

Seeking God

Lesson 5: How To Seek God



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

Seeking God

Lesson 5: How To Seek God

Learn the importance of God's word in seeking God, how to become a Christian, and how to live as a Christian

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW97

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Lesson 5:

How To Seek God

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Seeking God is central to living a life that is pleasing to God. During this series of lessons, we have explored some fundamental points concerning the God we should be seeking, why we should be seeking after this God, what it means to seek God, and considered examples of some who have sought God. Now, before proceeding in this study, we need to spend our time focusing on how it is that we seek after God.

We have already seen that we should “seek those things that are above” (Colossians 3:1). This involves setting our minds on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2). We must, in the language of Jesus in Matthew 6:33, “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” But, how do we know how to accomplish any of this?

Let’s take a moment to learn from something said in Deuteronomy 4. Moses has been instructing the Israelite nation that was preparing to go into the land of Canaan to be obedient to God. And, he prophetically warned them that there would be consequences if they failed to do so. For instance, in verses 25-28, Moses said that their descendants

would fail to serve God and choose to do evil in God’s sight so as to provoke Him to anger that would result in God punishing the people of Israel. Then, listen to verses 29-31: “But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.”

In this time when God would punish those who would turn away from Him, Moses said that they would choose to seek God and would find Him if they chose to seek Him with their whole hearts and souls. But, notice that they would only be able to seek the Lord in this way if they would turn to Him and *obey His voice!* Yes, God is a merciful God who offers forgiveness through Jesus Christ to those who will listen to Him!

Therefore, as you consider how it is that you should seek after God during the course of your life, you need to put your focus on listening to God. For, it is simply unreasonable to believe that you can seek God by living your life in just any way you choose to live. Instead, if you truly desire to seek after God, you will want to listen to what He has said He expects from you! So, this lesson will focus on learning how God tells us to seek after Him. We will be considering how God has revealed His will to mankind, how to become one of His followers, and how to live as one of His followers.

Seek God Through Obeying His Word

How is it that mankind can even know the will of the Almighty God so as to seek Him through it? To begin, let’s revisit something Paul told the people of Athens in Acts 17:30-31. In God’s full authority as Lord of heaven and earth, He will “judge the world in righteousness” by Jesus Christ one Day. And, in His authority, He also can use whatever

standard/criteria He chooses. Fortunately for mankind, God has revealed that standard to us before the Judgment so that we can live our lives according to it and be prepared for that Day! This standard/criteria is simply His word/His will.

God has instructed us through His written word

But, how has the God who is Lord of heaven and earth chosen to reveal His will to mankind? Certainly, He has communicated His will to mankind in various ways throughout time. Sometimes, He directly spoke to individuals (i.e. like He did with Adam, Noah, Abraham, etc.). Sometimes, He communicated with individuals through dreams (i.e. like He did with Joseph, Peter, etc.). Sometimes, He communicated His will through the Holy Spirit directing individuals (i.e. like He did to the prophets and apostles – who would tell others the things they had been told). At one time, He communicated His will to the nation of Israel through the Law He revealed to Moses. At one time, He communicated His will to people through Jesus Christ living on earth and directly teaching the people He interacted with. The Bible contains many examples of how God has revealed His will throughout the millennia.

Yet, the question for us remains: How is it that God communicates His will to mankind today? There is a problem. As Romans 11:34 asks, “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?” Isaiah 55:8-9 says, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’” So, we simply could not know what God’s will is unless He has (in some way) made it known to us.

Let’s consider the picture of the Day God will judge the world given in Revelation 20:11-15, as it reveals something about the standard God will use to judge us. “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the

things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Notice that everyone who will stand before the God and Judge of this world will be judged according to what they have done, by the things which were written “in the books.” These books are *not* the Book of Life that is identified in this text. Instead, the Book of Life is God’s book that records all the names of those who will spend eternity in Heaven. Rather, the books all people will be judged by are the books that contain the words of God. For instance, Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges Him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

But, how can we know these words? Yes, God has communicated His will to mankind in various ways (as previously demonstrated). But, according to Hebrews 1:1-2, God has “spoken to us by His Son.” Jesus said that the things He spoke were according to the authority of the Father (John 12:49 and Matthew 28:18). Yet, Jesus does not live on the earth so as to directly communicate with us any longer. How, then, does God’s Son speak to us today? Jesus told His apostles that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to them after He departed from this earth. And, the Holy Spirit would teach them all things, even bringing them to remembrance of what Jesus had said while He was with them (see John 14:25-26). In addition, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would guide them “into all truth” – including truths they could not grasp while He was with them (John 16:12-13). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would glorify Him by taking what was His and declaring it to them (John 16:14).

