Program Study Guides

For

November 2016
Citizenship as Christians
1 Peter 2:13-17

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

When it’s time to _______ government officials, should Christians get involved? Does the Bible have anything to say to the Christian _________? God reveals Himself and His will for our ______ through His written Word. The Bible tells us of God’s ______ and His ______ for redeeming man. It reveals what’s ______ and what’s _______. God’s Word reveals what will _______ us and what will _______ us. The Bible teaches us the truth, and that truth gives us ______ and purpose. The Bible is more than an ancient book; it lives and it ________ to every aspect of our lives. We need the Bible, because we need God’s _________ and His guidance. That’s why we study.

The founding fathers of the United States recognized God’s ________ in establishing and providing for the prosperity of this country, America. George Washington, said, “No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible _________ which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the ___________ of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of Providential agency.”

Can we suppose this nation with all its struggles has outgrown the ______ for God’s help? Can we have peace and security while we reject the _________ of the Lord? Do we imagine that we can prosper while we ignore the Source of all blessings? Can we assume that we have justice while we reject the ___________ of the God of all righteousness? When nations ________ the Lord and live by human standards, they deprive themselves of the blessing and the righteousness that the Lord’s way provides. Pushing God out of our lives is a disastrous decision. William Penn wrote in 1681, “If you are not governed by God, you will be _________ by tyrants.”

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter 2:13-17.

Proverbs 29:2 says, “When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked ________, the people groan.” We shouldn’t imagine that all people are __________. There’s an important difference between one who sets his heart to live ________ but sometimes does evil and one who sets his heart on ______ but sometimes does what is right. Wicked rulers _________ cities and nations, while righteous rulers _______ them. Wicked people are not content simply to be wicked; they want everyone else to _______ them in their wickedness. Psalm 125:3 says, “For the wicked shall not rule the godly, lest the godly be _________ to do wrong.”

When wicked people rule, they open the _______ for all kinds of evil. Corrupt rulers abuse their ________ by making laws that oppress the righteous and use public funds to do things that no righteous person could approve. How can anyone who loves what is good _________ rulers who make laws promoting evil? If I believe a practice is morally wrong, I will not ________ legalizing that practice. If I believe a practice is morally wrong, I won’t ________ for or use my influence to support a candidate that will do what God says is evil. If I support an ungodly candidate, I’m giving my _________ to his ungodly ways. How can I _______ God and support what is sinful? How can I _______ for righteousness and then support wickedness?
True Christians ________ to the Lord. They belong to Him in _____ aspect of their lives. It’s inconceivable that a Christian citizen could vote for someone who supports a platform that contradicts the moral ________ that they hold. If we elect people who have no regard for God, we’ll have to live with their ungodly decisions and ways. Tertullian encouraged the Christian minority in the pagan Roman Empire of the second century to be the “soul” of their culture. God _____ Christians today to be the soul and conscience of our culture. We can bring about moral ________ if we’re willing to speak out against evil. The best way to defeat the devil is to expose his wickedness. Christians have too often retreated into silence and let evil go unchallenged.

Edmund Burke, the 18th century politician said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do ________.” Many Christians have so silenced their voices that all one can _____ is the ungodly calling for more ungodliness. We are fast destroying ourselves by letting the ungodly go unchallenged. We don’t speak this way out of hate for anyone but out of love for God, love for our children, and love for our neighbors. It’s not bigoted to ________ for righteousness; it’s not bigoted to love the truth. It’s ___________ to want what is right and good.

Have we forgotten God is the ________ of all nations? Every nation is accountable to Him. Read what the Lord said in Jeremiah 18:6-10.

The Lord has witnessed our country’s ungodly disrespect for the sanctity of ________, for the sanctity of ____________, and the sanctity of moral ________. Our language has become profane, and our nation is ________ with the children of unmarried parents. The more we push God and His way _____, the more empty, and hopeless, and depraved we become. God’s Word still says, “Righteousness ________ a nation, but sin is a ________ to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). Our national sins are disgraceful, and we have no ________. We’ve forgotten how to blush, and our consciences have become ___________.

God’s grace should ____________ us to live godly and righteous lives, not remove all standards of Christian morality. Titus 2:11-12 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.” Should we not be so ____________ for what Jesus did on the cross for us that we would turn from sin?

Today, our laws ________ some evil practices to fill this land. We no longer ________ the sanctity of life or the sanctity of marriage, as defined in God’s Holy Word. We’ve replaced these with ________ values that are destined to corrupt the morality of our homes. We’ve made being tolerant of everything, whether it’s good or evil, into some form of _________. In tolerating evil, our society has simply become more evil, and it’s become more intolerant of God and what He teaches. Many have become intolerant of God’s values found in the Word of God. They won’t tolerate God’s regard for the unborn as viable persons. God speaks of the unborn as people in Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1; and Galatians 1. Nor will they tolerate 1 Corinthians 7:2 that says every man should have his own female wife, and every woman should have her own male husband.

