



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*Program
Study Guides*

**For
August 2016**

Hearing the Gospel

1 Peter 1:22-25

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

God gave us ears to hear, but are we _____? Today we're going to explore the importance of listening to God. We want everyone to _____ and to _____ the Lord. We know that the true way to know the Lord is through a thorough _____ of His Holy Word, the Bible. We can't count on _____ or the _____ of men. We want to hear God _____ for Himself, so we go to the Scriptures.

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. People will stagger from sea to sea, And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find it” (Amos 8:11-12). For many today, there is a _____ for the Word of God. I fear what happened to Israel in the eighth century before Christ is happening _____.

While the Bible is still the number one _____ of all time, and while 82 percent of Americans revere the Bible as sacred literature, they simply don't read it and don't know what it actually teaches. In a recent report by the American Bible Society, 79 percent of the people believe that they are knowledgeable about the Bible, but only 45 percent could _____ the four gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Sadly, many people know very little about God's _____ on sin, the soul, salvation, or the judgment. If we want to live with God eternally in _____ with joy and peace, then we must hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter 1: 22- 25.

Proverbs 1:5 says, “A wise man will hear and increase in _____, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.” From our earliest days in school, our teachers encouraged us to listen and to follow _____. Listening, really listening, may be one of the _____ tasks of life. We can hear words, but have we _____ to listen and to receive the message that we heard? Have we sought God and treasured up His Words in our _____? The Bible everywhere emphasizes the _____ of listening.

Read what the psalmist sang in Psalm 119:10-16. Some say they don't like _____; I hear that a lot, but the psalmist _____ in the ordinances or rules that God gave. In fact, he set his _____ to delight in them, to store them up, to meditate upon them, and to consider

them significant, so he would not forget them or wander away from them or sin against God. I hope that you _____ the Lord with all your heart and that you love God's Word like that.

Every parent who loves the Lord wants to see his children _____ God's ways and wisdom. **Read what Solomon said in Proverbs 2:1-5.** Solomon knew how important, how utterly important knowing God and His Word was to his children. Do you know? Have you made the Word of God a _____ in your home, mothers and fathers?

The Lord Jesus more than once said, "He who has _____ to hear, let him hear" as He did in Matthew 13:9. In the book of Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, we can read seven times: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." God wants and demands to be _____. God spoke from _____ on the Mount of Transfiguration about Jesus. He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. Listen to Him" (Matthew 17:5).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record one of the Lord's parables. Some call it the parable of the _____, and others the parable of the _____. It really describes how _____ respond to the teaching of Jesus. **Read Mark's account of this parable in Mark 4:14-20.**

In this parable, the _____ is the Word of God, the gospel. The first group is like the soil beside the _____. Matthew 13:19 explains, "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and he doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and _____ away what's been sown in his heart. And this is the one on whom the seed was sown beside the _____." Just as the seed never quite breaks into the soil, so the Word never quite breaks the _____ heart. Some never take the word seriously, never believe, and they _____ their opportunity to become Christians.

Read John 1:11-13. Satan came and _____ the Word from them, so they never heard what was necessary for them to know the _____ and so be saved. Many today never have the Word planted in their hearts, never truly hear the gospel, and never know the truth about Jesus.

The Jesus that they _____ they know and the Jesus that is _____ in Scripture are really for them two different people. Why? Because Satan is a deceiver. He doesn't want people to have the truth in their hearts, and so he _____ a mythical Jesus for the real one. This is a Jesus that never _____ them, that's Satan's Jesus; that never _____ anybody, that's Satan's Jesus. Oh, He's very attractive, but He's _____. He's not the Jesus of the New Testament.

Then, there's the rocky soil. These folks hear the message and they believe quickly; but when _____ comes, they fall away because they lack the deep spiritual roots that they need. Their shallow, superficial _____ isn't strong enough to sustain them. They only believe for a while. Trials or persecution cause their faith and their commitment to Christ to

just _____. They heard the good news of salvation, yes; but they didn't _____ it up in their hearts, so they leave their faith behind.

Third, Jesus tells of the _____ soil. They hear the word, but they let other things _____ the Word of God out of their hearts. They have a little _____ in their hearts for God, and a little for His Word, but because of the cares of the world, because of their delight in riches, because of the pleasures of this life which become their focus, the Word of God gets _____.

Read Colossians 3:1-4. That's where our hearts must be, where we must remain if we wish to _____ with Christ in glory. The psalmist said, "With all my heart I have _____ You; do not let me _____ from Your commandments" (Psalm 119:10). We need that way of _____; otherwise we too might have hearts filled with distractions that take us away from God.

