Program Study Guides

For

May 2016
Were You There?
Acts 2:22-24

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

A spiritual song asks, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” In our rush to __________ over who was responsible for the death of Christ, we often overlook our own __________, that Christ died for each of us. Were you there? I’ve always loved that old spiritual song, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” Nothing in life reaches into our __________ as does the story of Jesus Christ dying upon the cross. So many emotions just rise up inside of us.

When I consider the __________ of the scourging and the crucifixion, I become angry and ask “how could they treat an innocent, godly person like that?” When I consider Judas, I wonder how he could __________ the Lord Jesus. When I think of Pilate, I wonder why he did what was easy and wash his __________ of my Lord. Where was his __________? Then I look at myself. When I think of my Lord, I wonder how He could __________ me enough to bear such agony for my sins. I’m utterly ___________ that He loved me so much and was willing to redeem me with His blood. Yet, I’m ____________ for all my sins. I’m so sorry for all the evil things I’ve said or done, all the pain I’ve caused, and all the times I’ve failed to do the right thing. Going to the cross ___________ me and yet __________ me at the same time.

Our reading today comes from Acts of the Apostles 2:22-24. The four gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are ____________ by the Holy Spirit and describe the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. I have ___________ these four accounts from their words to give a fuller picture of what happened.

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, __________ by name, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country. They compelled this man to carry His __________. When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they ___________ him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when He tasted it, He would not drink it.

Two others, who were ____________, were led away to be put to death with Him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on His right and one on His left. Jesus said, “Father, __________ them, for they know not what they do.”

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His garments and __________ them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also His tunic. But the tunic was __________, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for My clothing they cast _______.” Then they sat down and kept watch over Him there.

Pilate also ________ an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was __________ the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews
said to Pilate, “Don’t write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man ________, I am King of the Jews.’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written I have written.’”

Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His __________ and the ________ whom he loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” From that hour the disciple took her to his own ________.

Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left. Those who passed by derided Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the _________ and rebuild it in three days, ________ yourself! If you’re the _______ of God, come down from the cross.”

So also the chief priests, and the scribes and elders, __________ him, saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him come down now from the cross, and we will ________ in Him. He trusts in God; let God __________ Him now, if He desires Him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” And the __________ who were crucified with Him also reviled Him in the same way.

One of the criminals who was hanged _________ at Him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not _________ God, since you’re under the same sentence of condemnation? We Indeed justly, for we are receiving the due ________ of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your __________.” He said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in __________.”

From the sixth hour, there was ____________ over all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you ____________ me?” Some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” One of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to Him to drink. The others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to ________ Him.”

Then Jesus calling out with a ________ voice said, “Father, into your hands I commit my ________.!” After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (that is to fulfill the Scripture), “I ________.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is ___________,” and he bowed his head and gave up His spirit.

When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, “Certainly this man was __________!” All the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned ________ beating their breasts.

Behold, the curtain, the ______ of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were ________, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with _______ and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

Since it was the day of Preparation, so that the bodies would not _________ on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be ________ and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the
other who had been crucifed with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already _______, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a ________, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne __________—and his testimony is true, and he knows that he’s telling the truth—that you also may __________. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not _______ of his bones will be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have ___________.”

The death of Jesus on the cross was _________ any execution ever known. He was innocent, but He bore the sins of the _______. While being nailed down, He prayed for His Father to _________ his executioners because they didn’t know what they were doing. The Lord Jesus, because He was __________, could see what we cannot see and He knew what we cannot know. He knew His Father’s ________ to offer His body as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, but they didn’t understand, they didn’t know. First Corinthians 2:8 says, “None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of _________."

When a person was executed in those days, the Romans posted the __________ against the man on the cross to __________ others not to commit the same crime. His accusers charged Him ________ with blasphemy in saying that He was the Messiah, the King of the Jews, yet they resented the sign that proclaimed Him King of the Jews. Pilate sought to __________ the Jews with the statement, but he spoke more of the ________ than he knew.

Read 1 Peter 2:21-25 where Peter speaks of the remarkable courage and inner strength of the Lord Jesus in His suffering.

There is no wonder the centurion who saw the crucifixion proclaimed, “Truly this man was __________.” Guilty men don’t act the way that Jesus acted. They don’t refuse a drink that would _______ them with the pain. They don’t ask _______ to forgive their executioners. They don’t keep _______ when being mocked. They don’t have the _____ being darkened and the _______ shaking. Jesus was indeed righteous and innocent.

Pilate said four times that he found no ________ in Jesus. Pilate offered Barabbas, hoping to _______ Jesus; but the high priests and the scribes incited the people to _________ on the crucifixion of Jesus. Pilate washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s _______; see to that yourselves.” All the people said, “His blood shall be on us and on our children!”

Pilate then took Jesus and _________ Him. The soldiers twisted together a ________ of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple ________ on Him; and they began to come up to Him and say, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and to give Him _______ in the face. Pilate came out again and said to the crowd, “Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find ______ guilt in Him.” Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold, the Man!” So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, “Crucify, crucify!” Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves and ________ Him, for I find no guilt in Him.” My friend, Jesus was no ___________ person. The Jews delivered Jesus up to Pilate, not because He was guilty, but because they were _____________ of Jesus.

