

## "Your Life, Your Soul"

If people were attending your funeral today, how would your friends describe you? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Today we're asking people to examine their ways. Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for the Lord's Way. And when this life is over, we'll look back at our lives wondering what we've done that mattered. Did we please the Lord or did we please ourselves? Were we a blessing to the people around us or did we bring them trouble? Many spend their entire lives pursuing empty paths, but the one who is faithful to God pursues righteousness. What have you done with your life? And what will people remember about you? Thanks for spending time with us today; we'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

Many Christians are content to be Christians in name only. They want to wear the name, but they aren't willing to take their faith seriously. My friend Steve Higginbotham recently wrote about some misplaced desires of people today. He said: "We want a Savior, but we don't want a Lord. We want a crown, but we don't want a cross. We want a harvest, but we don't want to sow any seed. We want to go to Heaven, but we don't want to go to church. We want to grow spiritually, but we don't want to feed on his word. We want Hollywood to 'clean up its act,' but we don't want to stop watching. We want the right to pray, even in school, but we don't want to pray. We want the Ten Commandments posted, but we don't want to live by their moral principles. We want to love God, but we don't want to abhor sin. We want to die to the death of the righteous, but we don't want to abandon the lifestyle of the sinner." Steve is right. People want to go to heaven, but they don't live as Christians should. What about you?

How are you living? If you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. If you live outside the United States, we have materials free online, and you can stream this program on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org) or on You Tube.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Psalm 15, and we'll consider the lives we've led.

Our scripture reading today, a psalm of David, Psalm 15. And David asks an important question and gives an answer.

O LORD, who may abide in Your tent?  
Who may dwell on Your holy hill?  
He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness,  
And speaks truth in his heart.  
He does not slander with his tongue,  
Nor does evil to his neighbor,  
Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;  
In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,  
But who honors those who fear the LORD;  
He swears to his own hurt and does not change;  
He does not put out his money at interest,

Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.  
He who does these things will never be shaken.

Oh, such good encouraging things for us to live up to. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to be people who can dwell on Your holy hill. People who love others, who are a blessing to others. Help us Heavenly Father always to love You, to love those who around us and to do what is right. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Bible gives some interesting assessments of people's lives. For instance, Genesis 5:24 says that, "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." We learn from Hebrews 11:5, "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God." Walking with God pleases Him. James 2:23 calls Abraham "the friend of God." Are you God's friend? God said in Acts 13 verse 22, "I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will." Are you doing all the will of God?

Then, there is the evil King Jehoram who killed all his brothers with the sword. When he died, 2 Chronicles 21:20 says of him that, "And he departed with no one's regret. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings." In the New Testament, we find Judas Iscariot, who stole money from the moneybag and betrayed the Lord Jesus with a kiss. We also find Demas. Though Demas had once been faithful, 2 Timothy 4 and verse 10 says, "For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica." Were you once faithful, and have you fallen away from the Lord?

Scripture says we'll be judged according to our works, whether good or bad. Jesus promised in Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done." The Lord Jesus said in Revelation 2:23, "And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works." How we live matters. Our works tell what's in our hearts, and the Lord will judge us by whether we have served Him or not.

The first thing God looks for in people is whether they believe. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And 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." Now a faithful Christian believes the gospel and knows the love of God. His faith is not merely a belief but is a way of life. He takes Whom he believes and what God says seriously.

There are different levels of faith. Some believe intellectually. They say God exists and His way is right, but their belief doesn't influence their behavior. They are believers in their minds but not in their lives. God wants our faith to be deeper than that. He wants us to get involved with our faith. Our faith should affect how we live and what we value. We should do more than merely believe Christ Jesus rose from the dead. We must obey Him, because we realize that He will raise us up one day. We must treat Jesus as Lord.

And unless our faith matters enough for us to practice it, it's worthless. We must act on what we believe. We must move from a dead faith to a living one. James 2 verses 14 to 16 says, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." We want a living, active faith that makes a difference in our lives and blesses the lives of others.

Someone asks well, “Phil, aren’t we saved by faith alone?” Well while it’s true we are saved by faith, to talk about salvation by “faith alone” is to talk about a dead faith. James 2:18 to 19 says, “But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” Saying that you have faith but if you’re unwilling to demonstrate that faith makes you no better than the demons who believe so strongly that they shudder at the thought of God. What are you doing with your faith?

James 2:20 to 24 says, “Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.”

When God tested Abraham, Abraham demonstrated his faith by offering up his son Isaac upon the altar. Of course, God did not allow him to slay his son; God was testing him to see if he would obey Him. Many years earlier, God told Abraham to leave his home and family and go to a strange place. Hebrews 11 and verse 8 says, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” You see faith obeys! A dead faith talks a good game, but a living faith obeys the Lord.