Many live today as they did in the days of the Judges of Israel. Judges 21:25 says, “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own _____.” Today, people have pushed God out of their thinking and ________ by their own standards. Believing we can live by our own rules is ___________, but it’s also destructive morally and spiritually. If what people think determines
right and wrong, then truth, peace, and morality are _____ in confusion.

Human _________, left to follow its own path, leads society to do unspeakably horrible things. Wicked men will find ways to _________ and justify themselves with every evil desire and every sin. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?” Some people demand the _________ to do as they please, and they don’t care who they _________. When evil men with no conscience or fear of God _______ in society, they will lead people away from hope and from righteousness.

Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way that seems ________ to a man, but its end is the way to ________.” God’s prophet Jeremiah wrote, “I know, O L ORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it’s not in man who walks to _________ his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). We need God’s wisdom and guidance. People may think they’re _________ enough to choose their own way; but any path without God will inevitably end in _______. People who _________ God’s wisdom hurt themselves and they hurt their children.

God said through the prophet Hosea, “My people are destroyed for _______ of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6). When we turn against God, we ______ our children of the opportunity to know God, to know His holiness, and His righteousness. We leave them in spiritual _________.

The books of Kings and Chronicles in the Old Testament provide a commentary on the spiritual lives of the kings of Israel and Judah for hundreds of years. God tied the prosperity of that nation directly to the _________ of the king and the people. When the king and the people _________ God, God prospered them. When the king and the people _________ God, they brought hardships and captivity upon themselves. If we, today, push God out of our lives, how can we think God will _______ us? How can we imagine that God will _________ us?

Character and devotion to God matter in our _________. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, and priest of Midian, gave Moses some valuable _________. Moses was wearing himself out with his duties and needed _______ to govern the people. Jethro instructed him to “look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens” (Exodus 18:21). Jethro knew that Moses would need men of good _________ to govern the people. These men had to be people that ________ would respect and follow. They must “fear God.” Fearing God meant that they took God and His laws _________. They drew their _________ of right and wrong from God, not from opinion polls. These men of integrity refused to be bought with bribes. Moses needed such men to help him _________ the people justly and honestly. We still need capable officials today who ________ God and have integrity.

Proverbs 25:19 says, “Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot is confidence in a faithless man in time of _________. “We’ve all been disappointed by _________ officials who’ve brought shame to our cities, states, and nation. You can’t count on a man of _____ character. A man who shows low character in _________ will have low character in _________. The Lord Jesus said, “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much” (Luke 16:10).

Some say a godly man or a Christian should never serve in the government. Joseph served as second
to Pharaoh, and David served as King of Israel. God used Moses to lead His people out of bondage and to build a new nation. The Ten Commandments are both religious and social laws on which the nation of Israel was founded. Ezra was a Jew in the Persian government and Nehemiah served as an authority for the king to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Daniel as a ruler over the whole province of Babylon and a chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel also served as a commissioner to King Darius for all of Persia. Both Nebuchadnezzar and Darius were pagan kings, but Daniel lived a righteous life and was respected for his faith. Queen Esther laid her life on the line to influence King Ahasuerus of Persia, who reigned from India to Ethiopia. Paul mentions Erastus, the city treasurer of Corinth, in Romans 16:23. Godly people through the years have served as public officials.

The Old Testament prophets called nations and cities to _______ of their wickedness. When people refused God and abused their fellow-citizens, God noticed and He _________ the wicked. God said through Amos, “But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). Oh, we need to turn away from evil and turn to righteousness!

Why does all this matter? When people _______ and support the wicked, they’re actually taking a stand against God. Second Chronicles 18 tells how a good king, Jehoshaphat, made an alliance with a wicked king, Ahab, in fighting an enemy. God sent a prophet who said, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD?” (2 Chronicles 19:2).

If I vote and support an evil person who won’t stand against sin, haven’t I also said by my _______ that I won’t stand against sin? If I don’t cast my _______ for god-fearing people, wicked ones will take office. My failure to vote for what is right may _______ a wicked person to rule. “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do __________.”

Some Christians don’t vote because they believe their vote won’t make any ___________. But, in 1839, one vote elected Marcus Morton governor of Massachusetts. In 1868, one vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment. In 1876, one vote gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency of the United States. In 1923, one vote gave Adolph Hitler the leadership of the Nazi party. I tell you, one vote _______ matter greatly. We must exercise our privileges wisely to _______ what is right and good. We must let our lights shine through wise and godly _______. We have the privilege to choose godly leaders. Let’s use that privilege.

