

# sermon study guide

April 24/25, 2021

## “How Then Shall We Live?” Part 1: Pursue God

Dr. Henry Schorr

### IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. During this ongoing pandemic, what activity are you grateful to be able to do? Why do you enjoy this activity?
2. When you find yourself getting distracted, anxious or overwhelmed during this pandemic, what helps you refocus and find strength?

### UP - PURSUE GOD

*Read Psalm 42:1; Hebrews 11:6, 2 Chronicles 16:9a*

3. From these Scriptures, what does it look like to ‘Pursue God’? What is our role in our friendship with God? What is God’s role?

*Read 2 Chronicles 7:14*

4. What are the four characteristics of somebody who is pursuing relationship with God? What might be the significance of the order of these actions? How do these serve as a guide today on how God wants us to have a relationship with Him?

### OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Read the ‘first love’ questions on *page 3* of this guide. In which of these areas are you strong? In which do you need to grow?
6. Pastor Henry said we should, “Plan like Jesus isn’t coming for many years yet, but live like He could be coming back today or tomorrow.” What will this look like in your life this week?

### THE WORD (NIV)

#### Psalm 42:1

As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.

#### Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

#### 2 Chronicles 16:9a

For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

#### 2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

### For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Pastor Henry said:

“I want to experience all that God has for me. I don’t want to go through the motions. I don’t want to give my life to lesser things. I don’t want to waste energy on petty arguments & secondary issues. I don’t want to live life half full. No there is ONLY one way I want to live out the rest of my life and that is all in with Jesus. Come what may regardless of the cost I join Paul in saying ‘For me to live is Christ!’”

Take a few moments in silence and finish this sentence for yourself: “For me to live is \_\_\_\_\_”

# sermon study summary

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A poll regarding the pandemic revealed that Albertans are of two opinions. Almost half are unhappy about too restrictive protocols, while the other half believes the protocols are too lax. Division and polarization are challenging leaders world-wide. Growing distrust in governments, confusion and frustration are escalating into impatience and nastiness. What or whom can we believe or trust? How should Christians live during this uncertainty? While some are conflating speculations with the end-times of Revelation, its main message is that Christ is coming again. We don't know when, but should be alert and ready, doing what the Bible tells us: loving God, one another and those needing the Lord. Regardless of circumstances, our focus remains unchanged: fixed on Jesus and His Word. The early Christians did the same despite intense persecution. God blessed them with answered prayers, healing and changed lives.

The Scriptures are clear: pursue a loving relationship that deepens our friendship with God. If we give our lives to lesser, temporary things, we miss the very reason for which we were created. God the Father, Son and Spirit created us to share their love. We are pursued by God even as we pursue Him. Once we entrust our life and eternity to Him, we will want to know Him better and grow closer to Him. Several pathways to friendship with God are:

1. Humility - The sin at the heart of our problems is pride, arrogance and self-sufficiency: thinking or living like we are god; or that we don't need God. Samuel defined humility as being 'small in your own eyes' (1 Samuel 15:17); awareness of our weakness apart from Christ, but knowing that we are neither worthless nor lacking ability. The rich young man went away when Jesus asked him to give up the god in his life. To see Jesus' power, we need to give Him our whole life.
2. Prayer - A prideful person trusts in his own abilities or believes he doesn't need God's help; or that God won't help him. Prayer is not a duty but God's invitation to communicate; regular daily prayer, small prayers throughout the day, or extended time alone to deepen the friendship. He hears, understands and responds to us with grace.
3. Seeking His face; not His hands. We long to be loved for who we are, not just for what we can do. He wants to accomplish His Kingdom purposes through us, offering us an exceedingly abundant life, instead of the lesser things we often seek. We need the faith to desire Him as if He were physically with us. One reward is having Him speak to us. God communicates with us in several ways:
  - a. Scripture: Greek has two meanings for the 'WORD': LOGOS, the word of God to everyone, the Bible; RHEMA, the word of God to you personally, a verse or phrase that leaps off the page at you
  - b. Daily life: God wants to be in the middle of everything that you do, not competing for your time or attention
  - c. By solitude, Bible reading, meditation, gathering with others to hear His word.
4. To love and serve Him with full devotion and remember our first love (Revelation 2:5) when He was our greatest treasure.
  - a. If we do not, consider how we have fallen
  - b. Repent; replace sinful acts with righteous acts
  - c. Do the things you did at first; be wise, but do not fear. For we know how it will end.

May our eyes be on Jesus as we grow closer to Him and, with Paul, may we say, "For me to live .... is Christ" (Philippians 1:21).

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### “First love” Questions (Revelation 2:4-5)

1. Does my delight in the Lord exceed my delight in someone or something else? (Mark 12:30)
2. Does my soul long for times of rich fellowship in God’s Word or in prayer? (Mark 12:30)
3. Do my thoughts during leisure moments consistently focus on the Lord rather than on everything and everyone else? (Mark 12:30)
4. Do I obey the Lord’s commands and do not give in to those things I know will displease Him? (John 14:15)
5. Do I willingly and cheerfully give of my time, talent, and treasure to God’s work and to the needs of others? (2 Corinthians 8:7)
6. Do I treat other people as I would the Lord? (John 13:34)
7. Do I view the commands of Christ as expressions of His love rather than as restrictions to my happiness? (John 14:21)
8. Do I strive for the Lord’s approval rather than acclaim of this world? (1 John 2:15)
9. Do I make Christ and His Word known rather than allowing fear of rejection or embarrassment to take hold of me? (Romans 1:16)
10. Do I forgive others for hurting or offending me? (1 John 4:20)