John 3:36 says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” God never speaks approvingly of a faith that will not obey. The disobedient can expect one day to see the wrath of God. A believer who will not obey will not enjoy God’s grace. 2 Thessalonians 1:7 to 9 speaks of “when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” God loves everyone, but His grace and favor only goes to those who love and obey Him.

Because of this, we must move away from being spectators to being participants. Some say, “I love Jesus, but I don’t want to be in the church.” Friends, the church is the family of Jesus, the body of Christ. If you love and want to be like Jesus, then you must come to be part of His church. The church was and is His idea and His family. Faith in Christ and worshiping with the church is not like going to a basketball game where we can sit in the stands and watch others on the floor. No God expects each of us to sing, to pray, to listen to the Bible, to commune with Him in the Lord’s Supper, and to support the work of the church. Living for God means I’m busy producing fruit every day, working for His cause, carrying my cross, sharing the gospel, and blessing the lives of other people. The Lord Jesus said in John 15 verse 8, “By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” Don’t just talk your faith, live it out every day.

Ralph Grant in his book, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, told the story of the Franks during the Dark Ages. When the gospel came to Northern Europe, large numbers of savage tribes of the Franks were being baptized. Now these people had been warriors for generations, so teaching them the ways of peace was difficult. They weren’t sure they wanted to give up their savage fighting, so they went into the waters of baptism holding their battle-axes up out of the water. They would say, “This hand has never been baptized!” Well they were willing to make a commitment to Christ in some things, but they wouldn’t give up their fighting.

Of course, one is either completely baptized, or he's not really baptized at all. There's no such thing as baptizing "everything but the hand." God only accepts us on His terms; and He will not accept anything less than a total commitment. God doesn't want some parts of you; He wants all of you. And this is one reason baptism into Christ is an immersion of the entire person in water; baptism is a total commitment to God. Romans 6 and verse 4 says, "Therefore we have 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." The whole person is buried and raised with Christ, the whole person has all his sins forgiven, and the whole person rises from the water to walk in newness of life.

We sing the hymn, "All to Jesus I Surrender." Have you truly surrendered all to the Lord Jesus? Are you totally committed? Listening to the way some Christians talk, I wonder if their tongues were ever baptized? Some continually gossip, and others continually complain. Some tell dirty jokes, while others take the name of the Lord in vain. Some Christians tell half-truths, and others slander their friends behind their back. Taming the tongue is difficult, but becoming a Christian means keeping a close guard on our mouths. James sadly said in James 3 and verse 10, "from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way."

The selfish and evil thinking of some Christians, the way they think, you'd wonder if their minds were ever baptized? Some are full of greed, while others are full of pride and selfish ambition. They despise others and step on others to get an advantage. Becoming a Christian means putting Christ first, others second, and ourselves last. Philippians 2 verses 3 to 4 says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Now considering what some people watch on television or at the movies, you'd wonder if their eyes and ears were baptized? Some Christians have grown callous to sinful words, to nudity, to violence, to anger, and to all kinds of immoral behavior. Years ago people expected the film and television industry to maintain moral standards. And if a movie contained ungodly language or ungodly behavior, people walked out and told the theater managers that they didn't care for such indecent movies. Today, one can hardly go to a movie or watch a television program that doesn't contain indecent language or behavior. What are you letting into your heart?

You see how some people treat others, makes you wonder if their hearts were baptized? Some have forgotten how to be kind. Others simply don't know how to be patient with others or to forgive. They seem to have forgotten the words of our Lord in Matthew 7:12, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Many people live with anger, fear, or hatred in their hearts. Paul said in Ephesians 4:31 to 32, "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." How are you living? Do you follow God?

Let's pray. Heavenly Father help us to give ourselves more completely to You. To do Your will, to love You and to love others. And to live with kindness in our hearts. In Jesus name, Amen.

God sets the bar high for those who would follow Him. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 14:26 and 27 that, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." God expects us to love Him more than anything else, and to put Him first.

Someone asks well, "Phil, aren't we saved by grace?" Yes, we're saved by the grace of God; it's a precious gift that can't be earned. We can't obligate God to save us. But because the gift is precious, God examines our lives to see whether or not we have genuinely received the gift or took it for granted. The Lord Jesus out of love paid a very high price to save you from sin. And so it matters to Him how you receive that gift. If you care so little for Him that you ignore His teaching and live as you please, why should it surprise you if the gift that you neglected was lost? The Lord will judge you according to your response to His grace. Have you served the Lord?

Now to enjoy the gift of salvation, we must lovingly respond to His grace by faith, by repenting of our sins, by confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and by being baptized into Christ. When you love the Lord, you won't argue with the Lord about what to do to obey His gospel. Faith and obedience are two sides of the same coin. We obey because we believe, and our obedience reveals our faith. Acts 2:38 still says, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Won't you do that today?

We hope today's study about our lives has stirred you to examine yourself and 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now if you live outside the United States you can download our material or watch the program on our website, [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org), or on YouTube. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we won't ask you for money or put you on a list.

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