Christians are first and foremost __________ of heaven. We owe our allegiance to the Lord Jesus. Philippians 3:20-21 says, “But our citizenship is in __________, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” Citizenship in heaven is a privilege and a blessing; we must not take it __________. The best decision that you’ll ever make is to follow Jesus Christ. Do it today!

To become a citizen of heaven, _______ in Jesus Christ with all your heart. Repent of your sins; you can’t _______ with God and the devil at the same time. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Confession is a public declaration of your decision to _______ Jesus. Be baptized for the forgiveness of your ______. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in _______. It’s the time that we have our sins _________ away and become a Christian. When we’re baptized, the Lord adds us to His _______; He makes us His child. Everyone needs to be a citizen of heaven. Don’t wait another day! Come to the Lord!
Strong Faith
Hebrews 11:1-6

Without faith, it’s impossible to ______ God. What kind of faith does God ______ from His people? What does a strong faith ______ like when it’s challenged? The Word of God gives us the answer. Paul said, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The more we read and study God’s Word, the ______ our faith will become. The more we ______ God’s Word, the better we’ll know God and His will for our lives. Nothing can replace a serious study of Scripture to help you ______ in faith. Paul commended the elders of the church at Ephesus “to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). We need God’s Word to build us up spiritually and to ______ us go to heaven.

To say, “I believe,” means placing your complete ______ in the Lord Jesus. It means trusting in God when you may not fully ______ what lies ahead. Faith stands firm in your trust of God’s ______ even when life is filled with unsettling circumstances. Faith means taking God at His Word, regardless of what ______ say. Faith means being willing to act in _______ out of trust in the character and the authority of God Himself. We trust His Word, because we trust Him.

What we know about God, how He’s dealt with people in the past, should speak to what we see for the ______. It should tell us what God will do. The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone is willing to ______ His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it’s of God or whether I speak from Myself” (John 7:17). Are you willing to do His will? Do you trust God?


Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it’s impossible to ______ Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He’s a rewarder of those who ______ Him.” Faith is essential to our ______ and to living the Christian life. Faith makes a remarkable difference in how we ______, how we _____, and how we ______ others.

There’s a ______ difference between those who believe in Christ and those who don’t know Him or believe in Him. When people really believe and put their faith into ______, they make the world brighter, more loving, more positive, more joyful, more hopeful, and closer to God. When people don’t know God or have no faith in Him, they lack the ______ that comes from God; they lack the ______ of God, and the ______ of God. Without faith, they often ______ to fairy tales and myths. They build for themselves ______ that cannot talk, cannot hear their prayers, and cannot help them in a time of trouble. They live futile lives.

The Scriptures teach us of people who put their faith into practice and found the ______ of God. Hebrews 11:2 says, “For by it (that is, by faith) the men of God gained ______.” God blesses true believers. Hebrews 11 gives many ______ of faith in action.
Hebrews 11:7 says, “By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence ________ an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” Noah took what God told him to heart. He built an ark to the ________ of his family. Genesis 6:22 says, “Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.” Real faith is not ________; it is active and living. It reveals itself by ________ what God commands.

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.” God made a covenant with Abraham and made him a ________ that he would make of him a great nation. God called Abraham at the age of seventy-five, when he lived in Haran and told him to go to the land of Canaan. Abraham obeyed, even though he didn’t ________ how God would accomplish all these things or when. Faith obeys even when it doesn’t understand all the ________ why, or the ways how, or even when.

Faith ________ us to trust God and to be obedient to His Word. Do you believe the Bible is God’s Word? Do you believe that God created the world in six days and created you? Do you believe in heaven and in hell? Believing God means believing what we’ve been ________. If we don’t believe what God says in His inspired Word, we really don’t believe God.

Do you believe the Bible is ________? Do you believe God has ________ authority? Do you ________ the Lord in all that He instructs? He tells us what to believe and what to do. Are you willing to ________ God’s Word, even when it disagrees with your friends, and family, and neighbors? Are you willing to ________ your thinking on every subject to what the Bible says? Are you willing to do what the Bible says, even if you don’t ________ to? Do you believe God’s promises will ________ true?

To claim “I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Lord” means that I’ve given myself to Him and will believe what He _________. Faith is not ________ in what it believes. It doesn’t say that it believes ________ things that Jesus teaches while ________ other things. If one believes Jesus is truly God’s Son, risen from the dead and knows all things, one believes Him completely. He will stand with Jesus even when the whole ________ disagrees.

