

"The Way to Healing"

Our culture lacks faith and fills itself with great confusion and chaos. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." What can we do to make a difference? Well stay tuned and we'll hear what God says.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We listen to God, because He speaks the truth to us, because He wants what is best for us, and because He truly loves us. Sadly, many in our culture have stopped searching God's word for moral and spiritual truth. They've relied on feelings and faulty opinions that reflect their own desires and have ignored God's time-tested wisdom. We appreciate your taking time to hear this message today. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

Praising God, Paul wrote in Romans 11:33 to 36, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.'" It shouldn't surprise us that God is truly wise beyond all we think or imagine. There is no better source of truth, no better source of history, or of life than the Bible.

You can search the world over, and there is nothing that surpasses Scripture in purity, in grandeur, or in honesty. From Scripture we learn the character of our holy God who doesn't compromise His morality but is full of love and compassion. From the beginning, God wanted to bless all people with a better way of life and eternal life. Sending His Son Jesus into this world to forgive our sins and giving us His word helps us to know His love and His ways. If we forget Him or forsake His ways, we choose a life of hardship and confusion. If we pay close attention to God and follow Him, we'll find peace and eternal life.

Now we offer this study free on the way to healing. 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 you can 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 2 Chronicles 7:12 to 14, and explore how God provides for us the way of healing.

When Solomon finished building the temple, he prayed to God and asked Him to be kind to the people even whenever they went against Him, to be forgiving to them and heal the land. In 2 Chronicles 7, verses 12 to 14, we have God's answer. "Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, 'I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.'" Oh, I wonder how much healing our land needs?

Let's pray. "Heavenly Father we humble ourselves and we seek Your face. Father, help us to turn from our wicked ways, to love You and to serve You always, and to obey Your will. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen."

In 2 Chronicles chapter 6, King Solomon led a lengthy prayer on his knees before the altar of God in the presence of all the assembly of Israel as he was dedicating the temple. Solomon knew there is no

God like the God of Israel, “keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart.” He knew the God of heaven would repay the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head and would vindicate the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness. He understood that Israel could be defeated by their enemies if they sinned against God and prayed they could repent and be forgiven. He knew a lack of rain, a famine, a pestilence, a plague, or a captivity could afflict the people. He asked God to hear their prayers when they repent and plead with Him to be restored.

God answered Solomon’s prayer in the night and said in 2 Chronicles 7:13 to 14, “When I shut up the heavens so that there’s no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Now we’re not national Israel of the first covenant in the days of Solomon, but there’s a message here for us. We shouldn’t imagine that God is blind and deaf; He knows our lives, our morals, or our hearts. If we forsake Him, He sees and knows. Isaiah 65:11 to 12 says to the disobedient Israel, “But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny, I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter, because, when I called, you didn’t answer; when I spoke, you didn’t listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in.”

Though we today do not serve idols as they did in ancient times, I fear we choose to follow foolish and destructive paths today. Jeremiah spoke of Judea in his day in Jeremiah 2 and verse 13, “for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” And I fear we today have rebelled against God and listened to godless counsel, which are our broken cisterns that can hold no water.

We’re truly in a moral and spiritual mess, and our rejection of God has created for us hardship and chaos. We have troubles on every side. Ancient Judah thought the answers were in false, man-made religions, which afforded them their pleasures but made them slaves.

If we wonder what can we do, the answer is in the Bible where it’s always been. God’s answer to Solomon provides the answer for healing in our land, our homes, and our lives.

First, we must humble ourselves. James 4:7 to 10 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.” God will not accept us if we’re prideful and full of ourselves. We must humble our hearts and submit to God. And that means we voluntarily subject ourselves to His will and His commands. We need to purify our hearts rather than be double-minded. We can’t be friends with the wickedness that’s in this world and remain friends with God. Until we consciously humble our hearts, we can’t please God. And those who boast in themselves will never stand before God. We can’t boast about doing things our own way (now I know that’s popular)! But that’s not bowing our knee before the Father.

Our God is holy! Psalm 5 and verse 4 says, “For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.” If it were not for the grace of our loving God, none of us could stand before God. Because our robes are washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, we have hope of salvation. When you

consider God, and what He has done for us, it should humble our hearts. We should indeed be grateful for His love, His compassion, and His daily care.

Psalm 103:10 to 12 says, "He does not 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." Now realizing this, shouldn't we humble ourselves in love and appreciation? The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, humbled Himself. Philippians 2:5 to 8 says, "Have this attitude (this mindset) in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, didn't regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Second, we must pray and seek God's face. David charged Solomon at the close of his life with these words in 1 Chronicles 28:9, "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever." Sadly, we seek out everyone's opinion but fail to seek God's wisdom. We fail to come to Him for answers to our concerns.