The Holy Spirit was uniquely qualified to accomplish this work. 1 Corinthians 2:9 says that “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” Then, verse 10 says, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep

things of God.” Listen to verse 16: “For ‘who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” So, it is through the words revealed by God’s Holy Spirit that we can know what is in the mind of Christ – who speaks with the authority given to Him by the Father! Ephesians 3:3-5 demonstrates that we can understand God’s plan of salvation whenever we read the words that have been revealed by the Holy Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets (who recorded that message in written form).

These words are recorded in the pages of the Bible. Specifically, the words we have been given to obey today are the words that are recorded in the pages of the New Testament. Jesus Christ nailed the old Law (contained in the pages of the Old Testament) to His cross (see Colossians 2:14). So, we live under His new and better law that is recorded in the pages of the New Testament. This is God’s perfect law that identifies how we can be made free from sin (James 1:25)!

The need for obedience

Having had the instructions of our holy God given to us, the only way we can be pleasing to Him and seek Him is if we will obey His instructions (more than just believing that He exists and that His Son died for us). 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” That is, all the words recorded in the pages of the Bible are from God. They are not merely the ideas or suggestions of man. They are from the eternally wise God who will judge the world in righteousness one Day by Jesus Christ. And, because He is a fair and righteous God, they are the words that are profitable for “doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” That is, these words from God tell us exactly what we need to believe, how we need to correct our lives, and what He expects us to do in order to please and seek Him! You will find no other book that perfectly leads you to live for God besides the Bible!

Surely, then, we must obey these words in order to live in the way that pleases God. The Scriptures repeatedly demonstrate this to be so. For instance, Hebrews 5:9 says that Jesus Christ “became

the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” As we discussed in lesson 3, hearing the words God has instructed is not sufficient to pleasing God. We must be “doers of the word” (James 1:22)! In fact, recall what we learned in lesson 2 from 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9. Paul states that those who “do not know God” and “those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” are the ones who will experience God’s vengeance and be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

What is obedience?

Yes, obedience to God’s word (as revealed in the pages of the Bible) is absolutely essential to seeking God. But, what exactly does true obedience look like? As we have considered in another lesson, 1 John 5:3 says that the love of God is to “keep His commandments” and that His “commandments are not burdensome.”

So, we must do what He tells us to do – in the way He tells us to do it. And, we must not consider doing His commandments a burdensome task. Therefore, just going through the motions of serving God without finding joy in doing what He says is not pleasing to God or true and faithful obedience. Furthermore, it is not obedience whenever you fail to do what God has said, even though you may be sincere about what you have done. True obedience requires both of these things.

Hold fast the pattern!

Before moving on in this study, let’s take a moment to consider the subject of Bible authority. As we studied in lesson 1, God is Lord (Master) of heaven and earth. Therefore, He possesses all authority. Now, we have been learning how that God (the Father) gave His Son (Jesus Christ) all authority. Then, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent to speak the things of Jesus. He did so whenever He inspired the apostles and prophets to write the words recorded in the Bible. Therefore, the Bible is a book that truly does contain the words of God and is fully authoritative. In fact, as I have mentioned, it is the only book that perfectly leads us into the righteous ways of God.

We must learn the need, then, to have Bible authority for everything that we do in life. Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Since Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18), everything we do and everything we say must be done in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord! To do everything in His name is to do everything by His authority. So, if we choose to do something the Scriptures do not approve (i.e. that is outside of the authority Jesus Christ has given), we cannot please God. This applies to how we live our individual lives, to how we conduct ourselves in our families, to how we conduct ourselves in business, to how local churches function and operate, etc.

But, how can we do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? I believe 2 Timothy 1:13 offers the answer. In this God-inspired text, Paul told Timothy, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” The words that have been written in the pages of the Bible are a pattern – a pattern for making lives that please God. Therefore, these words are “sound” (incorrupt, healthy, pure). There is no element of evil in them at all that will work to destroy your soul. Recognizing this, we must choose to hold fast to that pattern of sound words in every of area of life and refuse to act in a way that does not have Bible authority! The only way we can have Bible authority for a thing is to have a direct command, an approved example, or a necessary inference given within the pattern of sound words (contained in the New Testament Scriptures).