At the sixth hour, the sun did become dark. The sun was not darkened for a _______ minutes, as it is in an eclipse. This was different; the sun was darkened for ________ full hours. The Bible says the earth shook so violently that it _______ the rocks. Only ________ could do this and God did it.
The veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom. The temple veils were _______ feet long, _______ feet wide, and _______ inches thick. They were so heavy that we’re told that 300 priests were needed just to move each one of them. The veil being torn or rent from top to bottom suggests that God’s own ______ had done it, He tore it in two. That veil ___________ the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Once the veil was ________, that place ceased to be separated or holy.

In His death, the Lord Jesus opened a ______ and ______ way to enter the holy of holies. Hebrews 9:12 says, “He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, thus securing an________ redemption.”

Jesus died a cruel, agonizing death for you and me because of His great _______. God was in Christ at the cross ____________ us redemption, forgiveness, and reconciliation. God showed his amazing and wonderful love in the __________ of the Lord Jesus upon the cross in order to reach into our hearts, to reach into our souls, and to bring us back into a right relationship with Him. He wanted His children to _______ Him. He wanted His children to be ________. He was willing to send His Son Jesus to die for us so that we could be right with Him, so that we could love Him, so that we could have a _______ with Him forever and ever. Nobody, nobody will ever love you like Jesus loves you. Nobody will ever die, and could die for you, the way Jesus died for you. Were you there when they crucified my Lord is a great _______ because if you’ve not seen what He did for you, I hope that one day you’ll take a look. That you’ll see the love and the glory and the grandeur of God’s _______ for us. My friend, you were there when they crucified the Lord. Oh, not physically, but in a ___________ sense. Remember that Jesus died for you to _______ you from sin and open a _______ to have a relationship with you. He died so you could be reconciled to God in a new ________, so that you could have a loving relationship with God the Father that would last _________. In that sense, you were in His heart and you were there.

God took the initiative to show His love in the hope that we would ____________ to it with a total commitment of our own love. We should love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls, all our minds, and all our strength (Mark 12:30). Committed love is ____________ to go to any length to comply with what the Lord desires.

We’re saved by God’s goodness and grace; and God’s offer of salvation through the cross extends to every person. We can’t ______ our salvation, but we can ______ God’s conditions for salvation. God wishes everyone would respond to His love, but He knows that not everyone will. We hope and pray that you will respond to Him.

Respond to the remarkable love of God with a love of your own. That love should lead you to _________ in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, _________ of your sins, _________ Jesus before others, and be ____________. Baptism into Christ is the immersion of a penitent believer in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). These things you must do if you wish to show your love for God and become a Christian.

If the cross means anything to you and if you realize that your sins were involved in sending Jesus to the cross, you won’t wait even one day until you come to the Lord in love and obedience. Won’t you do that today?
Forgiving Yourself
Psalm 32:1-5

Many Christians feel the nagging ________ of shame and guilt. They still ________ over sins that were long forgiven by God, but they don’t know how to forgive themselves of their transgression. In today’s study, we’re going to ________ how to forgive ourselves. A troubled person once came to me with a serious ____________.

The problem is not God's ability to forgive the ____________ believer, but in the believer’s willingness to forgive himself. God is willing to forgive, but some people don’t ________ forgiven, or feel saved. A person who has never forgiven himself feels ________ in his heart every day. When David sinned with Bathsheba, he ______________, “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (Psalm 51:3). David felt God’s hand upon him because of his ______. He felt that his sins were “a heavy burden” (Psalm 38:3-4). Your sins may be too heavy for you too, but there is a God-given ____________ to shame and guilt.

Our reading today comes from a Psalm of David, Psalm 32:1-5.

When a person sins, he sins against God, but many ignore the ________ that sin causes to the person who commits it. Sin is an __________ against God, but it’s also against one's self. The Bible personifies wisdom in Proverbs 8:36, “But he who sins against me __________ himself; all those who hate me love death.” Wisdom is God’s __________ will for our lives. When people go against God’s wisdom and His will, they live with the ________ of guilt and shame.

Read what the inspired apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 6:7-8. Sin is the cause of the ________ heartaches of mankind. A person can’t live for sin and self and expect to find the blessing of God.

The conscience is a God-given function of the __________. The conscience works as a ________ monitor praising us or condemning us. Read how the Bible describes this function in Romans 2:14-15. When a person sins, his conscience ________ his heart and that causes ________. This pricked conscience causes a person to be grieved at himself; he can lose all ________ for himself. The prodigal son no longer felt ________ to be called the son of his father. You might think the conscience is a bad thing, but it was the prodigal son’s conscience and the terrible effects of his sin that brought him to his ________. God didn’t give us a conscience to __________ us, but to keep us from doing what is wrong and to encourage us to do what is right. When we ________ to listen to our conscience, we end up hurting ourselves.

Everyone has a conscience, but not every conscience uses the Word of God as a ________ for what is right and wrong. Many people sin against God but don’t realize that what they did was
They rely on their own experience or their own judgment rather than take the time to read the Scriptures and understand what God says about the matter.

Other people allow sin to pervert the conscience. Read the Bible’s warning in Hebrews 3:12-13. I worry far more about the person whose conscience is past pollution than the person who feels great remorse for his sin. When a person gets past feeling remorse, it’s not likely that he will repent. If a person sees no need to repent or won’t repent, he likely won’t ever get reconciled with God.

