

# What Are You Seeking in Your Life?

## By Billy Ingram

[worship set plays]

Ron Hafer:

Let's look to that Maker in prayer, shall we? Lord Jesus, thank you, uh, that you, uh, clearly taught us in your Word, uh, what you expect, and what we can expect when we live in obedience to you. You're the one who taught us to ask that we would receive, to seek and we would find, to knock and that door would be opened to us. Lord Jesus, you're the one who told us, hitherto have you asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. Thank you, Lord God, that you're a God, a hands-on God. Thank you that you cared enough to send the Lord Jesus from the glories of heaven so that we could be called your children. Thank you, Lord God, that we do not have to ask for the Holy Spirit, that he's here. We feel him, we desire him to work and move and change our hearts and minds. And may we, may we be open and uh, moldable and changeable. Join me, please, as we pray together, the prayer that the Lord Jesus taught his disciples, saying, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. I thought uh, it would be nice if uh, our chapel chair join me this morning, we're often confused. People often say, are you Ron Hafer? He says, no we're, we, we work together. This is Andy Kim, the chapel chair. He implored me that he might say a word regarding this evening, and then introduce the speaker this morning. Actually, I asked him to do that. Come Andy Kim and do that this for us.

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[audience cheers and applauds]

Andy Kim:

Good morning. Well, who knows what's going on tonight? After Dark Night Chapels. Nine fifteen, Calvary Chapel. Tonight, we have a really cool, um, thing planned for you guys today, once, for, for the month, we plan it out like this. Once a month, Ben Shin speaks. He's our After Dark advisor. The other week we get an on campus professor, and then we get an off campus professor or a teacher, a pastor. And then we get this one, one time a, one time a month that we kind of get creative and our staff comes together and we try to do something unique. That'll encourage and edify the body, so this is that week. And we have testimonies tonight from, um, different people will be sharing tonight. So we look forward to seeing you, and uh, welcome with me Dr. Billy Ingram as he shares with us today.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Billy Ingram:

Good morning.

Audience:

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Good morning.

Ingram:

How's everyone, this morning? You're doing well? All right. The pope, Billy Graham and Oral Roberts were in a three way plane crash over the Pacific Ocean. And they all died and went to heaven together. Oh, this is terrible! Exclaimed Peter. I know that you guys were, weren't summoned here and we're not quite ready for you, he said. Since we're not expecting you, your quarters are not ready. We can, we can't take you right now and we can't send you back. Then he got this great idea. He picked up the phone and called Lucifer. This is St. Pete. Hey. I've got three guys here, they're not ours, but we were expecting them. Uh, we got a fix. Can you take 'em for a couple of days and we'll get 'em after everything is ready? Reluctantly, the devil agreed. However, two days later, he called Saint Peter. Hey, Peter, this is Lucifer. You got to come get these guys. The pope is forgiving everybody, Billy Graham is saving everybody, and Oral Roberts has raised enough money to buy air conditioning.

[audience laughs]

The other day, I began talking about prayer. And it is something I love to do. How many of you have a relationship with the opposite sex? Close friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, blah, blah, blah, blah. How many of you wish one day you will have a relationship?

[audience laughs]

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There we go. All right. We're on the right track here. I'm sure that you will agree with me that you love conversing with that person, confiding in them, communicating to them, making sure that you're on the same page. Isn't that right? I'm sorry, isn't that right?

Audience:

Yes.

Ingram:

That's what prayer is. It is our privilege and our ability to be able to share with God what is on our hearts, what is on our minds, our fears, our hopes, our dreams, our aspirations. And I love the promise that Jesus gave to us in Matthew seven. Ask and it shall be given unto you. Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be open unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be open. Then Jesus asked the question, Of what man is there of you, whom, if his son shall ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? Jesus urged us to pray, and pray often, and to pray with genuineness and to pray with earnestness. And then pray, pray, pray and pray again. I love the Westminster Shorter Catechism, what it has to say about prayer. Prayer is an offering of our desires to God, for things agreeable to His will in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful

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acknowledgment of his mercies. One thing I discovered about prayer, and there is a reason why some prayers are not answered. You have any idea why? Not God's will? Is that, that correct? Is that why you sitting in the front? You get an A.

