

Program Transcripts

September 2021



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

September 2021

Topics subject to change without notice

SEPTEMBER 5 – CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Have you considered the fact God created you in His image and after His likeness? Being made in the image of God carries with it many blessings and many responsibilities. If you are created in His image, how are you showing it? Stay tuned.

SEPTEMBER 12 – NEVER ALONE

Living alone presents many emotional and spiritual challenges to adults today. What does God desire for those who face the challenges of living alone, and what promises does He make for those alone? Stay tuned and we'll find out.

SEPTEMBER 19 – WHEN YOU FACE GOD

You have an appointment you cannot avoid. One day you will face God on the Day of Judgment. When you face God, will it be with great love and hope, or will it be with dread and fear? Are you prepared to meet God?

SEPTEMBER 26 – WILL GOD HEAR MY PRAYER?

Will God hear my prayer? Does God really care about my problems? Some feel very close to God and confident in their prayer life, while others feel far from God and wonder if God will hear and answer their prayers.

Created in the Image of God

Have you considered the fact God created you in His image? Being created in God's image is no small gift! Let's take some time today to consider it. We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. In SEARCH of the Lord's Way began broadcasting 41 years ago on September 1, 1980. Mack Lyon was its founder and speaker for thirty years. He passed away in 2015 at the age of 93. We thank God for his love for God and people and for his hunger to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When God saw all that He had made, He said it was very good. God created man in His likeness and knew that the more each person grew to be like God the better for all humanity. Like God, man could reason, could choose, and could communicate. God gave each person a conscience that gave them a self-awareness and led them to evaluate their moral behavior. They knew when they had done something wrong and they knew when they did something that was right.

God expects those who turn to Him as Christians to live in a way that reflects the image of God. Ephesians 4:21-24 says, "if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him (that is, in Jesus), just as truth is in Jesus, in reference to your former manner of life, that you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." God gave us the Bible so that we may know what it means to follow the Lord and live righteous lives. While God created each of us with the ability to be like Him, we must be willing to follow His teaching.

Our reading today comes from the first book of the Bible, Genesis 1:26-31, and discusses the creation of mankind.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; and it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that You have created us in Your image, we're thankful Father for all the blessings that You've given to us through all of these years, and Father we pray that You will continue to be with us, and help us to be devoted to You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Hebrews 12:9 says that God is the father of spirits. The spirit you have and I have came from God. While other creatures on earth are alive, only man was given a spirit and created in the likeness of God. What does that mean? How do humans differ from the other creatures God made? William Grasham in his commentary on Genesis published by Truth for Today presents several differences between mankind and animals. First, only man can think above himself and reason about his thoughts. He can ask the most important questions "Who am I?", "Where did I come from?", "Why am I here?", or "What will happen to me after I die?" Only man considers his identity or tries to discover his origin or heritage. Only man wants to know about his purpose for existing or evaluates his place in life. Animals never struggle over such concepts; they just exist.

Second, only man is able to learn from experience, to accumulate knowledge from others, and to share that knowledge and wisdom with those who follow. Man is the only creature to whom history and the past are important. He accumulates knowledge from the past and cares enough to share it, so that the following generations become more knowledgeable than his own. As William Grasham noted, "Man can preserve knowledge in both oral and written forms, so that his children and grandchildren don't have to discover everything anew."

Third, only man has dominion or rule over the earth and all the animal kingdom. God gave mankind this rule, when He created them; but this rule is a sacred trust and stewardship. While man's physical body requires food, water, and air as the animals do, man is the only creature who can hear and meditate the words that God revealed. Certain animals have physical abilities that far exceed humans, but God made man spiritual as well as physical.

Fourth, only man shows restlessness with the physical things of life. Perhaps this is true because God "has also set eternity in their heart" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). While man longs for more than he has, animals are happy with the necessities of life. While man fails to be satisfied with who he is, what he looks like, what he knows, what he experiences, or what he accomplishes, animals don't desire to see, hear, or experience something new all the time.

Fifth, only man is a moral being with a sense of oughtness. His conscience makes it mandatory for him to wrestle with right and wrong. His conscience bears witness to his behavior and his thoughts alternately accusing or defending him (Romans 2:14-16). He longs to have a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21). While animals act on instinct doing what comes naturally, mankind constantly evaluates his thoughts and actions morally and ethically. Only man is a free moral agent with the ability to choose how he will live.