Of all of God’s blessings, nothing is more precious than forgiveness. Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. Forgiveness is “forgetting against.” When God forgives, He no longer remembers our sins against us (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). As part of the new covenant, God promises, “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

David, by inspiration, wrote, “He (that is, God) does not deal with us according to our sins, nor according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remember our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:10-12). When God forgives, He no longer thinks of us in terms of our iniquities. He removed the offenses from His iniquities, but He keeps us close to His steadfast love.

Forgiveness removes the shame and guilt by blotting out the offenses and settling the matter once and for all by the grace of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:24). Forgiveness means putting to death the old man of sin (Romans 6:4-7) and making all things new (2 Corinthians 5:17). When you forgive yourself, you forget your sins against yourself. You no longer hold those sins against yourself, and you will be at peace with yourself.

You cannot forgive yourself until you have made a genuine repentance in your heart and life. That is, you must repent. Many people seek forgiveness but they never repent their sins behind. You’ll never find peace if you’re unwilling to repent. If you commit the same old sins over and over, you’ll keep on having the same trouble and bitterness over and over.

Read what the Bible says in Colossians 3:5-10.

Here are four things that you can do to forgive yourself. First, be sure that you have genuinely repented. Repentance is not only a turning from sin; it’s also a turning to God. The Thessalonians turned from idols to serve the living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). You’ll have a hard time forgiving yourself if you fail to turn your life up with God. The Lord Jesus warns us about giving up sin but not filling our lives with evil things. Read Matthew 12:43-45.
Second, to forgive yourself, focus your attention on what you have __________, not on what you were! The apostle Paul was __________ of terrible sins when he was Saul of Tarsus. He was guilty of violence, murder, slander, and blasphemy. He persecuted the church beyond measure and cast people into prison for their __________. In 1 Timothy 1:12-16 Paul said, “I thank him who has given me __________, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the ________ and ________ that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to ________ sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.”

Paul couldn’t change his past, but he didn’t __________ on the past. Paul said he was “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the ________ for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). He focused on what God was __________ in his life and what God wanted him to do. Knowing God’s forgiveness, he could put his ________ behind and focus on the will of God. He could say, “For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10).

A person who forgives himself can say, “I'm not what I _______ to be.” God is more interested in what you are __________ in Christ than in what you “used to be.” You can’t change the past, and it’s not necessary for you to do so to forgive yourself. What you can do is change yourself and your ________ toward the past by becoming the person God wishes you to be. In doing this realize that no one is ________ but God. When you start living for God, you no longer have to be ________ of your past. You can be ________ that you serve Christ.

Third, trust ________ rather than your feelings. Feelings reflect perceptions, but these feelings are not always ________ to reality. Feelings accurately reflect how we perceive things to be but they don’t always reflect reality. The brothers of Joseph ________ him to some slave traders, and Joseph went to Egypt. The brothers, however, ________ that a wild animal had killed Joseph and they dipped his coat of many colors in blood. The brothers ________ to their father, Jacob. Jacob refused to be comforted (Genesis 37:35). Jacob believed Joseph was ________ and he mourned, but Joseph wasn’t dead. Jacob believed the brothers’ report but he didn’t know the ________. Jacob was ________ and so were his feelings.

People often feel unforgiven, even when God __________ in the Bible to forgive. So ________ God, not your feelings. Trust the Bible to tell you the ________. God doesn’t ________. God can and He will keep His _________. The Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the ________ of sin.” But he also said, “So if the Son makes you ________, you will be free indeed” (John 8:34, 36).
Fourth, draw ________ to God. If you wish to be at peace with God, don’t ________ with the sins of the world. The Bible says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he’ll flee from you. Draw ________ to God and He’ll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:7-8). When God ________ in your heart and life, when you choose to draw _______ to God and resist the devil, you’ll find your life growing better and better.

The Bible says, “Therefore whoever wishes to be a _________ of the world makes himself an ________ of God.” The double-minded fellow who wants to be a friend to God and a friend to the world ________ finds peace or assurance. If you want a _______ conscience, “submit to God” (James 4:4). When you draw close to God and start resisting the devil, you’ll find the ________ to live a righteous and holy life. You’ll find that things that used to tempt you aren’t ____________ any more. You can forgive yourself, and God can ________ you.

People think they can get away with their sins, but there are always two persons who know how and when we have sinned no matter how ________ we make it. God knows and we know. David thought he had hidden his sin with Bathsheba, but it wasn’t hidden from his own ________. David said, “When I kept ________ about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night, Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I didn’t hide; I said, ‘I will ________ my transgressions to the LORD’; and You ___________ the guilt of my sin” (Psalm 32:3-5).

God forgives us so that we can forgive ___________. We can ______ ourselves of the old self and be ________ again. God can do away with our ________ of sin. When we get right with God, we find peace with God and we find peace with ourselves. Forgiveness takes place in the ________ of God; it’s a ______ of mercy. You can’t ________ it. Mercy takes place when God does something for us that we’re not ___________ of doing for ourselves. Your ____________, your forgiveness, is the gift of God.

But you have to __________ that gift. That means being honest with yourself and honest with God in ____________ the sin. To become a Christian, we must trust God and ________ in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must turn from sin and turn to God; that’s _____________. We must _________ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as our Lord before others; and we must be _________ in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water of a penitent believer. If you need to do these things, why not contact a nearby church of Christ and get your heart and your soul right with God.
What God Wants for You
Romans 8:31-39

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

As parents, Jackie and I wanted to give our children the very _______ that we could because we loved them. In the same way, our Father in Heaven wants to meet our ________ and to give us the best life possible. Only in Christ can we find the ___________ life; that’s what we’ll explore today.