The fourth soil is made up of "good and honest _____." Oh, they hear and they _____ the Word. Rather than _____ with God, they accept it and they hold fast to it. In the end they bear _____ with patience, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some a hundredfold. A good and honest heart is willing to be in subjection to God because God _____ Him and he's willing to be honest about himself. Many hearts _____ to themselves about their need for God or about their need to change and repent. Many hearts would rather argue about what is and is not _____ than really to listen to what God actually says. An honest and good heart will listen to God and make then the needed _____.

God is able to produce fruit in a good and honest heart because His Word is firmly _____ there. If you're not willing to listen to God, God cannot _____ you; but if you're willing to listen, God can do great things in your life! Many want to claim the _____ of God in the Word but they're unwilling to let God's Word be the moral and spiritual _____ in their lives. But you can't have the promises of God if you're unwilling to _____ the rest of what God says. God is God, and we are His _____. We don't _____ more than He does. We're not _____ than He is. We must listen to Him rather than think that we can tell Him what we ought to _____.

Listening to God means that we regard His written Word as the _____ authority. Instead of going with our "gut feelings" or listening to other _____ that are in this world, we're going to listen to Him in the Word. Listening means that we quit trying to _____ what the Bible says, quit trying to remake God in our own image, and quit thinking God is subject to our _____. God is God! He was God before He _____ the world, and He'll be God after this world comes to an end. He doesn't change, and His Word doesn't change. Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, (forever) O LORD, Your word is _____ in heaven." What was

true when Jesus spoke it in the first century is settled in heaven and has not _____. The Lord Jesus said in John 10:35 that the Scripture cannot be _____. That is, you can't change it; you can't edit it, or dispose of it. It stands _____.

The book of Galatians _____ us that there is one, unchangeable gospel. The gospel of Christ is not a cafeteria, where people can _____ what they want and _____ the rest. No, the Lord determines what the gospel is, and our task is to hear and to be _____.

Read Galatians 1:6-9 .We must _____ the one, true gospel. We must not imagine any other gospel will do.

The one, true gospel _____ to Jesus Christ, crucified, buried, and raised from the dead.
Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

Why is all this important? It's important because we can be _____, and frankly many people have been. If we believe a gospel that has been _____ with, we'll be following a lie. We must _____ and _____ the one, true gospel. The Lord Jesus said, "Take _____ what you listen to" (Mark 4:24). A false gospel will only _____ those who follow it. The devil likes to counterfeit the gospel and _____ people. He likes to make people think they are _____ even when they're following a lie. We must be careful not to fall into his _____ and lose our souls. We're going to spend this month looking at what God desires from us to obey that one, true gospel. So, please study with us each week this month.

Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27. The Lord Jesus _____ a wise man as one who hears and does what He has said. He doesn't _____ to the gospel, or doesn't _____ from it. He doesn't _____ what God has said, or try to rewrite the gospel. He simply _____ and _____ the words he heard. On the other hand, the foolish man hears, but he _____ do what he heard. He does something else. He builds a house yes, but not a house built on the _____ foundation of the Words of Jesus. So, when the time of testing comes, the one who listens and obeys _____, but the one who ignores what he hears and does what he wants to do, that person is going to be _____.

Hear the Lord and obey Him; become a Christian today! Put your _____ in Christ and _____ Him, _____ of your sins, and be _____ into Jesus Christ and into His death. When you're baptized, the Lord will wash away your _____ (Acts 22:16) and He'll raise you up to walk in _____ of life (Romans 6:4). Today is the best day for you to hear the Lord and respond to His message.

Believing in Christ Hebrews 11:1-6

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

Do you truly believe Jesus Christ is the _____ of the living God? Today we're going to explore what it _____ to believe, truly believe, in Jesus Christ. We believe God, so we believe what He _____ in His Word, the Bible. God has shown us the _____ to eternal life in Scripture. We know God will keep every _____, but we also realize that God makes a distinction between those who will _____ Him and those who won't. So, we study the Scriptures and we strive to _____ the Lord.

If you wish to be _____ with the living God, faith is a necessity. The Lord Jesus said, "For God so _____ the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Do you recall the next two verses, verses 17 and 18? The Lord also said, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be _____ through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

Believing in the name of the only Son of God is necessary if we're to have _____ life. It's not just believing God _____; it's also believing in Jesus as God's only Son. We must put our faith in Christ. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the _____, and the _____, and the _____; and no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). The way to God is through _____ in Jesus.

