

What Does God Require of Me?

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes that God requires perfection, which can only be attained through faith in Jesus Christ, leading to a purposeful and fulfilled life.

Topics: "Faith in Jesus", "God's Purpose"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes that God has a purpose for each individual, as revealed through nature and the complexities of creation, particularly the human eye. He discusses the emptiness of life without God and the necessity of discovering His plan for fulfillment. Smith explains that while God requires perfection, humanity inevitably falls short, but through faith in Jesus Christ, believers can receive forgiveness and a new nature that empowers them to strive towards God's ideal. He encourages listeners to open their hearts to Jesus, who stands ready to transform their lives and fulfill God's purpose. Ultimately, the sermon highlights the importance of relying on God's strength to navigate life's challenges.

Transcript

David said in Psalm 19:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. (v. 1-3)

God has made Himself known in nature. I have become conscious and aware of the fact of God's existence. All around me there is a witness. The voice of God is speaking to me and telling me of the fact of God - and it cannot be denied.

Recently, as I was looking through volume "E" of the encyclopedia, I started reading about the eye. I became fascinated with the facets of the human eye the muscles that control the movements, the methods by which the pictures are taken at 18 impulses per second and impressed upon this vitreous jelly substance, vibrating the message into the brain so that I get the images and the color distinguishing. I was amazed at the intricate nature and the complexities of the human eye. I was just overwhelmed!

The description of the human eye spoke to me about the wisdom and creative genius God has exercised in creating this human body. For me to think that the eye "just happened" is impossible. It's incredible design and function gave me a very powerful testimony of the fact that God does exist - the fact that God

made me, using infinite wisdom in the creation of the human body.

Man becomes conscious of God through the universe about him because "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psalm 19:2). The universe speaks to us of the fact of God's existence. But once I become conscious of the fact that God does exist, make that acknowledgment, and realize that God has created me as the highest order of His created beings that I can observe - then I begin to wonder about the purpose of creation.

"God, if You have created me above the animal kingdom, if You have created me with these capacities and these abilities that I possess, why did You create me?" What is God's purpose in creation? More specifically, what is the purpose for my life? Do I die like a dog to rot as a log? Or did God have a real reason when He formed man out of the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of God, and man became a living soul?

What Does God Require of Me?

Why did He create me? These questions become of primary concern and interest. Does life have a meaning or not? Is there a purpose for being or not? Is there a reason behind it all? Why does life seem to be so empty and unfulfilled?

Psychologists tell us that the neurotic problems of man begin with a basic frustration - that awareness, that inner consciousness that there must be something more to life than what he has yet experienced. Every man is conscious of an emptiness within his life. There must be a reason for living beyond what he has already discovered. There must be something more than just this! Like the song, "Is that all there is?" - or is there more?

In searching for the answer, I turn to the Word of God. It declares that God definitely does have a plan and a purpose for my life. God created me with a design and with a purpose in His mind. I'm not here by accident. My life isn't a "fortuitous concurrence of accidental circumstances." God has His hand on it all the way along. God has a reason, a plan, and a purpose for not only my life but for your life as an individual, for not only the overall population and mankind in general but for individuals as well. God has a plan and a purpose for you, and He created you with that plan and purpose in mind.

The greatest and the busiest life apart from God is empty. To try to live apart from God's plan is utter futility. King Solomon lived a satiated life. He describes it in Ecclesiastes 2:10, "Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them." He did absolutely everything that came into his heart and mind. He gluttoned himself, looking for something that would be fulfilling, that would meet that deep, inner need.

Solomon indulged himself with life. He sought for wisdom and applied himself until he became the wisest man who ever lived. But fulfillment didn't lie there. So he indulged himself with pleasure - but it wasn't there either. Then he began to pursue great works and possessions. He began to build monuments after his name - but fulfillment wasn't there. Then he sought it in wealth, but it wasn't there. He sought it in sex, but it wasn't there. After satiating himself with all these things - no fulfillment! He finally came to the conclusion, "Emptiness, emptiness, always emptiness, and vexation of spirit." He said, "I hate life." It was empty!