When God, your Father, created you, He created you with ________ in His heart. God said to the nation of Israel, “…For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a __________ and a _______’” (Jeremiah 29:11). God has plans for our lives, too! He wants to ________ our lives and meet our needs. The Bible says, “Every good thing given and every perfect _______ is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow” (James 1:17).

All the physical blessings we enjoy, however, are not going to make up for what our ________ need. We’re spiritual beings with souls, and the physical things of this life will not __________ for the things that we need inside our hearts and souls. We need _____ in our lives. He’s the difference between wisdom and foolishness. He’s the difference between existing and an abundant life. He is the difference between chasing after the wind and living with meaning and purpose. God knows what is _______ for us and He wants to provide the things that we need most for our souls.

Our reading today comes from Paul’s letter to the Romans chapter 8, verses 31 to 39. God is our Father and, like any good parent, He wants what’s best for us spiritually because He loves us and He knows that our spiritual well being is ________. I’m so thankful for the Bible because it helps us understand the very heart of God. The more we know God, the more we’ll love Him and want to __________ Jesus Christ. Here are seven things God wants for our lives.

First, God wants you to be __________. The Bible says, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who _________ all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4). There’s nothing in this world worse than being _______ in sin. God says in Ezekiel 18:4 that the soul that sins will ______. He’s not here speaking of physical death, but spiritual death which is far ________.

Sin is a terrible thing. The Lord Jesus said, “Do not fear those who kill the _______ but are unable to kill the _______; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Sin will __________ you from the love of God and from His blessing. But God has a plan for us to save us from sin by the _________ of Jesus Christ when we believe in Him and obey His commandments.
Some people think God made up His mind long ago who would be saved and who would be lost, but this simply isn’t _______. God gave us the _________, which teaches us how to be saved; and He gave us free will, which allows us to choose to follow Him or to reject Him. God, however, wants us to choose Jesus and to be saved. He doesn’t want anybody to be lost.

Read what the Bible says when God speaks in Ezekiel 18:30-32.

Second, God wants you to come to know the truth and to be _______. The Lord Jesus promised those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly _________ of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32). God gave us His Son, Jesus, so that we might come to know and understand His ________ for us. The Bible says, “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has _________ God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him” (John 1:17-18).

Some people say they believe there is a God in heaven but we don’t ________ anything about Him. We _____ and _____ know something about Him. We can know God through looking at __________. Read what the Lord Jesus once said to the apostles in John 14:7-9. We know the Father by knowing the Son!

Third, God offers us the privilege of __________. In fact, God wants to _______ from us. Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-11. We don’t have to ______ God to let us pray to Him; the Lord ______ us and wants us to bring our requests to Him. Just as a father loves his children, so our Father in heaven loves us. He wants to hear from us and to have a relationship with us. The Bible is how God _________ to us, and prayer is how we _________ to God. God loves us enough to hear our _________ and our ________. He will always answer with what is ________ for us, not always with what we ________, but always with what we ________.

Fourth, God wants us to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in this present age. Read Titus 2:11-14. God wants only what is _________ for us. Living sensibly, righteously, and godly blesses our _______ and blesses those who surround us. God’s grace and forgiveness open an opportunity for us to _________ a sinful and destructive lifestyle for one that is godly and productive. The gospel of Christ ______________ lives from selfish to loving, from hurtful to helpful, from dishonest to devoted, and from troubled to trustworthy. God’s grace works through the Word to teach us to _________ what is wrong and to _________ what’s right.

Fifth, God wants you to have an _____________ life. The Lord Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy; I came that they may have ________, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Everybody wants to be happy, but “the abundant life” is far _________ than merely just being happy. It has real, inner ________, real life. It is a _____________ life; it’s a life “to the full.” Christianity is a way of life that doesn’t lack any worthy thing that we ________.

Sinful pleasures may satisfy for a _____________, but they cannot give you the lasting joy of
the Christian life. Sinful pleasures are __________; they promise much but destroy those who pursue them. Sinful pleasures are addictive, enslaving, and destructive. God wants something better for His children than __________ to sin. He offers the __________, which is so much better than the __________. God’s Word says the Father “has blessed us with every spiritual __________ in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

In Christ, we have God’s amazing _______ to sustain us, God’s abundant _______ to comfort us, God’s _______ of heaven to give us endurance, and God’s Word of wisdom to guide us. In Christ, we’ve become God’s holy and beloved _______. Being God’s child is the greatest privilege. Nothing else compares.

As part of the abundant life God gives us, He gives us the church as a _______. As part of the local church, we have brothers and sisters who know us and love us, who __________ us and _______ for our souls. As part of a local church, we have a place to _______ and to _______ as children of God. God gave us the church to bless our lives and to help keep us _______ in our faith and love for Him. Living as a part of God’s family, the church, and serving Christ gives us a great _______ of purpose and fulfillment.