Our reading today comes from the book of Hebrews 11:1-6.

I want us to look at faith from _____ perspective. Many look at God and Christianity through the eyes of popular _____. Salvation is not an entitlement that God _____ us. It's a _____ to those who believe. But we must understand the idea of believing as God _____, not try to read into it what we _____ it means. Let's take some time to _____ to God, asking what kind of faith God wants from us. We seek to _____ God.

Throughout the Bible, God distinguishes those who _____ Him, those who abide in His grace and have His approval, from those who don't. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it's _____ to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him." We must believe in God, but we must also know about the God that we believe. We must know He _____ those who seek Him. Many people believe a God exists, but the God they _____ is not the God of the Bible.

Our postmodern society thinks it should _____ its own god and wants to sit in judgment of God rather than seek the God who created them. Some manufacture a god that _____ with the times. Faith in a culturally-correct god is not the same as faith in the God who made the world and will one day _____ it. We must believe in God as He _____ and _____ Himself in His Word, the Bible, not in a mushy god popularized by our culture.

Our culture thinks of God as one who winks at _____, who never condemns anyone, and who believes everything that we believe. Many think the God of all _____ doesn't care about righteousness or truth. Others have forgotten that God is not just holy, but He's _____ holy. Habakkuk 1:13 says of God, "Your eyes are too _____ to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with favor." Some think God doesn't _____ what we believe or do, but God is vitally interested in our living holy _____ devoted to the truth, serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot speak of having faith in Jesus Christ but then believing _____ we want to believe. Nor can we speak of having faith in Jesus Christ and living any way that we _____ to live. When a person comes to Christ as a believer, He belongs to Jesus. Paul told the Christians in Corinth, "You are not your _____, for you were bought with a _____" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). If we wear the name Christian and we believe in Jesus Christ, we can never _____ that. We're not our own; we _____ to Jesus. He's our Lord and Master, and we are His _____.

Moses wrote, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:2). The eternal God stands _____ our changing culture. The Lord is not _____ to the changing philosophies of humanity. His holiness, His righteousness, His purity, and His justice do not change with popular _____. We must _____ Him and His revealed will in the Scriptures as He gave it to us instead of trying to remake Him in our own image. How can anyone say He trusts in God, when he doesn't believe what God _____? Faith means we believe what the Lord Jesus _____. Why? Because He is Divine. He knows all things and has all _____. He gives us His wisdom in the Bible, His Word, because He _____ us and wants us to know the truth.

Believing in the God of the Bible also necessitates _____ in the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. The Old Testament prophesies of Jesus as the _____ Messiah. The New Testament tells how He _____ dozens of prophecies. Believing in Jesus means that you believe the _____ that He made to be God's Son. Jesus said that He would _____ from the dead, and He did. Jesus said Jerusalem would _____, and the Romans destroyed the city in 70 A.D.

The Bible says, "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). Many people approach Christ with preconceived _____. If Jesus fails to measure up to what they want or imagined, they aren't _____ to believe. Some will only believe if Jesus never _____ anyone and never calls for moral _____. That kind of Jesus simply doesn't _____. To know the real Jesus, we must _____ all of the New Testament, all that it says about Him, not just pick out certain passages and ignore the rest.

Jesus came to His own people, but they didn't _____ Him. The Lord Jesus _____ only those who believe in His name, who believe who He really is and what He really teaches. Only they are given the _____ to become children of God. Jesus loves you, but He's not obligated to save you unconditionally. Jesus isn't your _____; He's your creator and Lord.

Faith stands _____ being accepted and being rejected. God made that decision, and we can't _____ God. The Lord Jesus said, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned _____, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:18). On another occasion Jesus taught the Jews that He had come from the Father in Heaven. He said, "I told you that you would die in your _____, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Believing in Jesus means believing He _____ is the Christ, the Son of God. It means believing that He is the fulfillment of God's _____ of the Messiah.

Saving faith is not simply believing in the _____ of believing. It's believing in the _____. Believing in Him means that you believe what He _____, what He _____, and what He _____, that all of these things are true. If I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then I will recognize His authority over my _____ life. Faith includes _____ and responsibilities. The Lord Jesus said, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). If I regard Jesus as Lord, I cannot pick and choose which of His commandments I will _____ and which I won't.

