



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*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 crucified 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

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

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 _____ the Scriptures and _____ what God says about the matter.

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

Of all of God's blessings, nothing is more _____ than forgiveness. Forgiveness is not the _____ as forgetting. Forgiveness is "forgetting against." When God forgives, He no longer _____ 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 _____ their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12).

David, by inspiration, wrote, "He (that is, God) does not _____ with us according to our sins, nor _____ us according to our iniquities. For as _____ as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast _____ toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he _____ 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 _____, but He keeps us close to His _____.

Forgiveness _____ the shame and guilt by blotting out the offenses and settling the matter once and for all by the _____ of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:24). Forgiveness means putting to death the _____ man of sin (Romans 6:4-7) and making all things _____ (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 _____ with yourself.

You cannot forgive yourself until you have made a _____ in your heart and life. That is, you must _____. Many people seek forgiveness but they never _____ their sins behind. You'll never find peace if you're unwilling to _____. If you commit the same old sins over and over, you'll keep on having the same _____ and _____ 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 _____. Repentance is not only a turning _____ from sin; it's also a turning _____ God. The Thessalonians turned from _____ to serve the living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). You'll have a hard time forgiving yourself if you fail to _____ your life up with God. The Lord Jesus warns us about giving up sin but not filling our lives with _____ 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 LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD, *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 the 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.

May 29, 2016

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 LORD 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!