Number six, God wants you to find peace. The Bible says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your _______ be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). God knows that we often come on _______ times. Just like any Father who loves His children, He puts His arm around us and says, “Let me handle it.” When we put ourselves into God’s hands, He sets a _______ around our hearts and our minds and _______ us from doubts and fears. He replaces all our worries and uncertainties with His perfect _______. Isaiah 26:3-4 says, “The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the L ORD forever, For in GOD the L ORD, we have an everlasting Rock.”

In Philippians 4:8-9 God’s Word says, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there’s any excellence and if there’s anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things that you’ve learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” When people _______ good thoughts and _______ righteous lives, they can go to sleep at night with a clear conscience, knowing they’re right with the living God. The peace that passes understanding is truly, truly a blessing!

Number seven, God wants you to come home to live with Him _______. The Lord Jesus said, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3). The Lord has prepared and reserved a _______ with your name on it. God intends to bless us in ways far _______ our
understanding. The Bible says, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were ______ in our transgressions, made us ______ together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and He raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-7). God wants to give you a marvelous, amazing ______ forever in His house as part of His family.

These are only seven things God wants for you and for me. There are many more. To enjoy them God wants your ______ and your ______. You can’t please God and remain on the fence or apathetic. You have to come to that point where you make a __________ to God from this day forward and forever. The Bible says, “The Lord is not slow about His ______, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to ______ but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). God wants you to find His love by __________ your life. You must ______ the old way of sinful pleasures and ______ Him into the abundant life. Today is the best day to get started on a new and better life!

The most important thing that we can do in __________ to God is to love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. A person who loves God will _____ upon that love by placing their faith in Christ (John 3:16), repenting of every sin (Acts 2:38), confessing the name of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 10:32-33), and by being baptized (that is, immersed) in water for the forgiveness of their sins. When a penitent, believing person is baptized, the Lord washes away his ______ (Acts 22:16), adds him to His ______ (Acts 2:47), counts him as His child (Galatians 3:26-27); He buries him and raises him up with Christ (Romans 6:4-5), and He ______ him (1 Peter 3:21). This is why it’s so necessary to be baptized. That’s when ______ acts upon you. Baptism is not something that we do; it’s something that we have done to us; God is the one who ______ in baptism.

God wants you to live with Him forever. The way to live in His house forever is to come into His family in this life. The church is God’s family (1 Timothy 3:15). As His child, you will want to be with other members of God’s family by __________ church regularly. God has designed the church to ______ your spiritual needs and to provide the loving family you desire.

God’s arms are open wide, and He longs for you to come home to Him and to the family He has on earth. No one will ever love you or ever bless you the way God loves and blesses you when you become one of His people. No one else can provide a home reserved in heaven for you. No one else can give you a Godly, loving family like Christ does. Won’t you come to Him; won’t you serve Him; won’t you live with Him? If you’re looking for a close, loving, personal relationship with God, why not visit one of the churches of Christ near you? They’re loving brothers and sisters who want to help you to go to heaven. My friend, you’ll never regret doing what is right, but you’ll forever regret passing up the gifts of God. God wants you to act in this life so that you can enjoy the blessings of the life to come.
Thirsting for God
Philippians 4:4-7

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Why do some people pursue life with hope and zeal, while others muddle through life ________? Today, we’re going to explore how to ________ our passion for life. The Word of God has the ________ instructions for life here and the ________ instructions for life hereafter.

I love the inspired words of David, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my ________ pants for you, O God. My soul ________ for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (Psalm 42:1-2). David knew how much he ________ God and how lost and alone he felt without God. Are there times in your life when you feel empty and alone? Perhaps the ________ for this emptiness is that you’re not as close to God as you once were.

Some people live their Christian life to the ________, while others just drift aimlessly. Some are passionate about their ________, while others are apathetic. Some come out of church ________ of hope and zeal, while others who were in the same worship service come out ________. Why the difference? Could it be that many have ________ their passion for God? Some folks have never been ________ to God; they don’t know what they’ve missed. My friend, I pray that you’ll look ________ into your soul and ask yourself if you have a close and loving relationship with God? Would you like one?

Our reading today comes from Paul’s letter to the Philippians 4:4-7.

Have you ever been thirsty, really thirsty? Have you ever had the kind of thirst that __________ a drink of water now? I’ve been out hunting and walking through the forest loaded down and desperately needing a drink of water. Or, I’ve been out mowing the lawn in the summer, and my face is red, and I’m so thirsty I could drink from a garden hose. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who ________ and ________ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). Jesus used two familiar things, hunger and thirst, to teach us how God looks at righteousness. God ________ the person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, and God will give him satisfaction.

Much of Judea is a _____ country. The people who live there know what it’s like to have ________ water available. The hills of Judea contain numerous cisterns to ________ rain water for the times when the dry seasons come along. They knew water was essential to ________, and they must have it. God, too, my friend, is essential to your life.

When was the last time you were ________ thirsty for God? When did you last ________ to be close to God? When did you last hunger to ________, to praise Him, and to thank Him? When was the last time reading the ________ or hearing a ________ from God’s Word was an immediate demand? It’s so easy to ________ what you need to be healthy and right with God.

Some people take for ________ that God is always there, always cares, and is always available when they need Him. They have ________ in their lives for God when they hurt and they
need Him, but they _______ God until some real need arises. Their relationship with God is really part-time. Their lives say to God, “I want you when you can _______ me, but don’t get used to being a part of my life.” They aren’t really close to God.