Romans 6:16 says that we can present ourselves as slaves for obedience to sin that results in death or to obedience to God, which results in righteousness. Verse 17-18 remind us that we can change course: "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." We thank God that we don't have to be trapped by enslavement to sin, that we can become the people God intended!

Sixth, only man has an aesthetic nature that allows him to produce art, music, and poetry. Animals care nothing for aesthetic matters because such things don't help their well-being. Though birds can instinctively weave intricate nests from things they find on the ground, and spiders can instinctively produce and weave intricate webs from the silk strands coming from the tiny organs called spinnerets in their abdomens, only man shows the ability to create many different intricate and beautiful things.

Seventh, only man has a concept of a future life beyond the grave. Only man thinks to prepare for the life beyond. He may fear death and mourn the departed, but he has hope for life beyond. He sees this life as precious but realizes it's not the end. He also realizes there will be a judgment that affects his eternity. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "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's done, whether good or bad." Only man works to lay up treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy.

Yes, God created mankind in His image; and man is unique. Grasham observed, "The blessing of this uniqueness is attached to a special responsibility to serve and to praise the Creator." We exist to give glory to God, our Creator. The twenty-four elders of Revelation 4:10-11 worship God who lives forever and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created." God wanted the best for mankind, but mankind lost sight of God.

Though made in God's image, people chose to follow their selfish desires and ignored the warning of the Lord God. They chose evil and caused themselves much suffering and heartache. First, it was Adam and Eve sinning by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God punished Adam and Eve by expelling them from the Garden of Eden. Adam had to work for his food by the sweat of his brow. God caused Eve to suffer at childbirth and yet to desire their husbands who will "rule over you." God also cursed the ground because of Adam's sin; "both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you" (Genesis 3:17-18).

Genesis 4 tells how Cain offered up a sacrifice that God didn't accept, but He accepted Abel's offering. This resulted in Cain becoming angry at his brother and murdering him. First John 3:12 describes Cain as one "who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous." Evil grew in Cain's heart to the extent that he would murder his innocent brother.

Years later the Lord witnessed how evil had multiplied throughout humanity. Genesis 6:5-7 says: "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thought of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.'" God decided to destroy the world, but Noah found favor in God's sight. No matter how bad things got, God was still wanting to offer hope that people could live right before God. Noah built an ark just as the Lord commanded, and God brought eight people safely through the water. First Peter 3:21 says, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Just as the ark gave hope to Noah, the blood of Christ that saves through baptism can give us a good conscience.

Scripture can teach us about the glory and power of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture can open our hearts so that we can see God's holiness; it also helps us to see ourselves as God sees us. Isaiah 6 tells of Isaiah's vision of God. The Lord was sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim, that is heavenly beings stood above him, and one called out, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." When Isaiah saw the majesty and the holiness of the Lord, he said in verse five, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I'm a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

We sometimes compare ourselves with other people, because we can always find someone who is morally lower than we think we are; but if we compare ourselves with our holy God, we know that we can never measure up. We can begin to see ourselves as we truly are: sinners in need of salvation. Like the prophet Isaiah, we realize that without the Lord Jesus, we too are ruined. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes us when we're separated from Christ, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

If the Scripture had stopped there, we'd all have to face being children of wrath. Ephesians 2:12 reminds the Gentiles, who had come out of paganism into Christianity, what their way of life was like before coming to Christ: "remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." I can think of nothing worse. The pandemic of 2020 separated us from one another, which was heartbreaking; but to be separated from God and without hope is the worst condition of all.

I'm thankful for verse 13: "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." You might be living in a way that's far off from God, filled with guilt and regret; but you can draw near to God because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. You can change and become a new creature. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." People who are without God and without hope can come to Christ and find hope and live for the God who created them. You can break from the old ways and be born again.

Because of the blood of Jesus, you can be forgiven and become a child of God. Ephesians 2:19-22 describes what became of the converted Gentiles who came to Christ: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you're fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household (His family), having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." In Christ, you're no longer a stranger to God but part of His family. You're a fellow citizen with the saints. Every person in God's family, the church, is now a saint. A saint is a person whom God considers holy. We are washed, sanctified, and justified by the blood of Christ. You can leave hopelessness for hope and wrath for salvation. You were created in His image; now become God's child.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father help us to be obedient to Your will, to turn from the things of this sinful world and to live in righteousness, knowing that we were created in Christ to be Your child. Help us heavenly Father to love You and to serve You always. In Jesus' name, Amen."