Great faith is the answer to ________. To believe in God’s promises helps us to ________ in the best way with the challenges of life. When we believe, we know God will take ________ of us. Even if we should ________ for our faith, we lose the love of God when we don’t believe. When the disciples thought the storm on the Sea of Galilee would overtake them, Jesus said to them, “Why are you ________? How is it that you have no faith?” (Mark 4:40). We all face frightening storms, but when the Lord is with us, we must not abandon all ________. The apostle Peter, inspired of God, ________ the church for the Roman persecution. Read 1 Peter 3:13-17.

Strong faith in Christ will determine ________ we will live. There’s a significant difference between those who truly believe and those who ________. Our faith in God’s teaching will determine our ________ and our _________. Since God’s Word is final and authoritative, we
reject the notion that morals are relative and dependent on circumstances. God’s morality matters. Since we believe the Lord will _______ us on the last day by His Word and by our deeds, there are firm reasons to be moral beings, to love and respect others, and to live with integrity and honesty.

Only faith in a God to whom we must _______ provides the constant motivation for right living. Read how Paul warned the Athenian philosophers in Acts 17:30-31. If I believe, I cannot keep on doing the things that are _______. If I believe, I can’t keep on lying, I can’t keep on stealing, using foul language, gossiping, getting drunk, coveting other men’s possessions; I can’t keep on committing acts of fornication, or taking vengeance, and many other sins. I must regard myself as _______ to sin and _______ to righteousness. Faith doesn’t _______ some sins as wrong and some as insignificant. To believe God means to believe _______ sin is hurtful, destructive, and wrong. Are you willing to sacrifice friendship with the world to be a Christian?

It should never _______ us that the world is worldly, filled with selfish ambition, lusts, and the desire to overthrow the _______ God placed upon us. Many have cast off the teaching of God in Scripture for their _______ opinions, morals, and desires. This rejection of faith in God shows _______ our society is in a moral mess and full of chaos. Read how the apostle Paul described the pagan world of the first century in Ephesians 4:17-19. When people _______ to give themselves to God, they start giving themselves to sin.

One talk show recently suggested that we _______ in a post-fact world. That is, people don't want the _______ if they disagree with their preconceived ideas or agendas. Some in our culture are driven more by their _______ than by their _______. They follow their passions and follow their friends rather than _______ the truth. They do what they _______ to do rather than what they _______ to do. When our desires rule over our duties, when our lusts overrule our morals, when our emotions overrule the facts, we are indeed living a _______ headed for ruin. Like the prodigal, we'll one day find total permissiveness _______ us to a pig pen.

How badly we _______ faith, a confident trust in what God says to be _______! When we leave the Truth, the way things really are as God _______ them, we’re left with chaos and confusion. Without God’s revealed will, we don’t _______ where we came from, why we’re here, or what will happen to us once this life is over. Without God’s instructions, we’re on a _______ to destruction. We need God’s teaching, God’s salvation, God’s providence, and God’s instructions. The Lord Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by _______ _______ that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Without God’s teaching there is no real nourishment for the _______.

Many people have bought into the idea that they should never express their faith to others, but should keep it _______. They believe we should _______ anything “Christian” from the public square. They would _______ Christianity from every aspect of life. When you _______ faith in Christ, you’re promoting faith in something futile, something that cannot save you or give you eternal life. You’re advocating a faith _______ on things less than God, less
than moral, and less than true. When faith in Christ is ______, people place their faith in a fantasy!

Belief in the God of the Bible is not like believing in an _______ or in some humanly manufactured religion. Belief in God is not some _______ leap of faith. Belief in God is built upon _______ evidence found in our created world, found in Scripture, found in history, found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and found in our very nature as moral beings. The DNA in every cell of your body and mine could _______ come from a great intelligence. The universe with stars, and planets, and moons could only come from a great __________. The moral conscientiousness that’s inside your ________ could only come from a moral governor. The moral and spiritual _________ found in Scripture could only come from a Divine source. Yes, there is a God in heaven, who made you, who loves you, who sent His Son to die for you, and who will one day _________ you by His Word.

Since God is ________, don’t hesitate to come to Him, to know Him, to love Him, and to obey Him. Don’t hesitate to give yourself _______ to Him. Coming to Christ means denying ourselves and taking up our crosses to ________ Him. True faith involves a ______ commitment. Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it’s no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by _______ in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20). Have you made a full commitment to Christ or are you wavering in your faith? Jesus Christ fully committed Himself to you upon the ______ for your sins in the hope that you would respond to His love by fully trusting and _________ Him. Love Him, trust Him, and serve Him! If you believe, don’t hesitate any longer.

People frequently tell themselves things that simply aren’t true rather than having to deal with what God __________. They put off making any decision or commitment. They think somehow everything will be okay in the _______ regardless of what they believe or do. Oh, it would be _______ to face the Lord in judgment spiritually unprepared. I don’t know of any promise of God to ________ the unbeliever or the disobedient.