There are times when we wonder _____ God asks the things that He asks. Trusting faith means that we _____ even when we don't understand. Hebrews 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, _____ by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going." Abraham didn't _____ with God because he _____ God; he simply obeyed. He showed his confidence in God, though he didn't _____ what lay ahead. We trust God in things that we _____ know because we find Him trustworthy in what we _____ know. We know God is true and loving.

The apostle Paul said, "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I'm not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I'm convinced that He is _____ to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). Paul could face the _____ with peace and confidence because He knew God and how God kept His promises. We can trust God in what we do not know because God has proved Himself _____ of our trust in what we do know!

Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." By faith we can understand God _____ this world in six days just as He said in Genesis, chapter one. While no one was around to _____ the creation, we can trust God's word about the creation. Why? Because we know God is trustworthy, and _____ of our faith.

The early disciples were willing to _____ for their faith for two reasons. First, they were _____ of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing _____, appearing to them over a *period of forty days*" according to Acts 1:3. They _____ Him, _____ Him; they touched His body. They were so convinced that when they were threatened by the Jewish council, they replied, "we cannot _____ speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). They were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Second, they believed in Jesus because they saw how He _____ Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Jesus was _____ in the right place, at the right time, in the right tribe, with the right family lineage, and with the right kind of mother—a virgin. A _____ announced His birth, and wise men came from the East looking for Him. The apostle Philip said to his brother Nathaniel, “We have _____ Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). As you read through the book of Acts, the apostles and evangelists time and again _____ that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah.

What we know is true about Jesus is that He is the promised Messiah who _____ from the dead. For this _____, we call Him “Lord” and “Christ.” Since we have confidence He is the Son of God, we can trust what He _____ about creation, about Adam and Eve, about the flood, about Sodom and Gomorrah, and every other story found in the Old Testament. When Jesus spoke of the Old Testament, He treated what He read there as _____, historical events. For this reason we can believe the Old Testament is trustworthy and _____. Why? Because we _____ Jesus Christ.

Because we have a living Savior, we want a _____ faith not a _____ one. **Read James 2:14-18.** Dead, inactive faith is _____. It doesn't reveal that one truly believes in Christ. It doesn't save.

Saving faith is _____ obedient. The Lord Jesus said, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; and whoever does not _____ the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36). You can claim to believe, but unless your faith _____ to obedience, you really can't be right with God. When the Bible speaks of saving faith, it's _____ an active, obedient faith. Galatians 3:26-27 says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were _____ into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” James said, “Be _____ of the word, and not _____ only, deceiving yourselves.” Are you a doer or merely a hearer? Faith means I'm willing to do what God wants me to do. I'm willing to be the kind of person God wants me to be. I'm going to hear what He says; I'm going to believe it's true; and I'm going to do it; I'm going to be obedient. Oh, the believer “has eternal life, but the one that does not obey shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).

Read John 11:23-27. You need to ask yourself, “Do you believe this?” Do you believe God _____ the world in six days? Do you believe the Bible is _____? Do you believe that Jesus arose from the dead and is _____? Do you believe Jesus' death on the cross can _____ for your sins? Do you believe that you will one day be _____ from the dead? Do you believe in the _____ Day? Do you believe in Heaven and Hell? Faith in Christ means believing what He _____ and what He _____ to give us eternal life.

If you really believe, put your faith into action by _____ of your sins; _____ Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and by being _____ into Christ. Baptism is an immersion in water of a penitent believer. It's done in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of sins. Baptism is the time when you become a child of God, free from sin, and _____ to the Lord's church. The Lord Jesus said, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16). Oh, we hope that you'll become a Christian today.

Repentance Matthew 21:28-31

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

Someone said, “You cannot repent too _____ because you don’t know how soon it will be too _____.” We’re now in the third part of our series on _____ the gospel. Two weeks ago we studied about _____ the gospel. Last week we explored what it means to _____ in Jesus Christ. Today we’re looking at the importance of repentance in responding to the _____ of God. As always, the Bible will be our _____ because we know the Bible gives us God’s true teaching. We want to _____ and _____ God, so we’re going to take the time to hear what He actually says about this and every other topic.

The New Testament _____ the great love that Jesus showed to sinners. The Pharisees criticized the Lord Jesus Christ for _____ with tax-collectors and sinners. In those days, the Pharisees, though a small group, had bullied the Jewish society into following their _____ traditions. They had no _____ in their hearts for anyone but those who followed their dictates. But Jesus followed a truer, better _____ that showed the love and compassion of God for all.