For my own good, for my own well being, for my own sake of sanity, I must discover God's plan and purpose for my life.

If you leave God out of your life, you're destined to end up with an emptiness within that cannot be filled by anything. You can try to fulfill yourself with other things, but they'll never fill the real need within your life. For my own good, for my own well-being, for my own sake of sanity, I must discover God's plan and God's purpose for my life. What does God want of me? Why did God make me? What does God require of me?

Ideal Requirement.

In Deuteronomy 18:13 we find that God requires this of me: Moses, in making a summation of the law, the commandments and the judgments of God, declared, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." What does God require of you? Perfection. Jesus said the same thing, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

What does it mean to be "perfect"? Let me ask you this: "What does it mean to be imperfect?" I understand that much better. The root word of "sin" means "missing the mark." The root word of "perfection" comes from "hitting the mark." To be perfect means to absolutely hit the mark, to be exactly what God wants you to be.

When I read in the Scriptures that God requires me to be "perfect" with the Lord my God. I immediately realize that I have failed. Standing in the consciousness of the ideal of Jesus Christ, I'm aware of the fact that I'm a sinner. I've missed the mark!

God requires that I be "perfect." Immediately, I realize that I've missed the mark. I'm a sinner. What do I do now?

When I stand with my fellowman, I get a different consciousness. I say, "I know I'm not perfect, but at least I'm not like they are!" I can always find someone whose face is a little dirtier than mine, and I take comfort in that fact. "I know mine isn't clean, but did you see how dirty his is!" We look at our lives the same way. "I know I'm not totally clean, but at least I'm not as dirty as someone else!"

Jesus said that in measuring yourself by men you do err (Luke 18:9-14). I must measure myself by the ideal in Jesus Christ - because if I want to know why God created man, if I want to know the purpose of the creation of man, I cannot look around and find it. I must look to Jesus Christ, for in Him I find God's ideal fulfilled. In Christ I find what God intended when He made man and placed him on the earth.

So, as I look at Jesus Christ and stand in His presence, the presence of this ideal, I realize and must confess that I'm a sinner. I've missed the mark. Even when I wanted to hit it and did all in my power to hit it, I still missed. I've failed God. I'm a sinner. I realize that immediately. I've failed in fulfilling the purpose of God for man. Is there any hope for me? Is there any chance for me - a sinful, failing man?

The word "gospel" means "good news." The Scripture says that the disciples went everywhere preaching the good news. What "good news"? The good news that there is help, there is hope - the good news of God's love for sinning, failing, rebellious man who is missing the mark. The "good news" is that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

God's ideal requirement for me is that I be perfect. I've failed. What about me now? What does God require of me now?

A man came to Jesus one day and asked, "What must we do to do the works of God?" (John 6:28). This is a question of perennial interest.

God's good news is that He has provided for our failure. God has accepted the responsibility of the guilt of my sin and my weaknesses. Jesus Christ took upon Himself my penalty - all my sin and all my missing of the mark. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus, taking my sin upon Himself, died in my place. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. God provided for my failure, for my sin.

What must I do to do the works of God?

Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29). That's simple enough, isn't it? God required perfection - I missed. What does He now require of me, the imperfect creature that I am? He requires that I just believe on His provision of love in Jesus Christ and that I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. This is the work of God: that you believe on Him whom He has sent. It's so easy that anyone can do it. "You mean I can do it right now?" You bet you can!

When I believe in Jesus Christ - accepting Him as my personal Lord and Saviour, realizing that He took my sin and my failures upon Himself and died for me, that redemption covers me as a personal individual, and I say, "O Jesus, I believe and accept and take You now as my Lord and Saviour" - what happens? Jesus comes into my life with a vital power. The Scripture says,

As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name (John 1:12).

Jesus comes into my life with power - a new dynamic, a new force. This new power begins to change me. He takes away my old nature bent toward sin and constantly missing the mark, and He gives me, instead, His new nature. He declared of Himself, "I do always those things that please Him [the Father]" (John 8:29).