Part-time Christians don’t want to be close unless they want something from God. They have a _______ relationship. Let me ask you, would you like to be _______ to someone who only wanted you when he or she needed you but didn’t care other times? Christianity is a heartfelt, daily relationship with the Lord. We must not let our love for God grow _______.

If you want a relationship with God that is vibrant and living and full of love and joy, you must _______ beyond having God around only when you need Him. The Lord Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 when he was _______ by the devil. He said in Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every _______ that comes from the mouth of God.”

Many people _______ themselves out of a real life by focusing on everything that is around them, but God. They listen to the talk shows; they go to the movies; they know their soap operas; they read newspapers and magazines; they know every sports figure; but they haven’t read a single book of the Bible in years. No wonder their lives are _______ with doubts and confusion and misunderstanding. When they push the Bible away, they’re pushing _______ and _______ away.

The Bible is no ordinary book; it is God’s book and God’s way of teaching and training us how to _______. It teaches us how to _______, how to forgive and to be forgiven, how to react to suffering, how to _______ on the inside in spirit, how to discipline ourselves, how to live without hurting other people, and how to make the _______ of our lives. The Bible gives us hope and promise; it gives us joy and peace; it uplifts; it comforts; it corrects; it trains; and it makes us _______. The Word of God is what gives us new life and causes us to be born again.

**Read an amazing promise in 1 Peter 1:22-25.** God’s Word is the _______ to being “born again.” No other book can _______ your past and give you the promise and hope of living forever! The more you read the Bible, the more you will come to _______ and to be _______ to God. The more you read the Bible, the more you will come to have the abundant life found in Christ Jesus!

So, start paying attention to God and to His Word. Our passion and feelings for God _______ when we remove ourselves from God. People don’t _______ to get away from God; they simply _______ away unconsciously. The Bible says, “Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we _______ away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we _______ such a great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:1-3). A person can slowly stop _______ the Word of God, stop _______, and stop going to _______. Before long, he’s drifted away from the God who loves him.

Desperate situations sometimes _______ us up and _______ us back to God; and we finally realize that we have no one else. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I’ve been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go.” It’s reassuring to _______ that God can do things that men cannot do. There is really only one _______ God
who can hear and answer prayer; and that’s the God of the Bible! Oh, I know it’s not politically correct to say things like that, but political correctness is not the measure of ________. Political correctness is often the world’s way of putting God to __________. When people ________ to the world and ________ God, they end up ruining their lives. Every social ill in America comes from people ignoring the _______ of God. We need God. We need His hope, His promises, and His laws to live good and peaceful lives. There is simply no other way.

We can draw close to God by making Him a __________ in our lives every single day. Every day make _______ for God. Spend time in Bible _______ and ________. Don’t simply read the Word of God; ________ it and meditate upon it. Psalm 1:1-3 says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his ________ is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by the streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.” God wants to _______ your spirit with his Word, the Bible, and to give you the very insights you need to prosper in every area of your life.

God also wants you to draw close to Him by opening your _______ to Him in prayer. First Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.” God is not saying pray 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No one could do that. Instead, God is telling us to stop quitting on prayer. Some folks stop praying altogether. That’s what God doesn’t want you to do.

Some folks think they’re __________ God by praying, but God doesn’t feel that way. He ________ us to pray, to ask, to seek, and to knock. He’s ready to ________, to give, and to help us find what we’re seeking. Prayer was God’s ________, so let’s rid ourselves of the notion that God is too busy for us or gets bothered by prayer. God loves you so much that He wants to hear your prayers. He wants to hear your ________.

If you want to be closer to God, let me suggest that you do this one, simple ________ every day. “What is it?” It’s this: _______ your blessings. Remember the ________ blessings that God has given to you. Remember, God saved you from ________, delivered you from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son. Remember the ________, the love that Jesus showed by suffering for you and me. Remember how God has __________ your prayers. Remember how the Scriptures gave you _______ and ________. Remember the ________ that God has given you to deal with the challenges of life. He’s been blessing you through the years. Just look how God has helped you and is helping you now.

Count your blessings, and when you do it’s so __________ for your spirit and your attitude. The Bible teaches, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8).

When we concentrate only on the ________, we lose sight of God. When we concentrate on the ________, we grow more thankful to God. Every day we need to ________ and _____ to God, “thank you, thank you, thank you for all that You do for us.”

There’s one more thing about God’s blessings that we must remember. God has lovingly
prepared a _______ for us, one that gives us hope. **Read 1 Peter 1:3-5.** As Christians, we have the true and living _______ in the true and living _______. We have all the blessings of God in this life and we have ________, too! In Christ, we are of all people most blessed.

Is there anything in your life that ______ you from being close to God? Is there anything in your life that ______ you of energy and time so that you’re so overly tired that you don’t have time for God? Some people day after day shut the Lord out of their lives. **Hebrews 12:1-2** says: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which so closely clings to us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

There may be many things in our lives that ________ us up. Some things are not sinful in and of themselves, but they so distract and rob us of _______ with God that we lose sight of the Lord who loves us. We also have to think about sin. Yes, sin, ALL sin __________ us from God. The Bible says, “Behold, the LORD’s _______ is not so short that it cannot save; nor His _____ so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid His _______ from you so that He does not hear” (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). If you want to draw close to God, you have to _________ the sin out of your lives.