We don’t like to think that anyone would be _______; but we mustn’t presume upon the grace of God. We have no _________ of salvation apart from grace, or apart from faith, or apart from repentance, or apart from obedience. We want the _______. We don’t want any _________ on the day of judgment. We don’t want to be __________, thinking that we’re saved, and then finding out we’re rejected.

God will save those who place their ______ in Him, those who _________ of their sins, and those who are willing to _______ His word. Read James 1:22-25. If you truly believe in Jesus Christ, if you repent of your sins, if you turn your heart to the teaching of Christ, if you confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and you’re baptized into Christ and you do that for the forgiveness of your sins, God can save you and He will. Baptism is not for little children but for those who are old enough to really believe and to repent. When you’re baptized, God will wash away all of your sins; He’ll make you His child; and you’ll have His blessing only if you remain faithful. Oh, will you be baptized, and will you remain faithful?
Time to Pray
Matthew 7:7-11

This week and every week, let’s take _______ to pray and to give thanks. Today we’re going to look at the ________ of expressing our hearts to God. We search the Scriptures for God’s will. We want to ________ God in every way, and so we take the time to _________ to what God has to say. Our Father in heaven _________ today through His written Word. He gives us a message that is ________ for all time and all people. We study God’s Word, because it has God’s wisdom. We need that wisdom!

Daniel chose to spend the night in the lions’ den rather than go one day without _________. He believed praying to God was more important than his own _______. Prayer is how we personally ________ God all the things that are in our hearts. It’s one means of adoring Him, thanking Him, and praising Him. Prayer time allows us to _________ our sins and to ask God’s forgiveness. Prayer gives us an opportunity to ask God to _________ our needs or the needs of people that we love. God invites us to pray to Him as our __________. He loves us that much.

First Thessalonians 5:17 urges us to “Pray without __________.” We should never give up on praying or lose heart. Acts 2:42 reminds us that the early _________ was “continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Colossians 4:2 says, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping ________ in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.” Why does God want us to concentrate on praying day after day? Because God knows how much ________ a strong prayer life will be to your soul. If you wish to renew your zeal for God or merely draw closer to God, then take time each day to get ________ with God and pray fervently from your heart.

Our reading today comes from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:7-11.

Even though He was the Son of God, Jesus saw ________ in prayer. Mark 1:35 says, “And in the _______ morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there.” Jesus needed time alone with the Father and He needed time to _________ His heart for the day’s tasks. Luke 5:16 says, “He Himself would _________ slip away to the wilderness and pray.” Before Jesus appointed the twelve disciples to be ________, He felt the need to pray. Luke 6:12 says, “And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the _________ night in prayer to God.” Have you ever spent even a single ________ in prayer?

I can’t imagine all that Jesus ________ on the night that He was betrayed. Jesus knew what struggles lay ahead of Him during the trials and on the _______. He knew that He would _____ a most painful death and He would bear the ________ of the whole world. He prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane for ________ hours. Luke 22:42 says He prayed, “Father, if You are willing, ________ this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.” Again, He said to His Father,
“My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy _______ be done” (Matthew 26:42).

Jesus was willing to pay the ultimate price with His own _______.

The Lord Jesus began and ended His crucifixion and His death with _________. While they were _________ Him to the cross, Jesus was praying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Even while these hardened soldiers were putting nails through His hands and feet, He was ___________ of their forgiveness. Such was His devotion to granting forgiveness to the ______. He wanted everyone to be saved. His last words after suffering for six hours, and as He was breathing his last were, “Father, into thy hands I commit my ________” (Luke 23:46). His heart and mind throughout this horrifying time was upon His relationship to the Father and _________ the Father’s will. If Jesus needed to pray, how much more so do we?

God not only wanted us to pray, He also wanted to hear our hearts, and He also knew the value of prayer to our _______ lives. Praying can _______ your life in a multitude of ways. I just want to mention a few:

First, prayer can _______ you in times of temptation. The Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the Garden of Gethsemane. He wanted them to _______ and to _______ with Him. While He was pouring out His heart in prayer, they were falling _________. The Lord Jesus told them, “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is _________ , but the flesh is ________” (Matthew 26:41). Prayer can help us to remain _______ to God in trying times. When Satan tempts us, prayer can strengthen our hearts and help us ___________ the temptation. We don’t have to ________ temptation alone. Read Hebrews 4:15-16. God will ________ us.