God created you in His image because He wanted you to be like Him and to live in love and righteousness. The Lord Jesus wants you to enjoy forever a place in the Paradise that He is preparing for you in heaven. God wants us all to put away the evil of the past and to live new lives devoted to godly ways. Colossians 3:8-10 says, "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

Jesus Christ can help us become the person God intended us to be. We can leave the old sinful life and become people who reflect the image of God. Who can choose the righteous path and leave the way of sin. We don't have to be trapped in a lifestyle of shame and guilt. We have an answer in Jesus Christ.

Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Decide today that you will no longer practice the sins that make you guilty and ashamed. Repent. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and make Him your Lord. Be baptized into Christ Jesus, uniting with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. When you're immersed (that is, baptized in water), God will wash away your sins and give you newness of life (Acts 22:16; and Romans 6:3-7). You can be a new creature, you can be a child of God.

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

Never Alone

Living alone presents many emotional and spiritual challenges to adults today. Today, we're exploring what God desires for those who live alone. We're here to search the Scriptures for the Lord's Way. This is God's instruction book for everyone, in every stage of life, and in every circumstance. Whatever struggle or heartache you face, God has some comfort and help for you in the Bible. He's not forgotten or abandoned you. He knows and cares about you.

Many years ago, I did a funeral for an elderly man who had no family at all. Three funeral directors and I carried his casket to the graveside service; two ladies from the nursing home and I sang some hymns. No one else attended. Six people, no family, no friends. This man was utterly alone and buried by strangers.

Loneliness is a growing problem in our society. More than 53 percent of all adults in the United States are unmarried; that's over 110 million people. A study by the American Council of Life Insurance reported that the loneliest group in America are college students. The survey next listed divorced people, welfare recipients, single mothers, rural students, housewives, and the elderly. Loneliness is a widespread problem; in fact, one in four people complain about feeling lonely frequently. Persistent loneliness can harm our mental and physical health.

The LORD God said to Adam, "It's not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). Living without a spouse is difficult, whether you've never married, have lost your spouse, or have been divorced. **Loneliness is painful and can confuse you into thinking that you are a loser or an outcast, but that's not necessarily so.**

Our reading today is a Psalm of David, Psalm 139:1-5, which remind us of our close relationship with God.

O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.

Oh, I'm thankful for the closeness of God.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that You love us and that You watch over us every day of our lives, and that You are so close. We're grateful Father for Your promises and for Your blessings. Help us to love You and to serve You always. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Loneliness makes people feel sad and empty, cut off from others and needing companionship. Loneliness typically includes anxiety because people need to connect with family. We all need a companion who shares our lives and dreams, who walks through life with us, who experiences our joys and sorrows, and who shares our responsibilities and decisions. Connecting with another is more than living in the same house. One can feel lonely even when surrounded by other people.

The Bible tells of several people who lived lonely lives. Joseph, the son of Jacob, grew up in a large family; but his half-brothers hated him so much they sold him into slavery. At a young age, he lived as a stranger in a foreign land. His master's wife tried repeatedly to seduce him. When he refused her advances, she falsely accused him. He spent years in prison, separated from home and family. I can only imagine how Joseph must have felt. However, Genesis 39:21 says, "But the Lord was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer." Whatever Joseph endured, the Lord was with him. The Lord protected and provided for him and the things that he needed, even if his family was far away. Joseph was able to endure his hardships and keep his faith, because he knew the Lord was with him.

Jesus walked alone much of his life. He never had a wife and children but gave Himself completely to His mission of saving people from sin. Jesus had people around Him all His life. He grew up in a household with several brothers and sisters. He chose and trained twelve disciples who accompanied Him in His ministry. Jesus often stayed in the home of friends like Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Multitudes followed Him wherever He went. In spite of all this, Jesus faced much of life alone and did what no other person could do. He went to the cross alone. While praying at Gethsemane, His disciples fell asleep and left Him praying alone. His familiar friend, Judas, betrayed Him; Peter denied Him three times; and the rest scattered.