Jesus touched the _____ and told the story of the Prodigal Son. Jesus cared about _____ soul. The Lord said, “For the Son of Man has come to _____ and to _____ that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Let’s be clear, just because Jesus _____ sinners didn’t mean that He tolerated their sin. Jesus told the man that he healed on the Sabbath Day, “do not sin _____, so that nothing worse happens to you” (John 5:14). The Lord Jesus doesn’t _____ us where He _____ us. He _____ us up out of sin and transforms our lives. Oh, thanks be to God.

Our reading today is from the words of Jesus in the Gospel According to Matthew 21:28-31.

The New Testament word “repentance” comes from the Greek word metanoia: “meta” means “after”; and “noia” means “thought.” Repentance then is an afterthought. People use an afterthought to _____ their ways, to _____ their thinking. An afterthought yields to us a _____ way of thinking, different from our former thoughts. Considering the destructive _____ of sin and the loving grace of God, penitent people have a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of life and behavior.

The Lord Jesus was, and still is, in the _____ business, but salvation includes transforming the life of those who follow Him. That transformation included what _____ would do for us in His grace and forgiveness, and what _____ must do. God _____ His people to believe and repent. The Lord Jesus _____ repentance to the Jews of His day. After his baptism and

temptation, Jesus _____ His ministry preaching throughout Galilee. Matthew 4:17 says, “From that time Jesus began to preach and say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at _____.’”

When the Pharisees grumbled at Jesus for eating with tax-collectors and sinners, Jesus replied, “It’s not those who are _____ who need a physician, but those who are _____. I have not come to _____ the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31-32).

When Jesus sent the twelve out into the towns and villages of Galilee, He called for those cities to _____. **Read in Matthew 11:20-24 what Jesus said when some of the towns rejected Him.**

Jesus was serious. Jesus _____ sinners, but He _____ them to repent. Repentance is not _____. If we wish to _____ God and be right with Him, we _____ repent. **Read what Jesus said in Luke 13:2-5.** If we wish to please the Lord, we too must repent.

Read what the apostle Paul told the pagan philosophers on Mars’ Hill in Athens in Acts 17:30-31. God won’t do your repenting for you, as some people suppose. God _____ you and everyone to repent.

Peter likewise _____ men to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38. The apostle Peter wrote, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not _____ for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). God doesn’t want anyone to be _____; but when people refuse to repent, they sadly _____ their sins over God. When people say no to God, they _____. On the other hand, the Lord God celebrates when people change their lives and _____ Him.

Read in Luke 15:4-7 the parable the Lord Jesus told to respond to the Pharisees who were grumbling because He ate with sinners. When a person turns his life around and leaves his sin, the God of Heaven _____.

Some people think repentance is a punishment, but actually it’s _____ for our souls. Some _____ about all the things they have to give up, but the heart that loves God finds new and wonderful _____ in righteous living. He trades the _____, destructive habits for a _____ and real joy in Christ. You don’t give up _____ pleasure to become a Christian. You give up the _____, sinful pleasures that end up enslaving and destroying you. But you take on new, _____ joys that are indescribable and everlasting. Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have _____, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Oh, we have an abundant life in Christ that keeps getting _____ and _____.

Repentance is _____ than ceasing to sin. While repentance requires a person to _____ doing evil, it also turns his _____ to the Lord. A penitent person learns to despise the _____ he did in the past, yes; but repentance also _____ in the heart a hunger and thirst for

righteousness. A penitent person wants to _____ God everyday and completely. The Ephesians made known their repentance by _____ from paganism and superstition, "bringing their books (of magic) together and _____ them in the sight of all" (Acts 19:19). I wonder if there are some sinful things in our lives that also need to be _____. They may be books, movies, or songs. We need to _____ our hearts of evil thoughts, ugly ways, and selfish intents.

When a person repents, he must also _____ his life with the Lord and His teaching. **Read the illustration the Lord Jesus gave in Matthew 12:43-45.** When a person is forgiven of sin but _____ to fill his life with the Lord, he becomes vulnerable to terrible sins coming back into his heart. One may cease to do evil, but real repentance means one lovingly fills his life with the Lord's _____.

When a person repents, he'll be truly _____ for his sin against God. He's sorry that he hurt and grieved God by his transgression of God's _____. He's also sorry when he realizes that Jesus _____ on the cross for his sin. The Bible says, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). It was our sins, our lust, and our selfishness that _____ Jesus to the cross. Repentance means that we've taken _____ how grievous sin is to God and how destructive it is.

Sin _____ us from God. Thankfully, God is willing to _____ when we repent. But once we come to God, we can no longer _____ in sin. Paul once asked, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:1-2). Because we love God, we can't _____ grieving God with our sins.