We also need to understand that the devil means business when he ________ us. He wants us to _____ and break our relationship with the Lord. James 4:7-8 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will ________ from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” God will ________ and help us when we pray. Someone has said, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”

Second, prayer can help you in times of _________ and struggle. First Peter 5:7 reminds us to cast “all your anxiety upon Him, because He ________ for you.” We all face worries and fears, but we can cast those anxieties on the ________. The Lord cares about you and your ________ life. No problem is too _____ or too ________ for the Lord. I love the promise in Philippians 4:6-7: “Be anxious for _________, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall ________ your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

God wants you to be at ________, to find security in Him. Instead of worrying about every _________ that comes along, tell God about it! While you’re asking, _______ Him for listening, for caring, and for helping you. What will happen, if you pray? God will give you a _______ peace of heart and mind that surpasses all understanding. He will place a _______ all around your heart and mind; He won’t let your worries overcome you. He won’t abandon you. He won’t forget you. In every difficult situation, prayer to God with faith will help you ride out the storm.
Third, prayer can help you grow ________ to God. When we pray regularly and truly _______ that the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven, we build our devotion to Him. When we see our prayers answered, it makes us _______ Him all the more. Prayer helps us _______ things differently and to want what God wants. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). How I wish ________ person in America, every person in the world hungered and thirsted for righteousness. This would change our country; it would change our world, and make it a better, more loving, more joyful, more hopeful, more honest, and more honorable society. Wouldn’t you like to live in a _______ that had no crime, no drunkenness, no immorality, no hatred, and no prejudice? Wouldn’t you like to live in a ________ where people helped each other, respected each other, and told the truth?

Prayer is the greatest precautionary measure that you can take against ________ away from the living God. The first step in falling away from God is when people _______ praying and become indifferent, and in time they _________ God altogether. Praying and being close to God will _______ you from growing complacent and apathetic. Praying ________ you of the most important matters of life. When you pray, you think of your soul and you think of the souls of those around you. In prayer, you thank God for His blessings, and this makes you appreciate and love Him all the more. Praying every day will ________ your life; taking time to talk with God will renew your spirit and keep your values and priorities straight. It will give you a _______ place to go from the world and all its temptations. Jesus needed time with His Father, and so do we.

Fourth, prayer can help you in your ______ for God. Prayer gives us the strength to carry on in our _______ for the Lord. In Ephesians 6:19, Paul asked the church at Ephesus to “pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the ________.” When we ________, God _______ the door. When we are weak, God gives us the _________ to bear our burdens. Sidlow Baxter said, “Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons – but they are helpless against our prayers.”

I think of Nehemiah, and how he heard, “The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.” Nehemiah 1:4 says, “When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and _________ before the God of heaven.” We too hear bad ______ now and then. What do you do? Nehemiah wept and mourned for days; he fasted and prayed. If you are hurting and in _______, pray for God to _______ you make a difference. God _______ Nehemiah’s prayer and helped him rebuild Jerusalem.

We all find ourselves inadequate at times, unskilled, lacking wisdom, or unprepared for the challenge. At those times, we pray for God’s _______! Paul said, “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5). This is certainly true! God can work in and through us to do things that we couldn’t do by ____________. Never give up on the ________ of prayer! Never give up on God! If we’re ever to recapture the _______ of the first century church, it will begin with prayer.
Paul praised God in Ephesians 3:20-21. He said, “Now to Him who is able to do ____ abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Fifth, praying can reassure you. Sometimes we just need to be ________ to the One we love. We need to tell Him we love Him, to thank Him, to praise Him, and to take our burdens to Him. Prayer is a great reminder that we have a “Father” in heaven. The Lord Jesus said, “your Father ________ what you need, before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). He knows all about everything, and He wants to ________ us. Read what Jesus asked in Matthew 7:9-11. God is ________ and He’s waiting for us to ask! Nothing is more reassuring than seeing prayer __________. God will answer our prayers. Read what the Lord Jesus said in Mark 11:22-24. Faith and willingness to do God’s will are vital to our prayers.

Read James 1:5-8. When I need God’s ________ to help me work through a problem, I pray and God ________. I know He has helped me in the past and will continue to help me. God isn’t offended by my asking. He’s generous and happy to help.

So, prayer is how we ________ with our Father in heaven. We can connect anytime, anyplace. We need God every _____ and every ______. How is your prayer life? Are you a man or woman of prayer?

Real prayer, heartfelt and fervent, blesses ________ God and man. Proverbs 15:8 says, “the prayer of the upright is His ________.” God wants to hear from you regularly. You don’t have to ____ God to be heard. He wants to hear your ________ prayers. It’s a joy to count my blessings and recall all the ______ that my God has done. It’s a great blessing to ______ my heart, my burdens, my fears, and my concerns with my Father in heaven, knowing He cares to listen and that He can do something about them.

When people tell me about some trouble they face, maybe it’s trouble at home, or trouble financially, trouble with their health, or trouble on the job, I ask them, “Have you prayed about it?” Don’t give up on God too ________. Don’t imagine that God is unaware of our troubles and cares. God may very well be working behind the scenes in ways that we cannot ______ and we don’t understand to answer those prayers. God doesn’t always give us what we ask for, but He always gives us what is ________ for our souls. Let’s trust in God when we pray.