God has spoken on so many issues, but our society closes its heart and ears. God Himself once asked the nation Judah, "What injustice your fathers find in Me, that they went far from Me and walked after emptiness and became empty?" (Jeremiah 2 and verse 5). Today, if God doesn't agree with what we want or believe, we shut Him out and seek out emptiness. Some would rather believe a lie than listen to the Lord. We foolishly think we can reject the will of God by redefining the most basic things of life. Our definitions won't change God's definitions. And just because one can do something legally doesn't mean that God accepts it morally and spiritually.

If there were ever a time to pray and seek God's face, it's now! If there were ever a time to bow the knee and humble the heart, it's now! I want to challenge you to pray humbly and fervently. Get on your knees! Pray every day that our nation will open our eyes to the truth and turn from foolishness and wickedness. Pray every day that people will revive their faith and their love for God. Pray every day that people will open their Bibles to seek the truth. Devote yourselves to praying to God, and that God will open a door for the word of truth, rather than for popular babbling of false religions.

Let's pray that God will meet our needs. We can pray for peace, for our daily bread, for healthy lives, for comfort for those who mourn, and for the forgiveness of our sins. God is listening to our prayers, when we humble ourselves, when we listen to His word, and we seek His will. And we must listen to God, if we wish God to listen to us. Seeking His face means paying close attention to what He says. Hebrews 2:1 to 3 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 such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard,"

Third, we must turn from our wicked ways. The idea of turning from sin in repentance has often been forgotten. Many pulpits these days will speak loud and long on grace but hardly whisper about repentance. If your preacher rarely or never speaks about repentance, he needs to repent himself. If your church leaders teach repentance is unnecessary, they don't know God. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Paul told the philosophers at Mars Hill in Acts 17:30, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

because he's fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given us assurance, He's given it to all by raising Jesus from the dead."

Peter on the day of Pentecost told the guilty Jews who crucified Jesus in Acts 2 and verse 38, "He said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" He emphasized later that God was patient but expects people to repent. He wrote in 2 Peter 3 and verse 9, that "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should (come or) reach repentance."

Repentance is how we correct our wrongs and how we straighten up our hearts and our lives. We must change our thinking and change our ways, that's repentance. And we can no longer live wicked lives; our task is to serve the Lord in love and in purity. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of behavior. Repentance restores our hearts and lives to the way that God intended. It brings about spiritual healing of heart and life. If someone tells you that God expects you to repent, He's not being mean. He's helping you to find healing and life in Christ Jesus. God's grace always works with repentance, not in its absence.

Titus 2:11 to 14 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." God forgives our sins in order to transform our lives. We come to Him sometimes thinking "Just As I Am," means that we have to stay that way. No, God accepts us just as we are, but he accepts us to transform us to become something bigger and better and more righteous.

God desires that we crucify the old man of sin, so that we can live free from sin and pursue righteousness and good works. We do this, according to Romans 6:3 to 7, when we're baptized into Christ and into His death. Baptism into Christ means we're buried with Him and raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Jesus from the dead (Colossians 2 and verse 12). And the result of this act of faith means that God makes us alive together with Christ and forgives all our transgressions (Colossians 2 and verse 13). Yes, God saves us and makes us alive when we're baptized into the death of Christ. Obedience to Christ, the grace of God, listening to the Lord, all of these things bring healing to our lives, not only to us individually, but to our homes, our churches, and our ultimately to our land. I pray that you will no longer live for the world but will seek the Lord's face and will serve Him.

Let's pray. "Father we're thankful that You give us healing when we come to you humbly, lovingly, and obediently. Father we ask that You will bless us, that You will bless our land, and Father help each of us to live lives that please You and our according to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

Since we're thinking of 1776, let's recall history. The Continental Congress on May 16, 1776, appointed a day of fasting and prayer. They said, "The Congress... Desirous... to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely... on his aid and direction... Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17th day of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of

Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness.” The Continental Congress knew that their blessing came from God and their forgiveness came through the blood of Jesus Christ.

You can't find forgiveness by doing things your own way, by denying your sins, by committing the same old sins and not repenting, or by blaming other people for your actions. God didn't make us sinners; we choose to do right and we choose to do wrong. Romans 14 verse 12 says, “So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.” You will one day stand before God; are you confident or are you afraid?

To become a Christian you must put your trust in the Lord Jesus and believe the gospel of Christ. You must turn from your wickedness and turn to the Lord in repentance. You must confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and make Him your Lord. This is not the time to play games; it's the time to get serious. And upon your confession, to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. That's when God saves us and washes away our sins (Acts 22:16, and 1 Peter 3:21).

We hope that today's study about the way to healing has stirred you to consider your soul. 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. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. And you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Go to “SearchTVMinistry,” and be sure to like the program.

We ask that you focus your heart on God, and get back to church if you haven't been there in a while. Let God be first in your life. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.