Several years ago, a middle school in Oregon faced a unique problem. A number of girls began to use lipstick. They’d put it on in the restroom and then press their lips against the mirrors, leaving dozens of little lip prints. This went on for several days. Finally, the principal decided that she had to do something to stop this problem. So, she called the girls to the restroom with the custodian. She explained that lip prints caused a major problem for the custodian who had to clean the mirrors every single day. To demonstrate how difficult it was, she asked the custodian to clean one of the mirrors. He took out a long-handled brush; he dipped it in the toilet; and then he scrubbed the mirror. Since that time, there weren’t any more lip prints on the mirrors. If we could see the _______ in sin, we wouldn’t be so attracted to it. God ________ sin. He calls it iniquity because it twists and ruins lives.

God loves you and wants something ________ than sin will give you. Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (**John 10:10**). Our Father in heaven wants us to _______ with joy and purpose.

We can live abundantly when we give our hearts and our lives to the Lord. So put your trust in the Lord Jesus. Believe His Word. Turn away from the ugliness of sin. Sin may give you pleasure for a moment, but it will rob you of your soul. Out of love and faith, with a penitent heart, confess Christ as your Lord and the Son of God and be baptized or immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ. **Baptism** is the time God forgives our sins. It’s also the time that we enter into a relationship with God and He adds us to the church. I hope you’ll do that today, that you’ll obey the gospel and be baptized.
Search Me, O God
Psalm 139:1-6

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Even when no one else does, the Father in Heaven ________ everything about me. He knows how I ________, what I _____, and what I ____. Would I ask the Lord to _______ my heart and see if there is any hurtful way in me? Am I willing to _______ my life of every sin? These important questions challenge us to live by a higher __________.

I hope and pray that you make it your ________ each day to live pleasing to the Lord. It’s amazing how many take the ________ of God for granted and never think about improving their spiritual lives. The apostle Paul said, “So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to ________ him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is ______ for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). Each of us must one day _______ the consequences of our behavior. How does God see you?

Have you made it the business of your life to _______ in your faith, your love, and your zeal for the Lord? Many people live lives in complacency, thinking that because they’re under the grace of God they never ________ to mature or grow. But God expects all of us to examine our hearts and to see if there are things we can do ________. As we study from the Scriptures today, I hope you’ll take a long look at your heart, your life, and your soul. Are you living as God wills? Could there be some sinful or hurtful way in you?

Our reading today comes from one of David’s Psalms, Psalm 139:1-6. One cannot think about this magnificent Psalm, without the overwhelming realization that God is ________ with us. He sees and knows everything about us. He searches our ________ and knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows how we think and all our actions. Psalm 139 says, “You know when I _____ down and when I _____ up.” Psalm 139 says God discerns our “________ from afar.” Psalm 139 says, “Even before a _______ is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.”

The Bible says God encircles us. “You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me” (Psalm 139:5). The fact is that you cannot go anywhere that God isn’t already ___________. You can’t _______ away from God. Psalm 139:7-12 says, “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.”

God is both omniscient (that is, all-knowing) and omnipresent (that is, everywhere-present). He’s not ________ by space or time; and nothing escapes His notice. Proverbs 15:3 says, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping ________ on the evil and the good.” No one can ________ the presence of God. This fact ought to ________ us that we must have pure and holy lives. God said in
Leviticus 11:44 and again in 1 Peter 1:16, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Again, the Bible says, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will _______ the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). God expects His people to _______ their sins and live holy lives. God will not tolerate being put in ________ place to our sins. God wants to be _______ in your heart, in your life, in your thoughts, and in your words. David knew that God would not tolerate wickedness but would one day slay the wicked.

God knew about us even before we were _______. Read how David spoke of God in Psalm 139:13-16.

Because David knew that God saw every aspect of his life and that sin would _______ God, the Father, he asked the Father in Heaven, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous (any sinful) way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Psalm 139:23-24). David wanted to _______ the Father so much that he wanted God to _______ his heart and life to see if there was any grievous or hurtful way in him. God would already know it. God didn’t need to search to find out. It was David who was the one who needed to know. He didn’t want anything to come _______ God and himself. He wanted to get ______ of the hurtful way and be ______ in the everlasting way!

David was saying, “You know, Father, if there’s something wrong with me, I want to know it so I can _______ my ways.” This we all need to consider! David wanted so badly to stand _______ in the sight of God that he opened up his life to God’s scrutiny. We might be able to fool others; we might even fool ourselves about our sins; but we can never, never, never fool God! David was afraid that he was ignorant of a sin, or he had _______ himself to a sin he was committing. People tend to do that this day and time, blinding themselves to the things that God calls sin.

We must all be concerned about whether we are _______ in sinful ways and don’t even recognize it. Perhaps we’re entertaining some wicked thoughts or _______ to do our duties as Christians. God’s Word _______ us the things that we must do and the things that we must not do. They’re clearly set out in Scripture, but many people live their lives completely oblivious to their own ______. I’m reminded of Proverbs 30:20, which says, “This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, ‘I have done no _______.’”

Sin is deceitful. People who commit sin don’t like to acknowledge that they could have done such a thing. The more people sin, the more likely they are to _______ themselves of sin. They often re-label sin to _______ the sting and to make it appear innocent. For instance, a person isn’t greedy; he has “business savvy.” Or, a drunk will hardly ever admit that he is intoxicated; instead he’ll say he’s “high.” A gossip may never admit he or she is backbiting; instead, they’re merely being zealous against sin. Many people _______ their principles according to their practice rather than shape their practice according to their principles.

