would grow in our love for Him and for other people.

How then do we love others? People are not “born lovers” any more than people are born chefs. They have to learn how to cook and they have to learn how to love. You may have the deepest of feelings, but love is a verb, an act of heart and soul. Loving someone means you’ve paid enough attention to the needs and desires of another that their needs and desires become more important than your own. The Scriptures teach us why to love and how to love.

Many want to be loved, but they don’t understand the higher calling of loving others. Love isn’t merely affection that we receive from others; it’s our determination to sacrifice ourselves for the best interests of others. We love because we choose to love. We love because we see the value of serving God and serving others.

The Lord Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). We show that we’re the Lord’s disciples to the world when we love like He loves. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). True Christianity calls us to sacrifice ourselves for others.

If we become distracted with how people treat us, we’ll miss how we treat others. Love means setting what we want aside so that we can bless others by filling their needs and wants. Ephesians 4:31-32 says, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

The devil leads people to be arrogant, to be easily offended, to take revenge, to slander, and to grow bitter inside. The Lord Jesus leads us to be kind, even when no one else is kind; to be tenderhearted, even when everyone else is apathetic; and to forgive, even when the world hates you. The Lord Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:43-48).

God calls us to be His children and expects us to grow beyond a purely selfish mindset. The Lord God sacrificed Jesus on His own. We don’t cry out for Him to send His Son. He gave Jesus because He first loved us, He initiated it. First John 4:9-11 says, “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

The Lord God forgave us, not because we deserved it, but because He is so loving. He calls us to forgive—even when people don’t deserve it, because we are His children. He calls us to love our enemies rather than hate them, to pray for those who persecute us, and to love those who don’t love us. Why? Because we are God’s children. That’s the way God is.

Colossians 3:12-14 says, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." Have you put on love? Can people see the love of God in your heart and in your behavior? Do you care enough to take up a brother's burden as your own? Do you care enough to sacrifice yourself for a noble cause?

Love means ending our selfish, self-centered ways so we can sacrifice ourselves to serve God and serve others. Life without love is empty and useless, sad and lonely. People who turn away from the love of God may not realize how much they have hurt themselves, hurt others, or what precious things they've lost. They lose out on God's love, God's forgiveness, God's ear in prayer, and that room in His eternal house. Do you love God? Will you love God? Will you love others?

Let's pray. "Father, help us to be loving people who care for the needs of others and make others more important than ourselves. Forgive us our sins and help us to forgive others just as You have forgiven us. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

After that wonderful love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, comes the command of 1 Corinthians 14:1, which simply says, "Pursue love." To "pursue" means to go after something until you seize it. Paul isn't speaking here about finding someone to love you; he's urging us to pursue the practice and the skill of loving others. Pursuing means regularly giving ourselves to do what is best for others. First John 3:18 says, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

Love also means spreading our love by telling others about Jesus and His love. We preach Christ each week because we love you. When people get to know Christ, they learn to love in the fullest sense. They truly put others before themselves. They won't hurt God or others by living sinful lives. God's love and kindness moves us to repent of our sins and to live moral lives. Love won't let us keep on sinning against God or others. God loves you greatly and wants you to be His child. If you open your heart to God's love, and to His Word, you'll change your life. You'll draw close to God and you'll become a Christian. Because He loved you, Jesus died upon the cross to make atonement for your sins. Don't reject His marvelous gift of salvation.

Believe in Jesus, turn away from everything sinful, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. When you're baptized you'll enter into a relationship with God that can last eternally. In baptism God washes away your sins (Acts 22:16) and makes you His child (Galatians 3:26-27). As God's child, He will hear your prayers and give you an inheritance in heaven. If God loved you enough to send His Son Jesus to die on the cross for your sins, will you love Him enough to commit your heart and life to Him?

So 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.

Thirsting for God

Why do some have lives filled with hope and zeal, while others muddle through life empty? Today we're going to explore how to renew our passion for life. We're here to search the Scriptures to find the Lord's way to be saved and to live the Christian life. The Word of God has the best instructions for life here and the only instructions for life hereafter.

I love the inspired words of David in Psalm 42:1:2, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" David knew how much he needed God and how lost and alone he felt without Him. Are there times in your life when you feel empty and alone? Perhaps the reason for this emptiness is that you're not as close to God as you once were.