A penitent person is also sorry for his sins against other _____. He realizes that his sins have caused other people to _____. We hurt others with what we _____ and _____. When we sin, we _____ others to sin. Jesus said that one who sets a _____ _____ before a little one sins grievously (Matthew 18:6-9). The penitent person also mourns because of the _____ that his sin has caused against himself. Solomon said, "His own iniquities will _____ the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin" (Proverbs 5:22). Every person who sins eventually has to _____ the consequences of his sin. The sinner's life unalterably _____ in misery and regret.

A person who loves God, however, wants something _____. He wants an opportunity to _____ his life and live a clean and righteous life. After his sin with Bathsheba, David _____ for something better than his selfish, lustful, and hurtful ways. David prayed, "Create in me a _____ heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). Hungering

to do what is good and right _____ the heart of a penitent man. This sorrow for sin and hunger for righteousness means that he will _____ what is evil and _____ what is good. Romans 12:9 says, “Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.” This doesn’t say hate evil _____; it says hate what is evil.

If I love God, I will hate what is evil and hurtful. I can love a _____ while hating the evil that he does. I can love a _____ while hating the evil a drunk does to his _____ while he’s drunk. Christians call people to change their behavior because they _____ them, and they know how sinful behavior will cause them _____. We don’t speak out against sin because we are _____ of people. We speak out against sin because we hate the _____ and the _____ of sin. Christians love their enemies and _____ for them.

Paul describes how a Christian should _____ with those caught up in sin. **Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26.** God is truly in the _____ business, and so are we. But people can be so _____ by the devil that they think they’re all right spiritually when they’re actually lost.

So, we ask, why are we talking about repentance? Why are we _____ people to repent? We’re speaking this way because we love you and we want God’s _____ for you. You can’t be right with God _____ repenting of your sins and turning to Him. Sin can _____ your heart and cause you to be lost. Romans 6:23 says, “the wages of sin is _____.” We want you to know Christ and the _____ of forgiveness and eternal life.

Don’t let sin harden your heart and _____ you of eternal life. Don’t stiffen your neck and _____ to change your ways. You’re grieving God and just _____ yourself. Like the prodigal, come back _____ to God, and do it today. God won’t _____ you to repent, but He does lovingly _____ to you to repent. You need to know, however, that if there’s no repentance, neither is there any _____. The Lord promises forgiveness to penitent people who change their lives, but there’s no promise for the person who time after time refuses to _____ God. One day there will be an end to God’s _____ and a day of reckoning. **Read Isaiah 55:6-7.** If we _____ our repentance even one more day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in.

Repentance is a change of heart that _____ to a change of life. We repent _____ we love the Lord and we believe in Him. Faith, love, and repentance _____ in the heart. I hope your heart looks at that old way of sin as something to be _____. I hope that you hunger for righteousness. If you believe and love the Lord and have repented of your sins, _____ Christ and be _____ in His name. Baptism is an immersion in water in the _____ of Jesus Christ. When you’re baptized, God will _____ away your sins; He’ll give you the gift of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:38 and 22:16. Oh, obey the Lord today!

Baptism

Romans 6:3-7

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

Sometimes people ask, “Well, _____ is baptism so important?” Today we’re going to explore the _____ and the _____ of baptism. Please don’t ever take the Bible for _____. It’s not simply _____ religious book. It’s unique and filled with God’s _____. It’s the only book that can _____ us where we came from, why we’re here, and where we’re going. The Bible teaches us the _____ that lead to eternal life. The Word of God is settled in heaven but it can _____ our lives for eternity. If we’re born again at all, we’re born again through the _____ of the Word. First Peter 1:23 says, “for you have been born again not of _____ which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”

Today we’re going to complete our series on how we respond to the _____ of Christ and what we must do. We’ve talked about the necessity of _____ the gospel and _____ what God says. We’ve shown the necessity of _____ in Christ and how faith is the foundation of Christianity. We’ve seen the necessity of _____, turning away from sin and to the ways of the Lord. Today we’re focusing on the need to be _____ to be saved.

Few people doubt the _____ to believe or repent in order to be saved, but there’s much controversy over baptism. People have mistakenly said baptism is a _____ that people do to earn salvation. This simply isn’t _____. While it’s true we’re commanded to be baptized, baptism is not so much about what we do as it is about what _____ does for us. We’re going to study what baptism into Christ _____ and why everyone who chooses to follow Christ should be baptized to be saved.