Becoming Christians

We cannot seek God without His word. We simply would not know where to begin. Thanks be to God that He has revealed His perfect word to us. Now, we must be obedient to His written word in order to be saved from our sins. But, just what does God’s word tell us to do in order to be forgiven of the sins we have all committed (as we discussed in lesson 2)? Let’s spend some time now investigating

the pattern of sound words for becoming followers of God (i.e. Christians).

Hear God’s word

It is only through a study of God’s word that you can understand what God has done for you and what God has instructed you to do to be saved! You can read Romans 10:13-18 and observe the importance of hearing the word of God – as it demonstrates that each individual must hear the word of God in order to be saved.

In Matthew 17:5, God (the Father) instructed that we hear (or, listen) to His Son (Jesus Christ). Today, as we have discussed, we do this by hearing the words recorded in the pages of the New Testament. In Acts 18:8, the Corinthians heard the word of God which was preached to them and, therefore, were able to believe and take the necessary steps of obedience (baptism is specifically identified in the passage).

Notice Romans 10:17: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Hearing the word of God leads an individual to faith (which we discussed as a necessary element involved in seeking God in lesson 3). You will not develop saving faith by hearing the doctrines or opinions of man. It is only developed through hearing God’s word! Therefore, you need to carefully evaluate God’s word, studying it daily (Acts 17:10-11), so that you can know what God says you must do!

Think about it. If you don’t hear what God has done for you so that you can be saved or what He has commanded you to do in order to be saved, how can you be saved? The simple fact is that you won’t be! You must hear God’s word. However, please understand that you do not need to hear everything that the Bible teaches in order to begin developing saving faith. Yet, you do need to hear about God, the consequences of sin, the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and the gospel’s plan of salvation. It is only *after* you hear the Bible’s teachings about these things that you can obey God and have your sins forgiven!

Believe

Recall that Hebrews 11:6 plainly states that is “impossible” to please God without faith. We must both believe that God exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. Jesus also said, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). We must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who came to earth, lived as man, died the horrible death on the cross, was buried in the tomb, and rose from the dead – so that we could be saved from our sins!

As we discussed in lesson 3, Hebrews 11:1 teaches us that faith “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is the proper trust that we place in God’s reality and in the reality of His promises. True faith begins with the mental acknowledgement of certain things as being true – but it does not end there! As we have studied, Hebrews 11 offers examples of faith. I encourage you to read this chapter that discusses faith and notice that it shows an active, obedient faith (not merely mental acknowledgement regarding certain facts as being true)! For instance, the faith of Abel caused him to offer an acceptable sacrifice. The faith of Noah caused him to prepare an ark. The faith of Abraham caused him to obey God’s command to offer his only son upon an altar. So it goes throughout the chapter. Faith leads to action, which results in being pleasing to God!

Yet, many religious organizations teach that faith (a mental conviction of certain facts) is the *only* requirement for salvation (i.e. “Just believe in Jesus”). However, we are ***not*** interested in what various “church doctrines” teach. Rather, we are concerned about what God teaches! James 2:14-26 teaches some important things applicable to the false concept of “faith only.” We’ll explore this passage in greater detail in lesson 6. So, for now, just consider the statement made in verse 24: “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” Clearly, the doctrine of “faith only” is not Bible doctrine and will not help us seek God (as we’ll explore further in lesson 6). There are other things that God has required of us.

Although “faith only” is not sufficient for salvation, God has absolutely declared faith to be essential. And, particularly, John 8:24 demonstrated that we must mentally acknowledge the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Without this belief, we cannot be forgiven of our sins. But, we have not met all of God’s requirements for salvation at this point.

Repent

Jesus clearly stated the importance and necessity of repentance in Luke 13:3, 5: “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish...I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” In response to the question, “what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37), Peter identified two things in Acts 2:38: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” One of these is repentance. Therefore, repentance is necessary in order to be forgiven of your sins.

Repentance is an acknowledgement of your past sins and a determination to put off those sins. In repentance, you are imitating Christ’s death. You are not dying physically or being physically crucified; but, you are putting the old man of sin to death! In putting the old man of sin to death, you are making way for the new man (which is patterned after God’s holiness)! Colossians 3:1-17 is helpful to understand this concept. The life of a Christian is a changed life – with changed affections (Colossians 3:1-4). The old man of sin has been put to death (a list of some things that are to be put to death is given in Colossians 3:5-11). Then, the new man is put on, being renewed in knowledge, according to the image of the one who created Him (a list of some things that are to be put on is given in Colossians 3:12-17).