Some people live their Christian life with love and purpose, while others drift aimlessly. Some are passionate about their faith in Christ, while others just don't care. Some come out of church full of hope and zeal, while others who were in the same worship service come out empty. Why the difference? Could it be that many have lost their passion for God? Today we're exploring the Scriptures and asking, "How can I renew my passion for God?"

Some folks have never been close to God, and they don't know what they've missed. There is simply no blessing in life as necessary and as fulfilling as being close to God. My friend, I pray you'll look deep into your soul and ask yourself if you have a close, loving relationship with God? Would you like to have one?

Our reading today comes from the book of Philippians 4:4-7, and encourages us to rejoice in the Lord and to pray.

Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Oh what a wonderful message.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful for all the blessings that You give us in this life, and we pray Father that we may always turn our anxieties and our struggles over to You, and rejoice in the good that You have done for us. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus Amen."

Have you ever had that kind of thirst that demands a drink of water now? I've been out hunting and walking through the forest loaded down with equipment and desperately needing a drink of water. Or I've been mowing the lawn in the summer; and my face is red, and I'm so thirsty I could drink from a garden hose. Much of Judea in ancient times and in this day is still a dry country. The people who live in dry areas know how essential it is to have water to drink and to be clean. They know what it's like when something so necessary is scarce. The hills of Judea contain numerous cisterns that collect rainwater for the dry seasons. They knew water is essential to life, and they must have it.

Like water, a relationship with God and the Lord Jesus is essential to life. Think! When was the last time you were thirsty for God? When did you last hunger to be close to God? When did you last long to pray, to worship, to praise, and thank Him? When was the last time you craved reading the Bible or hearing a sermon from God's holy word? It's so easy to forget what you need to be healthy and right with God.

Some take for granted that God is always going to be there, that He always cares, and always makes Himself available whenever they need Him. Some have room in their lives for God when they hurt and they need Him, but they ignore God until some need arises. Their relationship with God is part-time. Their lives

say to God, "I want you when you can benefit me, but don't get used to being a part of my life." They aren't really close to God. They haven't taken up their cross daily to follow Him.

Part-time Christians don't want to be close unless they want something from God. They have a shallow relationship. Would you like to be married to someone who only wanted you when he or she needed you but didn't care about being with you any other time? Close relationships are always two-ways. Christianity is a heartfelt, daily relationship with the Lord. We must not let our love for God grow stale.

If you want a relationship with God that is vibrant and living and full of love and joy, you must grow beyond having God around only when you need Him. The Lord Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 when he was tempted by the devil. He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We need God daily just like we need food daily.

Many people cheat themselves out of real life by focusing on everything around but God. They listen to the talk shows; they go to the movies; they know their soap operas; they read newspapers and magazines; they know every sports figure; but they haven't read a single book of the Bible in years. No wonder their lives are filled with doubts and misunderstanding. By pushing the Bible away, they're pushing the Christian life and pushing God away.

The Bible is no ordinary book; it's God's book and God's way of teaching and training us how to live. It teaches us how to love, how to forgive and how to be forgiven, how to react to suffering, how to grow on the inside, how to discipline ourselves, how to live without hurting other people, and how to make the most of our lives. The Bible gives us hope and promise; it gives us joy and peace; it lifts us up; it comforts; it corrects; it trains; and it makes us new people. The Word of God is what gives us new life and causes us to be born again.

Look what the apostle Peter says in the Bible about the Bible. This is an amazing promise! "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.' And this word is the good news that was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:22-25). God's Word is the key to being "born again." No other book can forgive your past and give you the promise and hope of living forever! The more you read the Bible, the more you'll know and be close to God. The more you read the Bible, the more you'll have the abundant life that's found in Christ Jesus!

So, start paying attention to God and to His Word. Our passion and our feelings for God die as we remove ourselves from God. People don't intend to get away from God; they simply drift away unconsciously. The Bible says, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:1-3). A person can slowly just stop reading the Word of God, stop praying, stop worshipping at church. Before long he or she has drifted away from the God who loves them.

Desperate situations sometimes wake us up and lead us back to God; and we finally realize that we have no one else and nowhere else to go. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." It's reassuring to remember God can do things that men cannot do. There is really only one true God who can hear and answer prayer; and that is the God of the Bible! I know it's not politically correct to say things like that; but political correctness is not the measure of truth. Political correctness is often the world's way of silencing God. When people listen to the world and forget God, they end up ruining their lives. The world didn't die for your sins; did you hear that,

the world didn't die for your sins, Jesus did. Every social ill in this whole world comes from people who ignore the will of God. We need God. We need His hope, His promises, and His laws to live good and peaceful lives. There is simply no other way than the Lord's way.