Our reading today comes The Letter of Paul to the Romans 6:3-7.

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary defines baptism as "a ceremony or sacrament of admitting a person into Christianity or a specific church by dipping him in water or sprinkling water on him, as a symbol of washing away sin." This definition describes what baptism means in the English language, considering there are many _____ “Christian” groups that baptize in a variety of ways. But simply because the many denominations do things differently doesn’t mean that that’s what the New Testament _____, or that they teach all these different ways to baptize, and that all of them are God’s _____.

So, what does the New Testament _____ in regard to the act of baptism? What _____ does the New Testament describe? The Greek word, *baptidzo* means to dip, to plunge, or immerse. It refers to the specific _____ of dipping or immersing in water. A different Greek word *rhantidzo* describes the action of _____. If the Lord or the Holy Spirit had wanted us to _____ for baptism, they would have moved the writers of the New Testament to use that word *rhantidzo* rather than *baptidzo*.

After an exhaustive survey of more than _____ examples in Greek literature and ancient translations, an author, Thomas J. Conant, in his book, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*, concluded: “That the word *baptizein*, during the whole existence of the Greek as a spoken language, had a perfectly _____ and unvarying import. In

its literal use it meant, as has been shown, to put _____ into or under a liquid, or other penetrable substance, generally water, so that the object was wholly _____ by the inclosing element.”

When the New Testament speaks of baptism, the event described points to an _____ in water. In Matthew 3:16, after Jesus was baptized, He “went _____ of the water.” In John 3:23 John baptized in the Jordan River “at Aenon near Salim, because there was _____ water there.” Baptism or immersion would, of course, _____ enough water to immerse an adult. In Acts 8:3-39, Philip and the Eunuch went _____ into the water; Philip baptized the Eunuch; and they both came _____ out of the water. Whatever happened in this baptism, it took place while they were _____ in the water.

The apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore we have been _____ with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was _____ from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). The _____ of being buried and raised in water is striking here! It’s not an accident that baptism is a burial and a resurrection that leads to _____ of life. Romans 6:5-7 says, “For if we’ve become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”

Baptism is that time when our old body of _____ is crucified with Christ and done away with. It’s buried! At that point we’re no longer _____ to sin. When we are _____ up with Him, we have new life just as the Lord Jesus had new life when He was resurrected. The resurrection caused the new life for Jesus, and our resurrection _____ Christ in baptism causes our newness of life. Before baptism we are _____ in sin, but after baptism we are freed from sin and _____ in newness of life!

Commenting on this passage William Barclay said, “Commonly baptism was by _____ immersion and that practice lent itself to a symbolism to which sprinkling does not so readily lend itself. When a man descended into the water and the water _____ over his head, it was like being buried. And when he emerged from the water, it was like rising from the _____. You see baptism was symbolically like dying and rising again. And the man _____ to one kind of life and _____ to another; he died to the old life of sin and rose to the a new life of grace.”

There is a second passage that _____ baptism to the burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Colossians 2:12-13 says, “having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the _____ working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having _____ us all our trespasses.” Baptism is an act of _____ in the powerful working of God. In baptism we _____ our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We’re _____ with Him in His burial and resurrection by baptism. Before we were baptized, we were dead in our sins, but in baptism God makes us alive just as God made Christ alive. In making us alive, God _____ us of all our trespasses. Did you notice in this passage how God is _____ in forgiving us and in making us alive. Baptism is an _____ of faith on our part. The command in Acts 2:38 and 22:16 is to “be baptized.” Grammatically, “be baptized” is a command, but it’s a _____ command. God commands us to demonstrate our faith by _____ someone baptize us in the name of Jesus Christ. “Be baptized” means someone _____ is immersing us in water. Someone else is acting on us. We _____ the action. That’s what “passive” means.

Just as we receive the physical act of baptism in water, we receive God's gracious _____ on us in the forgiveness of sins and making us alive. In baptism, we are born again or born from above with _____ of life. God is the One powerfully _____ on us. Baptism is not some work of merit on our part to _____ salvation. No! Baptism is an act of faith on our part whereby we _____ God's powerful working in our lives just as He powerfully raised Jesus Christ from the dead. God buries our old man of sin; God raises us up; God makes us alive; God washes away our sins; and God makes us new.

When people say, "Well, you don't have to be baptized to be _____," they've missed the point. If baptism is the time when God _____ on us, then baptism would have to be necessary for us to be saved.