Furthermore, Acts 17:30-31 answers the question, “who must repent?”: “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” Quite simply, God has commanded that all mankind everywhere must repent! Everyone who has

sinned must turn from that sin and live for God in order to be pleasing to Him! Remember, sin has separated us from the God we should be seeking. Therefore, we must turn away from our sin in order that we can live in the way God approves!

Confess Christ

Jesus says that those who will confess Him before men, He will confess before His Father; and those who deny Him before men, He will deny before His Father (Matthew 10:32-33). Paul also says that a confession is necessary for salvation in Romans 10:9-10: “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

This confession is *not* a confession of your sins. Rather, this is a confession that acknowledges your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9). The Ethiopian eunuch provides us with an example of such a confession. Notice how this man made this confession after he was taught the gospel of Jesus Christ – and before he was baptized. Acts 8:35-37 says, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’”

Be baptized

While most religious organizations do not teach that baptism is *necessary* (required) for salvation, the word of God teaches that it is! Please consider each of the following passages for yourself. Do not allow any preconceived ideas or other religious teaching to hinder your understanding of these passages.

In Mark 16:16, Jesus clearly couples belief and baptism with salvation. He said: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Ask yourself the question, “Who does Jesus say will be saved?”

Clearly, it is the one who believes and is baptized. However, simply failing to believe will lead to your eternal condemnation.

In Acts 2:37-38, Peter responds to the question of his audience by stating that both repentance and baptism are necessary in order to have sins forgiven: “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Ask yourself, “Can I be saved without having my sins forgiven?” If not, what does Peter say must be done in order to have your sins forgiven? He clearly says that repentance and baptism are necessary.

In 1 Peter 3:20-21, Peter says that baptism saves us (just as Noah and his family were saved by water): “who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype [corresponding to the example of Noah] which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Did you catch that? Peter said that baptism “now saves us.” Don’t let anyone tell you that baptism does *not* save you!

In Galatians 3:26-27, Paul says that we are baptized into Christ: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Why is it important to be “in Christ”? Romans 6:23 and 2 Timothy 2:10 both show that salvation is located “in Christ.” Now, you must consider that Galatians 3:27 teaches that baptism is what puts us in Christ – where salvation is! So, how can you be saved without being baptized into Christ? You simply cannot be!

In Acts 22:16, Saul (later known as the apostle Paul) was told to be baptized and that this would accomplish the washing away of his sins: “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Again, ask yourself, “Can I be

saved without having my sins washed away?” According to the things we studied in lesson 4, the answer is a resounding, “No!” So, if you cannot be saved while you are still in your sins, you must have them “washed away” (forgiven). God says (here in Acts 22:16) that baptism is necessary for that to happen! Also, God says that baptism is involved in “calling on the name of the Lord” (which is also said to be necessary for salvation in Romans 10:13).

But, what does God’s word teach us about the method/mode of baptism? “Baptism” is practiced in various ways in the religious world. Some immerse. Some sprinkle or pour water over the head of the individual. But, what is the truth? The word God’s Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the New Testament to use whenever He instructed “baptism” means to “immerse” – and does not mean sprinkling or pouring! Then, not only does the word that is used teach us about the acceptable mode/method of baptism; but, the Bible also contains additional passages that help us understand its meaning.

Matthew 3:16 says that Jesus “came up immediately from the water” after He was baptized. Acts 8:38-39 shows the preacher (Philip) and the student (the Ethiopian eunuch) both going down into the water, Philip baptizing the eunuch, and both coming up from the water: “So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

Romans 6:3-4 plainly says that we are buried in baptism: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Certainly burial is a complete covering, not a sprinkling or pouring!

So, only immersion is acceptable to accomplish God’s command known as “baptism.” The practices of sprinkling or pouring water over someone’s head simply does not fulfill God’s command to be baptized (immersed)! In being

baptized, the Scriptures teach that you are forgiven of your sins, put on Christ, and are saved. If you have not been baptized in this way or for these reasons, you have not fulfilled God’s command to be baptized.