Sin is able to deceive us because sin colors our ________. If I allow a certain lust in my heart to continue, it won’t be long until I find a way to _______ of my own actions. People just naturally begin to think that whatever _______ them must be all right. The same passions that lead people into sin _______ them to its deceitfulness. So they begin justifying their behavior. For instance, the more we _______ someone, the more inclined we may be to tell ourselves this person is rotten and
deserves to be hated. We may even tell ourselves that we’re ________ to hate others. Sin corrupts the ________ and it makes its thoughts twisted.

This is why the Bible says, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to _______ _______ from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it’s called ‘today,’ that none of you may be _________ by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12-13). Sin deceives us, blinds us to ourselves, and then it hardens our hearts toward Christ and other people. Many people who get caught up in sin grow _________ at anyone who thinks what they’re doing is wrong. But, inside they know the truth; they just don’t want to ________ it, and that’s why they become angry.

Proverbs 21:2 says, “Every way of a man is right in his own ________, but the L ORD weighs the _________. If given enough time, you can _________ to yourself whatever it is you want to. Just because you think it’s all _______, doesn’t mean that God approves of your sin. Even if everybody in the world says it’s OK, it doesn’t necessarily mean that God approves of that sin. basically, what people do is they tend to _______ to themselves. We can’t always _________ our own hearts. The Bible says, “Whoever trusts in his own mind (his own heart) is a ________, but whoever walks in wisdom will be delivered” (Proverbs 28:26). That’s why we need to _________ our Bibles. Don’t trust in your own _________ as to what is right and wrong; trust the _________ of God found in the Word of God. God’s the one who’s going to _________ in the end; you need to listen to what He has to say and not put your blinders on, but hear Him and not try to argue with Him.

People easily see the faults of _________ but they seem to miss even the most glaring faults of their ________. You remember the words of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 7:3-5 about unfair judging: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

When some people see the errors of others, they can quickly _________ them; but it seems easy for people to _________ themselves for committing the same sin. Romans 2:1-3 says, “Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?”

Paul urged the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the ________. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the _______!” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Let’s ask ourselves some questions that search our souls. Let’s see if there is any grievous or hurtful way in our lives. Let’s see if we pass the test.

First, do I believe Jesus is the Christ, the ________ of the living God? Do I believe that He _______ for my sins and that He was raised up; that He really died on the cross; he really did resurrect from the dead. Do I believe the Bible is truly inspired of God and free from _________? Do I believe the Lord Jesus is coming again one day to _________ the world in righteousness according to the things that are written in the Book and according to our deeds? Do I really, really believe? If I don’t have faith in
Christ, there’s no way that I can _________ God at all. I have _________ the test.

A second question is do I _______ God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength? We might easily _____ that we love God, but do we love Him completely and freely? Do we put Him _______ in our lives, our decisions, our plans, and our time? Do I _______ regularly and fervently? Do I _______ and meditate on God’s Word? Do I _______ others about God? Do I turn to God when I hurt? Am I compassionate toward those who _______ and those who are _______? Have I encouraged anyone lately? Am I willing to be a bigot towards other races or be prejudiced towards those who are not like me?

Do I let the lust of the _______, the lust of the ________, the pride of life lead me away from God? Do I have pet sins that I keep committing? With what kinds of things do I _______ my heart? Do I think _______ thoughts or do I allow sexual sin to flirt with me? Do I allow my eyes to see things that I shouldn’t see or my ears to hear things I shouldn’t hear?

Do I allow my _________ to indulge in envy or jealousy? Do I _______ with others often? Do I gossip? Am I greedy? Do I support the Lord’s _______ generously? Am I _______ for all the blessings that God gives to me and my family? Do I tell lies? Am I _________ in all my dealings with others? Do I _______ on my taxes?

The grace of God provides a wonderful __________ of forgiveness, and we all desperately need the grace of God. But God’s loving grace should lead us to repentance and a __________ of ways. We must never presume on the grace of God or think the grace of God allows us to _________ in sin. Oh no, God’s gracious _______ of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was done so that we might be forgiven; and it was not a cheap gift. It deserves to be taken seriously. So, let’s examine ourselves so that the grace that God has given us may not be in _______. In Psalm 26:2, David asks God, “Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind.” Could you ask God to __________ you to see what kind of person you are? Would you want God to look into your _________? What would He see? Would you want Him to look into your _________? Would you want Him to know what you’re thinking right now? God already knows what’s inside of you, but are you willing to _______ yourself spiritually that you might _________ what is wrong? Would you be willing to see if there is any grievous way in you and then give it up?

David could say in Psalm 26:1, “I have walked in my integrity, and I have _________ in the LORD without wavering.” Can you say that? In verse three, David says, “For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I _______ in your faithfulness. I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.” Can you say this?

As you look at your life, you might ask yourself if you have made a firm commitment to God. God has loved you enough to send His Son to die for you. Have you come to Him? A person makes a commitment and becomes a Christian when he believes with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. A person who commits to Christ will recognize Jesus as Lord, turn away from every sinful thought or behavior, and turn to a life that pleases God; that’s repentance. A person who commits to Jesus will confess Him before others and will be baptized in water for the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 2:38). Oh, I pray that you’ll do that today!