We can draw close to God by making Him a priority in our lives every single day. Every day make time for God. Spend time in Bible study, not just reading but study, and prayer. Don't simply read the Word of God, study it and meditate upon it and learn from it and practice it. Psalm 1:1-3 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's like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf doesn't wither. In all that he does, he prospers." God wants to feed your spirit with his word and give you the very insights that you need to prosper in every area of your life.

God also wants you to draw close to Him by opening your heart to Him in prayer. First Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." God is not saying pray 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No one could do that. Instead God is telling us to stop quitting on prayer. Some folks stop praying altogether. That's what God doesn't want.

Some folks think they're bothering God by praying, but God doesn't feel that way. In fact He invites us to pray, to ask, to seek, and to knock. He's ready to answer, to give, and to help us find what we're seeking. Prayer was God's idea, so let's rid ourselves of the notion that God is too busy for us or gets bothered by our prayers. God loves you and wants to hear your prayers. He wants to hear what is on your heart.

If you want to be closer to God, let me suggest a simple exercise every single day. "What is it?" It's this: count your blessings. Remember the good blessings that God has given to you. Remember God saved you from sin, delivered you from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son. Remember the cross, the love that Jesus showed by His suffering for you and me. Remember how God has answered your prayers. Remember how the Scriptures gave you hope and comfort. Remember the strength God has given you to deal with the challenges of life. He's been blessing you through the years. Just look how God has helped you and is helping you now.

Counting your blessings is so healthy for our spirits and attitudes. The Bible teaches us, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there's any excellence, anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8). Dwell on them, focus on them. Focusing on the negative will take our eyes off of God. But focusing on what God has done for us will help us to stay close to God. When we concentrate on the positive, we grow more thankful to God. Every day we need to stop and say to God, "thank you, thank you, thank you for all You do for us."

There is one more thing about God's blessings that we must remember. God has lovingly prepared a future for us, one that gives us hope. The Bible says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he's caused us to be born again, born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5). As Christians we have the true and living hope in the true and living God. We have all the blessings of God in this life and we have heaven too! In Christ we are of all people most blessed.

If there is anything keeping you from being close to God, get rid of it. Is there anything in your life robbing you of your energy and time, so that you don't have time for God? Some people day after day shut the Lord out of their lives. Hebrews 12:1;2 says: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of

witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Many things in our lives can tangle us up. Some things are not sinful in and of themselves, but they so distract and rob us of our time with God, that we lose sight of the Lord who loves us. We also have to think about sin. Sin, ALL sin, separates us from God. Isaiah 59:1-2 says, “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.” If you want to draw close to God, you have to clean the sin out of your lives. I hope you’ll do that today.

Let’s pray. “Father, we’re thankful for Your love and we’re thankful for all the good that You’ve done for us. Help us to put the sin away and to draw close to You by loving You and reading Your word by praying and doing good things. Be with us and help us to do Your will always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

A middle school in Oregon faced a unique problem. A number of the girls began to use lipstick. Then they would put it on in the restroom and then press their lips against the mirrors, leaving dozens of little lip prints. This went on several days. Finally the principal decided she had to do something to stop this problem. So, she called the girls to the restroom with the custodian. She explained lip prints caused a major problem for the custodian, who had to clean the mirrors every day. To demonstrate how difficult it was, she asked the custodian to clean one of the mirrors. He took out a long-handled brush, dipped it in the toilet, and scrubbed the mirror. Since that time there were no more lip prints on the mirrors. If we could see the filth that’s in sin, we wouldn’t be so attracted to it. God hates sin. He calls it iniquity, because it twists and ruins lives.

God loves you and wants something better than sin provides. Jesus said in John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” Our Father in heaven wants us to live with joy and purpose. We can live abundantly when we give our hearts and lives to the Lord. So put your trust in the Lord Jesus. Believe His Word. Turn away from sin. Sin may give you pleasure for a moment, but it will rob you of your soul. Now out of love and faith, with a penitent heart, confess Christ as your Lord and the Son of God and be baptized or immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the time that God forgives our sins. It’s also the time that we enter a relationship with God. I hope that you’ll do that today.

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

Is the Truth Important?