Like Joseph, Jesus found strength in His relationship with His Father in heaven. Jesus said, "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32). Jesus found the strength He needed in the Father, and so can you. Peter revealed how Jesus dealt with lonely suffering. First Peter 2:21-23 says, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, He didn't revile in return; and while suffering, He uttered no threats, but He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." When Jesus suffered most, He put His life and His soul into the hands of the heavenly Father. There He found comfort, there He found support.

Jesus began and ended His ordeal on the cross with prayer. Of course, He prayed for three hours while in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord Jesus prayed, "Father, if You're willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). While Jesus wanted to escape the cross on one hand, He wanted to do the will of the Father on the other. His desire to do the Father's will was greater than His desire to escape death. His true prayer to do the Father's will came from His love for the Father. Hebrews 5:7 says, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence." In His pain and sorrow, the Father heard His obedient prayer.

As they crucified the Lord Jesus, He was praying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they're doing" (Luke 23:34). Instead of focusing on their cruelty and the pain of large nails going through His hands and feet, Jesus thought about their souls, praying for them to be forgiven. We often focus on the evil in life, but Jesus focused on saving people from their sins.

Matthew 27:46 says, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ... 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Did you know these words are a quotation of Psalm 22:1. Psalm 22 is the most Messianic of David's psalms. It begins with a feeling of forsakenness, and speaks of wagging heads in verse 7, predicts the piercing of His hands and feet in verse 16, and speaks of the dividing of His garments in verse 18. But verse 27 speaks of all the nations turning to and worshiping the Lord. Could it be the Lord Jesus was reciting this Scripture to Himself and reassuring Himself that His death was not in vain?

Jesus kept entrusting Himself to the Father. Luke 23:46, "Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this He breathed his last." From the beginning to the end of His excruciating ordeal, Jesus found His strength in prayer. His example will help us in our times of pain and loneliness. First Peter 4:19 says, "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right." When you're lonely, entrust your soul to a Creator who won't let you down.

The apostle Paul provides another example for those who live as singles. While some may think he may have been married at some point, he says in his writings that he is unmarried. He says in , "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am" (1 Corinthians 7:8). He realized that not everyone had the gift to live the single life, and yet felt there were many advantages to living as a single.

Paul knew having a family would get in the way of his ministry, and he wanted to be free of any responsibility except to Christ. Paul often faced great difficulties. They put Paul in prison five times, and he spent five years of his life incarcerated. Paul wrote in Philippians while he was imprisoned, but Paul wasn't depressed or defeated, even though he was imprisoned. He spoke of the joy in that letter, the letter of Philippians, more than twenty times.

Paul learned the secret of being content in whatever circumstances he found himself. In context, Philippians 4 is speaking of Paul's financial wellbeing; but this is likely true of other circumstances of his life. He explains, "I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I've learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:12-13). Paul found God's grace was sufficient for him, even when he was suffering. Having God in his life made up for all the things that he didn't have.

Paul also understood what it's like to face death alone. God spared Paul's life the first time he appeared before Caesar. Paul said, "At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:16 -8).

When you're lonely, think on the promises of God. They'll reassure you. The Lord God said in Psalm 68:5-6, "A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation. God makes a home for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, Only the rebellious dwell in a parched land." If you have God with you, you have far more than many of the largest families. The Lord Jesus promised, "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The Lord Jesus dwells with His people. I love the Lord's promise, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we'll come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). The Father and the Lord Jesus make their home with those who love Him enough to obey Him.

The Lord God promised Joshua, "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (Joshua 1 :5). This promise is repeated to Christians in Hebrews 13:5. David said in Psalm 37:25, "I've been young, and now am old, and yet I've not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread." What's true in practical matters is also true in our relationship with the Lord. David said, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the LORD will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). When no one else was there for David, God was.

God said to the people of Jerusalem through the prophet Isaiah, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Well even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hand; Your walls are continually before Me" (Isaiah 49:15-16). God thinks continually of His children. He thinks of their physical welfare, their spiritual strength, and their emotional needs. The Lord Jesus reminds us that "your Father knows what you need before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8). The Lord is a blessing to all of us.

David kept himself aware of the presence of God. Our reading today came from Psalm 139:1 -5. Where he said, "O LORD, you've searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me." David describes how intimately God knew him. God knew everything about him, how he acted, how he talked, even what he thought. David said in verse 6, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it."