Some folks think that salvation comes from simply ________ a “sinner’s prayer.” The New Testament, however, never speaks of a “sinner’s prayer.” Does that surprise you? Saying a “sinner’s prayer” is a ________ invention. To be saved, the Lord expects people to ________ in Him, to love Him, to ________ of their sins, to ________ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and to be ________ in His name for the forgiveness of their sins. In Acts 22:16, Saul of Tarsus was baptized to ________ away His sins, calling on His name. According to 1 Peter 3:21 baptism is how we ________ to God for a good conscience. We hope that you’ll follow the Lord’s teaching and be baptized today for the forgiveness of your sins. When you do, the Lord will add you to His church and make you His child.
Conversion

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

About three fourths of the people in America claim to be Christians, but many who claim this don’t _______ or _______ like Christians. Today, we’re going to talk about conversion. Nothing in life is more important than a sincere _______ of the Word of God. God has spoken to us so that we can know His will and make the _______ to our attitudes and our behavior that pleases Him and blesses us. God gave His Word for our _______. It teaches us, guides us, protects us, rebukes us, and encourages us. The Bible is our only _______ for eternal life, and we must understand what it says.

Matthew 18:1-4 speaks of an encounter that Jesus had with his disciples. The Bible says: “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘Who then is _______ in the kingdom of heaven?’ And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are _______ and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then _______ himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’” Conversion is not a childish act, because only the _______ can choose to set aside their fleshly desires and become like children.

The Lord knows our _______. He knows that we need to make conscious _______ in our thinking in order to be the kind of people who can enter heaven. We must turn from what is _______ to what is _______. We must have the humility and the faith of a child, who looks to the Lord rather than _______ on his own ability. Being converted turns our hearts from our fleshly _______ to what God expects. Repentance is deeply involved in conversion. We must have a change of heart that leads to a change of _______.


Occasionally I encounter people who are Christians in _______ only. They claim to be Christian, but you couldn’t tell it from the _______ they think, or talk, or act. They say they’re Christians, but they don’t _______ the way a committed Christian behaves. They rarely pray, rarely go to church, rarely read their Bibles, and rarely talk about Christian beliefs. By listening to their language or watching their behavior, you might not be able to distinguish them from someone who _______ goes to church. Christians in name only are as likely to gamble, or drink alcohol, or watch sexually explicit movies, or use four-letter words as people who say they have no faith at all. In fact, many of these folks have _______ living for the Lord altogether.

If you ask them if they are Christians, they might be offended; but you couldn’t tell it from the way they act or talk. For them Christianity is more inherited than _______, more assumed than embraced. They were told when they were young that their _______ was Christian.
They say they are, but one wonders if they were _______ converted to Jesus.

On other occasions, I’ve encountered folks who were once _______ church members but fell away from the truth of the _______ to follow popular religion, where worship is replaced by entertainment or the inspired gospel is replaced by man-centered doctrines or human traditions. One wonders how someone who was once strong in the faith could leave the _______ of the Scripture for a ______ or forget Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. One wonders how they could follow things that are _______ mentioned in Scripture but were innovations of men and then imagine that they’re acceptable to God. Didn’t Jesus say, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not _______ shall be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit” (Matthew 15:13-14). How can they say they are converted to the Lord Jesus?

Conversion is a life-changing event, a transition from darkness into ________, from the fleshly to the ______, from the deceptions of men to the truth of God in Scripture. Like a child, we choose to trust what God says is true and right, trust how He wants us to live, and determine how we will do whatever He commands. This change of heart is enlightening; it opens our hearts to a _______ and _______ way than the sinful ways of the world. The Lord wanted Paul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in order “to open their _______ so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:18).

To be converted means that you will change what you ________, change how you will live, and leave ______ to walk in righteousness. God doesn’t save us merely to _______ our sins. He saves us to ______ our hearts so that we can pursue a holy and righteous life! Read Titus 2:11-14. Conversion means that I ______ die to myself, die to my desires, and die to my sin. I can’t ________ to sin and still remain right with the Lord. Paul 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 ____ to sin still ______ in it?” (Romans 6:1-2). We just can’t do that! Becoming a Christian means that I die to sinful ways. I don’t _______ sin; I don’t think sinful thoughts, or at least whenever I’m tempted I don’t stay there; I don’t give in to my sinful feelings; or say sinful words anymore. I’m no longer what I _____ to be. When we’re baptized into Christ, “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” (Romans 6:6). Our attitudes and our behavior must change.