Jesus Christ gives me the nature that helps me do those things that are pleasing to the Father - those things I couldn't do because of the weakness of my flesh, as I'm just a miserable failure. Christ now begins to give me the power to make those necessary changes so I can start hitting the mark even as God desires that I do.

God requires that I just believe on His provision of love in Jesus Christ - accepting Him as my personal Lord and Saviour!

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17).

Jesus imparts to me that new nature by which I can now become perfect and hit the mark!

Now, I have no intention of giving you the false concept that I'm saying, "I'm perfect." Far from it! Every time I say, "Lord, there's nothing to this one. Let me show You I can hit the mark," I miss it. Every time I try in myself and I'm not yielding to those forces of His Spirit within, I still miss the mark - and I'm still stupid

enough to keep trying in my own self. But I've found that every time I yield to the power and dynamic of His Spirit within my life, He puts me right on target. I can hit it with His power and help as He dwells within me. His nature is fulfilled within me and I become more and more like Jesus Christ.

Paul the apostle, writing 30 years after his conversion on the Damascus Road, said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (Philippians 3:12). This great saint is saying, "I'm not yet perfect. I'm still missing. Not as much - praise God for that!" There are those glorious times when I yield and I'm hitting the bulls-eye. God is teaching me the lessons day by day of my absolute need for Him and the absolute necessity of turning everything over to Him. God's ideal is being fulfilled in me through the power of Jesus Christ. My failures are now taken care of. I'm on the right path. By holding on to the hand of Jesus and receiving His power and strength, He is guiding me. Along with Paul, I'm pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).

"Be ye therefore perfect." Don't let that discourage you. Of course you can't be perfect! But yield yourself to those forces which will give you that new nature in Jesus Christ, enabling you to fulfill God's ideal requirement. God hasn't given up on His ideal requirement. As I hold on to the hand of Jesus Christ, one of these days I'll be standing right in the presence of God, the One who created the whole universe.

As God looks at me with His searching eyes from which nothing is hidden, I'll stand there in the bare nakedness of my being - but, praise God, He's going to see me in Christ absolutely perfect!

Why? Not because Chuck Smith is perfect, but because Jesus is able to keep me from falling and to present me faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24). If you believe on Jesus Christ and yield to the power of his Spirit within your life, one day He'll present you faultless before the throne of God.

If you believe and trust in Him, the work of God is already at work in your life helping you to hit the mark that He has set. If not, salvation is very simple. All you have to do is say, "Lord, I know I've failed, but take over and help me. Lord I turn it over to You." If you within your heart at this moment will do that. then He'll take over. He's just waiting.

Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). He's standing at your heart's door right now. He's knocking. He's waiting. Will you open it? As the Spirit of God is speaking to your heart, will you say, "Okay, Lord, I give up. Take over. Make me what You want me to be." It's just that easy. Won't you do it now?

You don't have to go forward at an altar call. You don't have to be singing. All you have to do is decide within your heart, "Lord, I turn it over to You." And He will give you that power to become a child of God.

Secret of Strength

Years ago, I taught my two boys how to use a bow. When I first taught them I bought 25-pound bows - bigger than they were actually capable of handling in the beginning, but I wanted them to learn with a powerful bow. So, as I took each boy out to teach him how to use a bow and arrow, I'd first show him the proper grip. I said, "Take hold of the bow with your left hand," and I'd stand behind him. As he held the bow, I took a firm hold of his left wrist.

Then I reached around him and said, "Take the draw string with your two fingers, notch the arrow, and begin to draw it back." I took hold of his right wrist and began to draw back, holding both his wrists with my

hands so that, when the bow had been drawn, we were able to hold it there and sight the target. Then I said, "Release!" - and he'd release his fingers.

Actually, my boys were able to draw that bow only because I had hold of their wrists. Their hands were made strong, really, by the fact that their father was holding on to their wrists and drawing for them.

When God's hand is upon you, you are strong. When God's hand is upon you, you're able to face any situation. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). With God's help I am sufficient - no matter what the trial or the testing or the problem may be. When God's hand is upon my life, I am strengthened and strong enough to meet any obstacle. That is always the secret of strength!

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