God had known David from his conception in his mother's womb. In Psalm 139:13-14 David said, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." No one knows us as intimately as God. He's watched over us every day of our lives, He's heard every prayer we've ever made, He has known every thought we've ever had, and provided every need. You can't go anywhere outside the presence of God.

How does all this help? Because you too can say, "I'm not alone; the Lord is with me." You too can say that His grace is sufficient for you. You too can say that He will never leave you or forsake you. Oh, friend, give yourself to God, and He will be with you.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father, we're thankful for Your loving presence that surrounds us at all times, that You hem us in before and behind, that You lay Your hand upon us. Father, help us to be devoted to You and to Your will always. In Jesus' name, Amen."

The outspoken atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who went to court to take prayer out of the schools, clearly sensed something was missing from her life. She wrote in her diary in 1977 that she had failed as a wife, as a parent, and as a politician. In half a dozen places in her diaries O'Hair wrote, "Somebody, somewhere, love me." We all long to be loved and to love. There's one place in your heart and soul that no one can fill but God. The most lonely person in the world isn't the one who lacks family but the one who has rejected God.

Some let their love for God fade as years pass. The Lord Jesus said to the lukewarm church at Laodicea, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; and if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him (or dine with him), and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20). The Lord Jesus wants to restore the warm and intimate fellowship that He once had with the church in Laodicea, and He wants to have that same intimacy with you. Do you have a close, loving, peaceful relationship with the Lord?

Draw close to God; make Him part of your life every day! Become a Christian by placing your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And He will never lie to you and He wants to save you from your sins. So, out of love, repent of your sins by forsaking them and by following the Lord. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ, and united with Him. Oh, we're crucified with Christ in baptism so that our body of sin might be done away with according to Romans 6:3-7. God washes away our sins in baptism according to Acts 22:16. Become a Christian today, and have God in your life.

We do ask that you focus on God, and do that by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. There's probably a church of Christ that's near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one.

When You Face God

You have an appointment that you cannot avoid. One day you will face God in the Judgment. Today, we're exploring what it means to face God. We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Since the time is coming when all of us will face God and give an account for the lives that we've lived, it's necessary that we take time to see what the Scriptures say about our accountability toward God. Hebrews 4:12-13 says, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Facing the God who already knows our hearts and our lives is not an easy thing. Thankfully, through Jesus we have hope.

Many people think, like Adam and Eve, that they can do as they please. They think of God as one from whom they can hide their deeds. After they ate from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve discovered they were naked and hid from God in the bushes. God knew what happened, just as He knows all things. Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating of the fruit that was forbidden to them.

People today still think of God, and how He doesn't see what we do. God reported the sins of the wicked in Psalm 50:21, "These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will improve you and state the case in order before your eyes." God knows and will confront us one day.

Our reading today comes from Genesis 3:8-13. This passage comes right after Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you've done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

That's the beginning of sin.

Let's pray together. "Oh Father, we are thankful for these stories of ancient times, that help us to understand what has happened in the past and what can happen in our lives. Help us Heavenly Father to be true to You, and true to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

Many in our culture think little or nothing about the day when they're going to face God. They live their lives on their own terms according to their own rules. Many dismiss God from their minds and their morals. Some have no need for God, and they'll be surprised one day to realize God is still God. He's still our Creator and our Judge. There will be no atheists on Judgment Day. No one can replace God, and no one can dethrone Him. No one can change His laws. He alone is the One who rules heaven and earth.

It's astonishing what ways people justify themselves rather than admit anything they've done is sinful. Solomon remarked, "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Some blame others. Adam blamed Eve and God for giving her to him, and Eve blamed the serpent. Some blame God for making them the way they are and never consider their own responsibility.

James 1:13-16 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I'm being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he's carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren." If we sin, it's not because God led us into sin; but we sin because we gave into our desires that carry us away into sin and spiritual death. We're responsible for what we do.

Some lie to themselves and try to relabel their sins as something harmless and innocent, but they aren't fooling God. There is an old riddle which asks, "How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg?" Some might say, "five" but the answer is four. You see, calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg. You can't change God's truth or God's morals no matter how hard you try.

Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." People don't like facing the reality of sin. They would rather ignore it or act like their sin doesn't and didn't happen. Proverbs 30:12 says, "There are those who are clean in their own eyes but are not washed of their filth." They think what they are doing is acceptable in our culture, and so it must be acceptable to God; but God sees them as they really are. Proverbs 30:20 says, "This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and she wipes her mouth, and says, 'I have done no wrong.'"

The Lord Himself said, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Because of this, Jeremiah the prophet said, "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Hebrews 9:27 reminds us that "it's appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." God one day will judge each of us according to the way that we've lived. Paul told the Stoics and Epicureans in Athens in Acts 17:30-31, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Many think God's love means He doesn't judge anymore. They see God in an unbalanced way. While God is the God of grace, He is still the Holy God, who is just and punishes sin and lawlessness. We can't intentionally live any way we please and then presume upon the grace of God. God's grace came at the ultimate price of the precious blood of Jesus Christ; and we have no right to cheapen or take that grace for granted. Will God judge us today? Yes He will! He distinguishes the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the unrighteous.

Paul spoke to those who refused to repent, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you're storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will repay each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, He will give eternal life; but to those who are self-serving and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, He will give wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of mankind who does evil, for the Jew first and also for the Greek, but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who does what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:5-11).

The apostle Peter also speaks of God's judgment and distinguishes the righteous from the unrighteous. Second Peter 2:4-10 says, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved

Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.”

There will be a Judgment Day for us all. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive compensation for his deeds done through the body, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad.” How we think, how we talk, how we treat others, how we observe God's morals, and whether we follow the Lord will matter on that day. On that day, we'll come face to face with the Lord and have to look him in the eye. Romans 14:12 says, “So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.” God Himself is our final judge, and He will judge us by the words of Jesus Christ. His words will judge us on the last day (John 12:48).

We may consider the things that we say and do are like the culture around us, but being like the world hardly makes us right with the living God. Just because our culture believes something doesn't mean that God approves of it. Just because the masses approve or participate in some activity doesn't mean God approves of that activity. God has determined what is right and wrong, good and evil, and righteous and unrighteous. God doesn't change His mind simply because something becomes fashionable and acceptable in society. Because the Lord Jesus will judge us on the last day, the Lord Jesus will have the final say. Since Jesus knows everything about us, we won't be able to overrule or even to object to His verdict. The Day of Judgment will come on the last day when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven and appears in the sky. That day every person will be raised from the dead, and the earth and its works will be destroyed.

We don't want to be like the five foolish virgins who failed to prepare for the coming of the Master. The Lord Jesus tells about what it will be like on that day of reckoning, “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they didn't take extra oil with them; but the prudent ones took oil in flasks with their lamps. Now while the groom was delaying, they all became drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there finally was a shout: ‘Behold, the groom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. But the foolish virgins said to the prudent ones, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’ However, the prudent ones answered, ‘No, there most certainly would not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the groom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Yet later, the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ Be on the alert then, because you do not know the day nor the hour” (Matthew 25:1-13).

My friend, no one can prepare for you. You have to do that on your own. You may know many religious people, even some righteous people; but that doesn't make you righteous or prepared. Jesus doesn't accept everyone; He accepts those who obey God's will. The Lord Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matthew 7:21-23).

The book of Revelation gives us a picture of that last day when every person will stand before the white throne of the Lord Jesus. “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence

earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds" (Revelation 20:11-12). You'll notice that the present heaven and earth have fled away; Revelation 21:1 says they have "passed away"; that is they are no more. You'll also notice that we're judged by what is written in the books. What books? The books found in the Bible; they are God's laws and commandments. They can't be changed, and no one can rewrite them on the last day. What God, through Jesus and through the Holy Spirit, said in the first century will stand as the whole truth on the last day. God's word is unchangeable.

Will you be ready to meet the Lord or will you hide from Him? Can you say, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus"; or will you have dread and fear the day that Jesus comes again?

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father, we pray that You will help us to be ready on that day, help us to be obedient to Your will, to love You and to Serve You, and to put away the sins from our lives. Give us strength and hope, and give us faith, and give us love, so that we might love You and love one another. All these things we pray in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen."

God has called you to an appointment that you cannot avoid. You'll face God one day to give an account for what you've done. Solomon wrote, "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of your young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things" (Ecclesiastes 11:9). Wouldn't it be sad to have lived in rebellion to God only to find out God is real and He means what He says. He wants you, and He wants to make you His child and to bless you forever and ever. Don't turn from Him and lose your soul.