Paul concludes, “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:12-13). Some people are baptized but ______ to repent, to stop their sins, and to serve the Lord in righteousness, they never get around to that. Again, Paul says, “So then, brethren, we’re under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—
for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you’re putting to
death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:12-13). Those who call themselves a
Christian but live sinfully after the desires of the flesh will die spiritually and be ______.

Read the words of Colossians 3:5-11 that we need to follow. Oh, that, my friend, is
conversion! It’s a change of heart and life, turning from the ______ way of sin to a ______ and
righteous way that follows in the steps of Jesus.

Even a ______ spoken in private matters is important. We may think we’ve spoken or acted
in secret, but secrets don’t always ______ secret. God always sees, hears, and knows. Proverbs
15:3 says, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.” The
wicked person discounts God, ignores God, and assumes “God has forgotten; He’s hidden His
_______; He’ll never see it” (Psalm 10:2-11). But God does see and hear. Words also matter,
because they ______ our inner person. The Lord Jesus said, “The mouth speaks out of that
which fills the heart” (Matthew 12:34). Christians should speak words that edify and ______.
“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is ______ for
edification according to the need of the moment, so that it’ll give grace to those who hear”
(Ephesians 4:29).

This world is darkened, callous, ignorant, sensual, impure, and greedy. Read Paul’s
something ______ for us! What Jesus teaches is better than what the ______ offers. The
Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that he who hears My word, and believes Him who
sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life”
(John 5:24). Jesus expects his converts to ______ His Word and believe God sent Him to be
Savior, if they want eternal life.

Don’t say, “I believe in Jesus,” if you’re not __________ to believe what He says. Jesus
call Jesus “Lord” and yet never be willing to do His will is ______. God distinguishes
between a man who claims to believe and a man who actually ______ out what he believes.
First John 2:4-6 explains: “The one who says, ‘I’ve come to know Him,’ (that is, I’m a
Christian) and doesn’t keep His commandments, that person is a ______, and the truth is not in
him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the ______ of God has truly been perfected. By this
we know that we’re in him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the
same manner as He walked.” We ______ our faith and our love for Jesus by keeping His
commandments and abiding in His Word. Claiming to love Jesus while ignoring his Word is
merely a delusion. Oh, my friend be real; be genuine.

We must recognize and treat Jesus as our ______ as well as our Savior. Only then do we
have the kind of faith to be saved. Be doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude
themselves. James said that in humility we’re to “receive the word that’s implanted, which is
able to ______ your souls” (James 1:21). The faith that ______ the Lord is first humble,
realizing that God is God, who knows all, sees all, and is wiser than we are. Let’s love and trust Him enough to _______ and to do all that He commands. Considering what Jesus did for us, that’s the _______ that we can do.

Faith leads a person to ______ the Lord in every respect. If I believe in the Lord, I will love and trust Him. That means I want to be saved and live with Him _______. If I believe in Jesus, I’ll _______ that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God and my Lord. If I call Him Lord, I’ll change my _______ and I’ll change my _______. I’ll repent of every sin. I’ll stop my rebellion and I’ll honor Him by being obedient.

If I believe in Jesus, I’ll be ________ in water for the forgiveness of my sins (Acts 2:38). I’ll be _______ of water and the Spirit in baptism to enter into His kingdom (John 3:5). I will be baptized to have my sins _______ away (Acts 22:16). I want to be ________ with Him in baptism so that I can rise to _______ in newness of life (Romans 6:3-7). With humility I’ll do what the Lord says without trying to _______ that I can be saved a different way. I’ll trust Him to the point that whatever He says, I’ll do.

When we’re converted to Christ, we’ll think like Jesus thinks, love like Jesus loves, act like Jesus acts, and obey like Jesus obeyed. We’ll ______ pleasing the world and _______ pleasing God. Jesus said, “for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29). When we’re converted, we’ll _________ what people teach with what the Bible says. There are a multitude of religious _________ in our world. Conversion to Christ means I’ll stop listening to the human doctrines and start _________ everything by the Word. First Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, “But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; and abstain from every form of evil.” We must _________ religious teaching and it’s practices to see if those things come from God or from man.

The Bible says, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but _______ the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Don’t believe everything that you _______ some preachers say. Be like the noble Bereans. “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures _______ to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

When we become servants of Christ, we cannot _______ every idea that comes along. We must _______ what we hear with a Scripture! If it doesn’t agree with Scripture, don’t follow it. True disciples _______ in the words of Christ (John 8:31). We want everyone to be a _______ disciple. So believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and out of love repent of your sins, confess Jesus, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Conversion doesn’t end with a change of heart; it also changes the relationship with God. When you’re baptized you become a child of God! The Lord adds you to His church! God unites you with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection so that you can walk in newness of life. Oh, my friend won’t you be converted today?