Most people think that religious truth is relative and determined by what people think. Surveys say that only 22 percent believe in absolute truth. Is the truth important? The Lord Jesus in a prayer to the Father said, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (John 17:17). Those who are faithful to God must be sanctified or set apart for the truth. God wants His people to be saved and to know the truth, to love the truth, to practice the truth, and to proclaim the truth everywhere. The Scriptures describe the priest and scribe Ezra, "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). That's what we seek to do with our faith in Jesus Christ. Today, we're asking the question, "Is the truth important?" Courts convene with a jury trial to determine the truth about a person's guilt or innocence. Doctors give blood tests, take X-rays and MRIs, and examine patients to figure out what is truly causing the physical problem. Officials photograph the finish line and time athletes to a thousandth of a second to see who truly won the race. Is truth important to courts, doctors, or athletes? Of course.

When some, however, turn to religious matters, they question whether truth is important or even knowable? They hear so many voices, they become confused. Frankly, some find being confused or even deceived is better than knowing the truth. It seems people feel comfortable ignoring the most important truths. One day the only truth that will matter is the truth God has spoken; it will affect the eternal destiny of our souls. We must know what the will of the Lord is, if we are to please Him and to live with Him forever.

Our scripture reading today comes from The Gospel According to John 18:33-38. It talks about Jesus before Pontius Pilate, just before His crucifixion.

Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" Pilate answered, "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him."

That's the story before the death of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're grateful for your love and we're grateful for the promises that You give to us. And that You have given us the truth that we might know right from wrong, that we might know truth from error. And Father, help us to be devoted to the truth and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

The book of Proverbs was written by a father to his young adult son, teaching him the wisdom necessary to find "favor in the sight of God and man." He wanted his son to have a safe guide that would keep him out of trouble. Solomon said, "My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life, And peace they will add to you. Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. So that you will find favor and good repute, In the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body, And refreshment to your bones" (Proverbs 3:1-8).

For Solomon, truth was very important. He said, "Do not let kindness and truth leave you—bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart" (Proverbs 3:3). Solomon valued the "truth," whether it was truth about morals or truth about God Himself. He knew there were some things that you must understand about life and about God. Trust in God and in the truth are inseparably linked. When people leave the truth, they show disbelief in what God says. Moses reminds us, that "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). God doesn't lie; it's against His very nature to ever utter a false statement. This explains why Psalm 119:160 says, "The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever."

We can trust the Word of God to give us what is true, that is, what is consistent with reality and what is actually the case. Solomon advised us, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). Truth is worth our every effort; we should pursue it until we find it. David said, "the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; and in keeping them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:9-11).

The mindset of our time is to treat truth as subjective and disposable. We often hear, "What's true for you is true for you, and what's true for me is true for me." Such a view of truth makes it confusing and even worthless. Some are leaving the truth behind altogether. It's startling that the one who speaks the truth about morals is made into a villain today, while an evildoer is made into some kind of hero. Only the devil and his followers would do that.

The devil wants to turn everything upside down, making evil into good and good into evil. Paul warned the young preacher Timothy, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Timothy 4:1-4). We're seeing Paul's prophecy fulfilled today. Religious beliefs are more divided today than at any time in history. "Designer" churches are popping up everywhere, so people can choose whatever appeals to them. Such churches are created more after the human will than the will of God. They've lost sight of putting God's will at the very center of all that they do.

When people leave God's Word for their own philosophies and desires, they leave the truth. They leave the wisdom and goodness of God behind. God's Word is true, yes, because God knows everything and is good. He doesn't lie, and He means what He says.

Paul said, "But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2). Paul wasn't interested in hiding anything or twisting his words around to deceive anyone. He wasn't underhanded but told things like they were. You can count on what he says, and you can count on God.

To tamper with the Word of God is to distort it in order to make it say what people want it to say rather than to listen to what it actually does say. When someone changes God's Word to fit their own desires, they show that they don't believe or respect God. Some falsely interpret the Word to their agenda, and others get fooled by their deception. Such cunning to advance a distortion to God's word is in Paul's eyes disgraceful and underhanded. Paul said that we must not be ignorant of the devices that Satan uses (2 Corinthians 2:11).

One of Satan's devices follows a common pattern. Satan, first, loves to create doubt in the Word of God. You'll remember He asked Eve, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" (Genesis 3:2) Satan knew what God had said; and he didn't want information but he wanted to cause Eve to doubt what God had said. Doubt is always the first step to apostasy. The devil knows that if he can get you to question God's love, wisdom, and truth, that he can get you to follow him to destruction.