We often sing an invitation song: "Careless soul, why will you linger, Wand'ring from the fold of God? Hear you not the invitation? Oh, prepare to meet thy God. Careless soul, oh, heed the warning, For your life will soon be gone; Oh, how sad to face the judgment, Unprepared to meet thy God."

There is a need to be prepared, and we do this by faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. A saving faith is one built upon Scripture. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). Faith leads us to repent of our sins, denying ourselves so that we can serve Christ. Saving faith is always obedient, so we receive the word and are baptized into Christ, just as they did in Acts 2:38-41. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water that unites us to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and frees us from sin according to Acts 22:16 and Colossians 2:12-13.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody 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 gladly help you find one.

Will God Hear My Prayer?

Will God hear my prayer? Does God really care about my problems? Today, we're exploring when God hears our prayers. We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible opens a marvelous treasure chest of wisdom that prospers our lives and our souls. God's Word enriches us in a thousand ways and touches every aspect of our lives. Solomon told his son, "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver, And her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast." (Proverbs 3:13-18).

A recent report said that 84 percent of Americans prayed within the last week. Even six percent of atheists say they pray every single day. We sometimes wonder, "Will God hear my prayer? Will praying make a difference?" Prayer is an amazing gift of God; we should rejoice over it and be thankful. But like any gift, it only works if we practice it; and only works if we practice it according to the will of God. God answers prayer, but God doesn't grant every request. Some prayers violate the will of God; and some prayers come from selfish or disobedient hearts. Prayer's not like rubbing a lamp and having a genie grant you wishes. We pray to a holy and righteous God, who wants us to be holy and righteous.

Our reading today comes from the book of James 1:5-8. Here he tells us what we can do when we're facing difficult times.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Let's pray. "O Father, we're thankful that we have Your word to teach us and to help us. Father, we're thankful that we can pray to you and pour our hearts out whenever we have difficult circumstances. Father, we pray that You'll help each of us, and give us strength and give us wisdom. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Each of us faces times when we need to pray. We need God's help. We want to know God will hear us and grant our requests. Certainly God hears the prayers of those who love and follow Him. Jesus said, "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For all the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33). First, when you pray, you're praying to your Heavenly Father. Second, your Father knows what you need and has heard your every prayer. Third, He promises to supply your needs if you put Him first in your life.

The Father loves us and deals with us as His children. Jesus said, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend,

yet because of his persistence he'll get up and give him as much as he needs" (11:5-8). God is better than that. He gives to us out of love, not because we are a bother.

Paul, with lots of experience, said, "my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). God the Father wants to bless His children and supply their needs, just as any father might. God invites us to pray. We don't have to apologize to God for taking up His time. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:7-11).

Jesus wants us to feel confident in prayer. Some think that when they sin God doesn't want to be around them, so they withdraw from God and they quit praying. That's exactly what God doesn't want. He wants us to cease from sin, yes; but He also wants us to come boldly to Him for help. Hebrews 4:14-16 says: "Since then we have a great high priest who's passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Rather than avoiding God, let's draw near to get the help we need for temptation.

It matters how we live, whether we believe, and whether we seek first the kingdom, if we wish the Father to hear our prayers. First Peter 3:12 says, "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." Ephesians 3:20 says that God "is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." Many shut God out and wonder why He doesn't hear their prayers. You can't live a wicked life and expect God to bless you. If that's the case, whose prayer will God not hear?

James 4:1-3 says, "What's the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and you don't have; so you commit murder. You're envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You don't have because you don't ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." If I'm praying to God, and what I'm praying is selfish and wasteful, I shouldn't expect God to help me do what's wrong. Think about what you're praying and how the Father thinks. Some people's prayers are so self-centered and hurtful to others that God wants no part of it.

When you pray, remember that God treats you the way that you treat others. Jesus taught us to pray "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Jesus explains, "That if you forgive others their trespasses, then your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). How can you expect God to forgive you, if you aren't willing to forgive others? If we're children of God, we ought to have the same tenderness and compassion for others that God has shown to us.