[laughter]

Some prayers are not God's will. Excellent. Someone else said something over here. Because of what? The motives. What about the motives? I hear a voice, but I can't see you. For selfish things. That's exactly right. James says, James four, we have not because we ask not. We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss. That's with the wrong motives, as the young lady just mentioned. What's your name? What is it, Jodelyn? Jo-delyn? That's a good name. We have not because we ask not, we ask and we receive not, because we ask amiss. We ask with the wrong motive. I've discovered every prayer that's prayed for the glory of God, God will answer. God will always glorify himself. Another secret, as was just mentioned a moment ago, by the young lady sitting in the front. We need to ascertain God's will. First John five fourteen says, this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know we have the petition we have desired of him. Isn't that wonderful? Well, anyway, it's wonderful to me. See, God will never reject our prayers, God will never ridicule our prayers, God will always answer our prayers, but his answers will always be according to his will and according to his way, according to his perfect wisdom and love. If he answered our prayers at the moment we preferred it, it probably would be disastrous for us, for we don't always know what we need. Jesus is saying, simply stated, ask,

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and go on asking. Keep it up. Don't lose heart. Don't quit. Prayer has to be equivalent to our heartbeat. It has to be a way of life for us.

Now, the second word that Jesus points out is, seek. Ask, and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find. Can I ask you a personal question? What is it that you are seeking out of life? What are you looking for? I mean, why are you here? Besides the fact that perhaps your parents went here. What is it that you're looking to gain out of your experience at Biola? What is it that you're seeking to gain from life itself? Listen. From start to finish, it's all about God. He must be the author and the finisher of our faith. He must be the sum total of our passion. Paul said in Philippians one twenty-one, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Nothing can be substituted for Christ as the center of our lives and have life then make sense. It just doesn't work. So many people who often give up after a few half-hearted attempts, and conclude that seeking God is not worth it because they didn't get what they want. God doesn't always give us what we want. In fact, sometimes, if we press long and hard enough, God will allow us to get what we want, but we may miss what we need. And I am fully confident that God knows best what we need, and we need to trust him for that. Don't give up in your efforts to seek God, continue to ask him for more knowledge and patience and wisdom and love and understanding. And he will give it to you. You remember David said to Solomon and Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy fathers and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, for the Lord searches hearts, and understandeth all the imagination of the thought. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee. But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. It is clear, as Jesus said, you remember in Matthew six thirty-three, but seek ye second, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things should be added unto you. Amen? Huh?

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Audience:

Amen. [laughs]

Ingram:

That's what I'm talking about. Hey, man, any time. Yeah [laughs] Close. Close. Did I say seek ye second? Okay, seek ye third, the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things shall be added unto you. How's that? Oh, he said, how 'bout first? You're right. You're correct. He said, seek ye first. First. The kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Now, Jesus in this passage gives us a reminder and a promise, listen, that God will take care of us, when we take care of our priorities, as you said, seeking Him first. Now, in Matthew six thirty-two and, thirty-one and thirty-two, Jesus says, take therefore no thought for tomorrow, or, saying what shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed for after all these things do the Gentiles seek. I love this, for your Heavenly Father knoweth what things you have need of. Now, listen, if you don't get anything else out of anything I say all this week, get this. God knows what you need. Since he knows, why you trippin?

[audience laughs]

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What are you worried about? Why are you allowing your heart to be filled with worry and fear and anxiety? The Psalmist said, be still and know. I am God. Wow. God already knows what you need. In fact, he knows what we need before we need it. And he will take care of us. George Mueller once said, the beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety. I remember, in fact, I was talking with Coach Holmquist just a moment ago. Can you believe that thirty-one years ago, he and I were roommates here at Biola. Thirty-one years ago. Yeah. I was a student at the University of Oregon. Tell me what you would do if you were in this situation. As a sophomore, we played against UCLA, and in those days they had Bill Walton, Jamaal Wilkes and a host of great players. And we had [unintelligible] Oregon, called the kamikaze kids. We came down to UCLA and crushed them, in fact, in the game, this particular game, I scored twenty-two points, blocked Bill Walton shot, told him to get back with that weak stuff.