Satan, second, contradicts what God says. Eve admitted they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that they would die if they did so. But Satan said, "You shall surely not die" (Genesis 3:4). Satan wants people to think he knows better than we do and even better than God. He wants us to think that he has the inside track to what is really true, so he contradicts God. The desire to know His secrets, to be one of the elite, to buy into his arrogance, has led many unfortunate souls down the path to perdition. Jesus said, "He [that is, the devil] 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's a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). You can expect the devil to challenge God at every point.

Adolf Hitler's propaganda minister said, "If you tell a lie long enough, loud enough, and often enough, the people will believe it. The secret to get someone to believe a lie is constant repetition. Just tell it over, and over, and over again." The devil has told the same lies for thousands of years, and people are still gullible enough to believe them. Satan will tell you what he thinks you want to hear. Eve was deceived by this lie; and Adam was not. Adam knew that eating the fruit was wrong, but he followed his wife in rebellion to God. For this reason, Adam actually committed the greater sin.

Satan, third, produces an alternate version of "truth." He said to Eve, "God knows that when you eat of it that your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The devil's alternate always mixes truth with error. There's enough truth to sound persuasive, but his message is full of misrepresentations and distortions. Knowing good and evil meant turning against God and suffering the consequences of the evil. The devil didn't explain that. He acted like it was desirable, but Adam and Eve ended up separated forever from the garden of Eden. They ended up in sin.

Satan often pretends to be holy, yes. Paul described him as he does some false teachers he talks about, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it's no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. And their end will correspond to their deeds" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). The devil wants everyone to believe that he's got some better way and God is trying to fool them. He wants them to think that God is somehow cheating them. And his strategy is to get people to rely upon him [that is Satan] for real "progress." And he says he has a better way than Christ or the church. And remember, he's a liar.

There's nothing better than New Testament Christianity. The entertainment religions don't have anything better than congregational singing in worship. The church growth experts don't have a plan better than preaching the truth in love. You can't improve on God's way or God's will. The devil will always ask questions to create doubt, he'll always contradict the Bible, and he'll always provide some kind of alternative; but the devil delivers a counterfeit religion. Don't fall for it.

Paul warned the elders at Ephesus, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. [Paul said] I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30). Through the centuries men have taught strange doctrines that contradict God's Word and lead people into error and to be lost.

What can we do about it? Paul told Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Check your preacher out. Ask if he is preaching what God says in the Scriptures or if he’s just giving his own opinions.

A sweet lady—not a member of the church of Christ—recently told me how much she enjoyed the program *In Search of the Lord's Way* and how she watched it every Sunday. I thanked her. She explained, “Well, the preacher where I go to church doesn’t use the Bible much; he tells lots of stories. I like it when you preach the Bible.” My friends, as long as there is breath in my body, I intend to preach God’s Word out of the scriptures and not the opinions or stories of men. I’m not interested in alternative religions and their experiences; I want God and His Word to be the source of truth for my life. I can count on that. The apostle John, “For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you’re walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 3-4). There is no greater joy, no greater blessing than having faith in and following God’s word. Truth is important, because it assures us that our sins are truly forgiven, that Jesus truly will come again and raise us from the dead, and that we have a home in heaven. That is the most important thing of all!

Let’s pray together. “O Father, we’re thankful that You have given us Your Word that teaches us the truth and that the sum of Your Word is the truth. Help us to be diligent students, to study with all our heart and soul, to know the things that You’re teaching. Bless us and be with us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

How we view the truth of God’s Word matters. True disciples make their home in the words of Jesus. The Lord Jesus said to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue [that is] in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32). When you have more than the truth, you have too much; when you have less than the truth, you have too little. You need all the truth and nothing but the truth. When people won’t listen to God, they’ll believe anything that makes them feel good. Solomon’s advice to his son is valuable for us too: “Don’t let kindness and truth leave you—bind them around your neck, and write them on the tablet of your heart.”

Truth is precious. Nothing will set you free but the truth found in God’s word! Peter said, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:22-23). It’s not enough to simplify, or to simply know the truth, we must obey it as well. We obey the gospel of truth by placing our faith in Christ Jesus, repenting of our sins, by confessing the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and by being baptized (that is, immersed) in water for the forgiveness of our sins. It’s in the faithful response of baptism that God causes us to be born again. God at that time gives us newness of life (Romans 6:4). My friend, have you obeyed the truth? Have you been born again?

So focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. There’s probably a church of Christ near you. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be glad to help you find one.