There is great _____ to immersing as baptism. We should _____ what God is doing to us by saving us in baptism or immersion. We have no right or authority to _____ sprinkling for immersing in fulfilling God's commandments. If God is providing salvation to us through our baptism, then shouldn't we be careful to abide by the Lord's _____. Shouldn't we _____ with what He's told us to do. Sprinkling and immersing are _____ things; they're not the same. While many have sprinkled people and called it baptism for centuries, sprinkling for baptism has no _____ in Scripture; you just can't find it there. Baptism by sprinkling is an old, _____ tradition begun centuries after the New Testament.

Obedying the Lord doesn't mean doing what's conventional or doing what's _____. Obeying the Lord means honoring the Lord to the point that you're _____ to do what He says. Honoring and respecting God means you won't _____ to God's commands, take away from God's commands, or _____ God's commands to suit yourself. You simply, lovingly, humbly _____ the Lord.

So, _____ should a person who is penitent and believes in Christ be baptized. There are numerous reasons. Peter told the guilty people at Pentecost in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." People repent and are baptized so that their sins will be _____. Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). Baptism is the time when God _____ away our sins.

Baptism is the time we _____ ourselves with Christ or become united with Him. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Baptism is a necessary _____ of faith. Placing your faith in Christ necessarily _____ baptism. The faithful sons of God today are baptized into Christ and clothed with Christ.

We've already seen in Romans 6:4-7 and Colossians 2:12-13 that baptism is the time that God _____ us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. In baptism we are _____ with Him, buried with Him, and _____ with Him to walk in newness of life. Since the old man of sin is crucified with Him in baptism, God at that time frees us from sin and its _____. Baptism is also that time when we begin _____ our new life in Christ and with Christ. From that day forward we are new people who _____ to Him. His blood has cleansed and _____ us; we are no longer our own. We have been bought with a _____ (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

When we're baptized, the Lord _____ us as God's children to the church. The Bible says, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one _____, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all

made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Baptism unites us with Christ and with those who are in His body, the _____.

To be in the church is to be in God’s _____. Paul wrote the church at Colossae, “For He (Jesus) _____ us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14). Forgiveness and membership in the church or kingdom are _____ of being baptized into Christ. This agrees with what the Lord Jesus told Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of _____ and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). How are we born again of water and the Spirit? This is surely by baptism. The Lord says that without baptism we cannot _____ into the kingdom of God.

In Christ, we have the _____ and blessing of God. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with _____ spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” In Christ, we have the promise of eternal life. First John 5:11-12 says, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us _____ life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; and he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” The way to have the Son is to _____ to the Son by baptism when you confess Christ and repent of your sins. Baptism is certainly not the _____ thing necessary to faith. We’ve seen in this past month that hearing God, believing in Jesus, repenting of sin, confessing Christ as the Son of God are also necessary to _____ the gospel.

So then, why is baptism so important? Why are we talking about its necessity? Because baptism is that culminating _____ in our obedience. Our faith, repentance, and confession _____ us to baptism. But baptism is that point when God acts upon us, transforming us from people _____ in sin to people _____ in Christ. That’s when we are _____ and become members of the Lord’s church. To talk about baptism means revealing how God unites us with Christ, _____ us, makes us His children. Oh, what a blessing! Nothing else could be so very important for today and for eternity! The New Testament gives us many _____ of people being baptized. The 3,000 who obeyed the gospel at Pentecost in Acts 2:4 were baptized that _____. In Acts 8:12, when the Samaritans believed the _____ of Philip about Jesus and His kingdom, they were baptized right then. They didn’t _____. The Eunuch in Acts 8:36 asked to be baptized. It was _____! He wasn’t content to wait until another day. He came up out of that water _____. In Acts 22:16, Ananias asked Saul of Tarsus, “why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and _____ away your sins, calling on his name.” In Acts 16, the jailer and his household considered baptism so important that they were baptized in the middle of the _____. Why the urgency? Why the emphasis on acting quickly?

I’ll tell you why. Being baptized is necessary for you to be _____. It’s necessary for you to receive the _____ of your sins. Baptism is necessary for you to be _____ with Christ and to become a Christian. The Bible never contemplates the idea of a Christian who has _____ been baptized. Baptism is not something that you do _____ you have been saved; baptism is the _____ when God saves you. That’s when God takes the _____ of Christ and washes you free from sin and makes you His child. First Peter 3:21 says, “Corresponding to that, baptism now _____ you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Baptism is how we _____ to God to be saved and to have a clear conscience. Have you been baptized into Christ? If you believe and you’re repentant, won’t you be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins today?