[audience laughs]

It's on tape. It's on film. After the game. An agent, his name is Sam Gilbert, he comes up to me. He says, Young man, you're a rare talent. And if you stick it out at the University of Oregon, I can get you a multi-million-dollar contract. Now, what would you do if you have an offer of someone who walks into your life and says, I can get you millions at doing what you love to do? Then that same year, Jesus Christ says hello, hello. He gets my attention and I open my heart. My life is altered and changed radically. So much so that I feel like I should spend the rest of my life in ministry, but this guy says he can get me a multi-million-dollar contract if I just stay at Oregon. So, I remember we were on a, a basketball tour in Africa, particularly, then we were in

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Rhodesia, Solsbury, Rhodesia, now is Zimbabwe. Coach Holmquist was the coach. We were playing against their national teams and on a particular day I sprained my ankle. It was devastating because I couldn't compete any longer. And I remember I was in the bathroom near the top. Holmquist comes in. I said, you know what? I feel God is telling me to go to a Bible college, and start preparing for ministry. And he didn't say anything. He walked out of the room, he comes back, he says, I just called Coach Holmquist. Uh, Coach Lyons, who was the head coach then, and he said we'd be delighted to have you to come to Biola. I said, really? He said, yeah. He said, the problem is they have no more scholarships. And my heart just dropped. They were out of funds for the year. A few days later, he received a phone call, and there was an anonymous donor who had out of their own pocket, made an investment in me, put up the scholarship money for two years. I immediately made plans and transferred here to Biola, and once a month, this anonymous donor would send me a check for one hundred bucks. Man, I thought I was rich. Hundred bucks is a lot of money when you're a student at Biola, for me.

[audience laughs]

I wish I could get an Amen.

Audience:

Amen!

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Ingram:

Every man for the whole two years, and I had to meet these people, the long and the short is, Gordon and Lonnie Scott, who are proud supporters of Biola, especially their sports teams, were the ones who made the investment in me. They now are my wife and I's, the, our son's godparents. We have maintained a close relationship over the years, and I asked them recently, having no knowledge of me, not knowing me, why would you take a risk and invest all of that money in my life? They said, sometimes God providentially guides you to do certain things. And I was just beginning my walk with God and what a way for God to confirm to me I was on the right track by moving upon their hearts without me even knowing them and talking to them, and they making it possible for me to become a student here at Biola. And what I'm saying to you is that God knows what he's doing in your life. You may not know how it's all going to work out or even how you're gonna make all the financial ends meet. God does. In fact, the words of our Lord remind me of the twenty-third psalm. Anyone know it from memory. You know it from memory? Can you assist me with the message? Come on, please.

[audience cheers]

Give us your name, your year, and go for it.

Robert:

My name is Robert, people call me Bobo, and uh, I'm a freshman here.

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Ingram:

Go for it. Oh.

Robert:

Uh, the Lord is my shepherd, [to Ingram] that's the right one, right?

Ingram:

Yeah, that's right. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Robert:

Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he makes me to lie down in green pastures, uh.

Ingram:

He leadeth me.

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Robert:

It's right here. [laughs] You leadeth me beside still waters, you restoreth my soul. [laughs] Um.

Ingram:

He leadeth into the paths.

Robert:

He leads me into green pastures,

[audience and Ingram laugh]

I don't, I don't like the end of it. Um, yea, though I walk through the valley of shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. And surely I will walk through the ways of Lord all the days of my life. [pauses] Amen [laughs]

Ingram:

All right. [laughs and claps] All right, Bobo. I'll give you an A for effort. Good job. It's tough being put on the spot like that, but you, you handle it well. Appreciate it. The twenty-third psalm says, the Lord is my shepherd. That's, as someone said, perfect salvation. I shall not want. That's

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perfect satisfaction. He maketh me lie down in green pastures. That's perfect rest. He leadeth me besides the still waters. That's perfect peace. He restoreth my soul. That's perfect restoration. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. That's perfect guidance. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. That's perfect protection. That's one thing that we're trying to instill in our sons about God's protection and God's presence. Somehow, a student who works at our child development center, in an attempt to get the kids to go to sleep, told him, if you don't go to sleep, monsters are going to come get you. And up to that point, they were doing well in their lives. At two, I mean, they were handling life well. And then one night, Solomon, who's the younger by one minute, he comes running down the hall. Mommy, Mommy, there's monster. There's monsters. We're like, what? Monsters, where did you learn that? And the wonderful thing about kids, they they remember and they tell the truth. And they said, teacher Jerome told us that. Oh, man, we lit into him. He's lucky to still have a job.

[audience laughs]

But what we tell them now, no monsters, and they repeat after us, no monsters, Daddy. No monsters, Mommy. Jesus is in your heart. Jesus in my heart, Daddy. Jesus is at your school everyday. That's right. Jesus is at my school every day. And they believe that. And when we have them making that affirmation this morning, both of them say, yeah, Jerome told us about monsters and he's a liar.