Living As Christians

After being obedient to the things that God has commanded (as we have discussed), you become a child of God (a Christian). You can rejoice because your sins have been forgiven (Acts 8:39). You have now been reconciled to God and have gained access to all the spiritual blessings that are in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). Additionally, you have been added to the church of Christ – the body of the saved (see Acts 2:37-47). But, your responsibilities to seeking God through His word do not end at this point. Instead, you have been given the responsibility to live faithfully to Jesus Christ throughout your earthly life in order to receive the eternal home with God in Heaven (see Revelation 2:10). Therefore, take just a moment to consider what it means to live as a Christian.

Newness of life

Our lives (as Christians) must be transformed lives. Listen again to Romans 6:3-4. “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Though we once lived for sin and unrighteousness, we now live new lives for God. Therefore, we must (in the language of Colossians 3), put to death the sinful things we have been involved in. Whenever we repented, we determined to turn away from them. Now, we must produce the fruits of repentance – a life that no longer lives for those same sinful things. Instead, we must only be living our lives in order to do things God approves.

Continued obedience

In all areas of our lives, we must be searching diligently to hold fast to God's word as a pattern. We must look to His word to transform our thoughts, our words, and our actions. We must have a burning desire to get away from everything that is evil and cling closely to everything that is good. And, the only way that we can accomplish this is if we put everything we do, think, and say to the test. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, "Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." The standard for all things to be tested by must be God's pattern (His word)!

And, once again, we do not do this grudgingly. Instead, we do this joyfully (as we discussed from 1 John 5:3). We should gladly live our lives for the one who gave Himself for us so that we could be saved eternally (see 2 Corinthians 5:14-15)! Recall (from lesson 2), that Jesus Christ did not die for us so that we could continue living for our sins. Rather, He died for us so that He could "redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14)! Therefore, we must search the Scriptures diligently and make zealous application of the things we read.

Local church membership

While there are many specifics involved in living as a Christian (much of the New Testament is devoted to this subject), we should also consider the importance of being a member of a local church of Christ. Whenever an individual becomes a Christian (by obeying the commandments we have already discussed), God automatically adds that individual to the church of Christ (see Acts 2). However, His word also teaches the importance of being a member of a local church of Christ that follows the pattern of sound words in the pages of the New Testament.

As you read the book of Acts and the letters that were written to Christians throughout the New Testament, you should observe the fact that there were many local churches of Christ (Romans 16:16). These local churches were composed of individual Christians who had joined themselves together for the purpose of working and worshiping together in a

local geographic area. As a Christian, God wants you to join yourself (if possible) to a local church of Christ that faithfully follows His pattern. He designed the local church to be a base of fellowship and strength that is greater than the individual Christian. Through the local church, there is encouragement offered to Christians that helps them continue to live a life of faithfulness to God, there is a collective work that is done to teach others the gospel of Jesus Christ, and there is benevolent help offered to Christians who are in need. I encourage you to search the Scriptures and discover even more about the pattern God has revealed concerning the role of the local church and how it benefits the Christian!

Conclusion

Please recognize that the God we will be judged by has revealed His will to us. We can learn about His will by reading the words the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and prophets to write (i.e. found in the pages of the New Testament). And, these are the only words that lead us to live lives that are fully pleasing to God.

So, have you been obedient to God's word? Have you become a Christian by hearing His word, believing in Jesus Christ, repenting of your sins, confessing Jesus Christ, and being immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins? If not, you are not seeking God. Then, if you have obeyed these commandments of God, are you continuing to live a life of faithful obedience? If not, you have stopped seeking God. Please choose today that you will seek God by being obedient to the instructions of God in His word!

Study Questions

What can you learn about seeking God from Deuteronomy 4:29-31?

1. Seek God Through Obeying His Word

How has God communicated with mankind in the past – and how does He communicate with us today?

Why do you need to obey God?

What is true obedience?

What is the importance of having Bible authority for everything you do in life?

2. Becoming Christians

Is hearing God's Word necessary for salvation?
What does hearing the Word of God lead to?

Is faith necessary for salvation? What is faith? Is "faith only" sufficient for salvation?

Is repentance necessary for salvation? What is repentance?

Is a confession necessary for salvation? What confession must be made?

Is baptism necessary for salvation? What is baptism?

3. Living As Christians

Should your life be different after becoming a Christian than it was prior to becoming a Christian? Explain.

Do you have a responsibility to continue to be obedient to God now that you are a Christian?

What is a local church – and why is it important to be a member of a local church of Christ that is faithful to God?