Proverbs 15:29 says, "The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous." God allows us to change our ways, so we can have a loving relationship with Him. Nobody is perfect, though we strive to serve God. God distinguishes the person who sets his heart to do right but sometimes fails and the person who lives his life to serve his own desires but sometimes does good. We can't be

perfectly sinless, but there's a difference between endeavoring to do right and having no intention of following God. One is one way, the other is the other. The Father will not hear the person who has turned his heart away.

Peter speaks to husbands, "husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). A man who mistreats his wife or children cannot expect to draw close to God and be heard. God will treat him in the same way that he has treated his family. Don't let a lack of kindness toward those whom you love put a barrier between you and God.

Faith is necessary. The Hebrew writer said, "without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). If we seek God's help and blessing, we need to believe that He will keep His promises and will bless us. James said, "But let him ask in faith, without doubting, for the one who doubts is like the wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he'll receive anything from the Lord; because he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8).

Repentance also comes into this discussion. Some folks think God is supposed to be at their beck and call, but they continue their sinful behaviors. They think God will overlook all their sins. Some folks think they can negotiate with God. "I'll change Lord, if you just grant me this wish." God's no fool. You can't bargain with repentance. Some people repent just long enough to get what they want and what they're after, but their change is temporary and not real. You can fool yourself, but you can't fool God with a negotiation. If you want God to hear you, then first change your ways.

Isaiah 59:1-2 says, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear 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." You can't hang on to sin and expect to have the ear of God listening to you. The Psalmist wrote, "If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (Psalm 66:18). Here the Psalmist is clarifying for us the point. You can't let sin be cherished in your heart and find room for God too. He won't hear your heart's request, if your heart's real desire is sin.

Continuing in sin and failing to repent builds up a wall. Tear down the wall. God said, "When you spread out your hands [that is, when you pray], I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's case. 'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord: 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken'" (Isaiah 1:15-20).

God has always wanted His people to pray and to love Him, but people don't show love to Him when they live in sin and ignore His teaching. You can't love the world and love God at the same time. First John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride in possessions or life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing

away along with all its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." We must keep Him close and live righteously if we wish to have God's blessing.

I'm thankful for the opportunity and the privilege of prayer. God not only allows us to pray, He asks us to pray. He wants to hear our hearts and to grant our requests. In John 14:13-14 Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." We can approach God because we have a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. God hears us when we speak in His name.

I don't know how close you are to God, but I know prayer is a precious privilege. To be able to speak our hearts to God and to know that He will hear us is a great blessing. I don't want to build some kind of a barrier between God and me by neglecting God or ignoring God, or by sin. I want my life to say to God, "God I love You and I serve only You." I don't want to disappoint my Heavenly Father by participating in moral compromise or error. I want to stay close to Him in this life, so that I can live with Him forever in the next life. My friend, are you close to God? Are you living in such a way that you draw near to Him, or have you pushed Him away? If you want God close to you, then you move close to Him.

Let us pray. "Heavenly Father, we are so grateful to You that You hear our prayers, and that our prayers matter to You. Father, help us to live in such a way that we glorify Your name and that we do Your will. Father, we pray that You will grant our requests and help us through the difficult times. Be with us, give us wisdom, give us strength, and give us courage so that we may live in such a way to glorify You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible; and we speak to God through prayer. Prayer is powerful, because God is powerful. Our Father wants to hear our prayers and bless us. We should tell God "I love you," "thank you," and "forgive me" everyday. When our hearts are burdened, the Lord can help us bear our burdens. When we're weak, He can strengthen us. When we're fearful, He can reassure us. Prayer is a blessing. Let's maintain a close, peaceful, loving relationship with God. Jesus said, "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). Prayer keeps us from sin and keeps us close to God.

First Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." This passage isn't speaking about praying every minute. It's saying, "Keep on praying. Keep loving Him, thanking Him, praising Him, and asking Him for help." Live with love and obey the teaching of Christ. Keep worshiping at church. Keep serving others. Don't start even a single day without prayer, and you'll find life is richer and fuller. Time with God is time very well spent.

To become God's child, believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." When we're baptized into Christ by being immersed in water, God unites us with Christ (Romans 6:3-7) and washes away our sins (Acts 22:16). In baptism, He adds us to His church (Acts 2:41-47) and causes us to be born again (John 3:5). In baptism you begin your walk as a follower of Christ and a child of God. Can you think of anything better than having Christ as Lord and Savior?

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.