[audience laughs]

We say, yeah, that's right. God protects us. He watches over us in every given situation. For thou art with me. That's perfect companionship. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. That's perfect comfort. Thou prepare us a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. That's perfect provision. Thou anointest my head with oil. That's perfect consecration. My cup runneth over. That's perfect joy. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Perfect care. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. That's perfect destiny. Story was told of a church service in which, in which the twenty-third psalm was read by two men. It was first read with great pomp and circumstance by a seminary student. Afterwards, an elderly gentleman stood up and read with a quivering voice, stumbling over words and by all appearance should not have been called upon to read. But when the elderly gentleman finished, unlike the student reader, to whom the audience did not respond, the old man's rendering left many in tears. Very puzzled, the seminary student privately asked the old man why he received such response when he concluded his reading. The old man replied, you read the text that you know well about the shepherd. But I know the shepherd. Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand. I and my Father, we are one. That's awesome. We have absolute certainty and security in Christ, our Good Shepherd.

In fact, he said in John ten ten, the thief comes not, but for to steal, to kill and to destroy. But I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly. The Psalmist when he said the Lord is my shepherd, in other words, was saying God is our source. And

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therefore I shall not want. Listen, when we seek to make Christ our shepherd, our provider, our protector, our companion, he will take care of all of the things that we have need of. Thank you for that Amen, I appreciate that. The Hebrew word for Shepherd means to feed, to be a friend to, to nourish, to care for, to watch over, to provide, to protect. It's our shepherd's responsibility to provide for every aspect of our lives. That's why Jesus said, just seek me and my kingdom, and I will take care of the things that you need in this temporal world. In Psalm eighty-four eleven, the Psalmist said, the Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Now let me make a suggestion to you. The best way to get to know the shepherd and his voice, lean forward I need tell you this. It's a secret between between us, all right? Best way to get to know the shepherd and his voice, come on, lean forward, need to tell you this. [whispers] Is through His word. Did you get that? Forever oh Lord, said the Psalmist. Thy word is settled in heaven. Psalm one-nineteen eighty-nine. Jesus said, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away. If you want to know the voice of God, if you want to seek and follow the shepherd, then bury yourself in this book. Search it. Seek it. Pursue it daily.

Because that is the source from which God is speaking. I have a serious problem with a lot of stuff that's going on in the body of Christ in Christendom today, especially on Christian television. It seems like anything goes, you just get on television, say anything, and, it goes. There's no accountability, there's no check and balance. There's, there's no criteria and standard. It seems to have been lost. And you and I must be masters and students of God's word, like the Bereans, who search the scriptures daily. And they were commended. Because they receive God's word with all readiness of mind, and they search the scriptures daily, whether those things

were so. In our culture, we have what's called soul food. Any of you ever tasted soul food? Oh, you're deprived, you're culturally deprived. Oh, my gosh. Soul food is a style of cooking that traditionally came from the south. It is very tantalizing, very tasty, and it is indigenous to our culture. But someone wrote something that I think is even more profound about soul food. Some love the taste of T-bone steak. Delicious, every bite. But there's nothing like the Word of God for my spiritual appetite. The word of God has milk and meat, and even ice cream and cake. Take a slice of the bread of life and coffee to keep us awake. Open your Bible and turn to the Psalms for David's famous buffet. You can drink from the wine of the word and still feel fine every day. There's not, there's enough of the word for everyone, and no one has to cheat. The word of God is a smorgasbord, so take all you're able to eat. Let's have a little long-suffering Job gives the recipe. Patience is the main ingredient, self-denial is the fee. Wrap that up in temperance, it may make much sense.

Cover that with contentment, then add some joy for strength. Let's have love for dessert, Jesus made his dish. Cream of joy and pieced together, sift down all selfishness, add some deeds of righteousness, enough to make it sweet, humility is the frosting that makes the dish complete. Or are you on a diet? 'Cause the race seems hard to run. For a weight -losing menu, try Hebrews twelve and one. Are you suffering from malnutrition and don't know what to do, your spiritual growth seems hindered? Try First Peter two and two. If every time you battle, the enemy always wins, try the Holy Ghost protein and some spiritual vitamins. God's word can feed millions and still have plenty left, because the word of God is soul food sent from the world's greatest chef.

[applause]

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You know, this is another one of those [unintelligible] messages. Lord willing, if the creek don't rise, we'll be back on Friday. Let's pray. Our Father and our God, we are grateful, indeed for this precious moment and investment in time that you've given to us to be able to share. And I pray that you would encourage each of us right where we are. That you would have a word and that would help us. Not only during spiritual emphasis week, but may the words we hear last us all our earthly days. And we thank you. For the glory of God in Jesus' name, Amen. Have a great day.

[applause]