Program Study Guides

For

December 2016
Lifted Up
John 12:27-32

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

The Lord Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up, will ________ all men unto me” (John 12:32). We would all do well today to take a long look at the ________. We know that the Scripture is what ________ us to God in heaven and His Son Jesus Christ. The Scripture teaches us what we know about the Lord Jesus. So, we ________ it again and again!

The story of the cross of Christ occupies a ________ portion of the New Testament. So important is the cross, the apostle Paul said, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him ____________ ” (1 Corinthians 2:2). A sweet lady once said that she had difficulty thinking about the death of Jesus on the cross. She wondered why we talk about something so ________ as crucifixion. Of course, the cross is an instrument of ________; but it also has a message for each of us that is so ________ that none of us can afford to miss it.

To contemplate the death of Christ will have a definite effect on the ________. No one can think long and hard about the ________ of Jesus and not be moved by it. There may be many things about the death of Christ we may not understand in this life; still the Bible does ________ some things to us of great value. The New Testament mentions the death of Christ _____ times. So, it’s helpful to ________ what we can about the death of Jesus and its connection with our salvation and our eternity. It’s touching to know that Jesus was __________ to give his head to a crown of thorns, his back to a cruel scourging, his hands and feet to nails, and his side to a spear. Asking why Jesus would do this is very, very important.

Our reading today is from The Gospel According to John 12:27-32. Jesus here was predicting His ________ upon the cross. Read James Coats’ hymn, “Where Could I Go?” At times going to the Lord is the only real option we have. Whether we know it or not, we all need God. We need His love, His peace, His joy, His hope, and His salvation.

Jesus is real and genuine. He has ________ Himself time and again to be everything that He claims. You can ________ His teaching and His promises. You can depend upon Him to ________ you through the toughest of times. Some think of Jesus as merely one among many religious ________, but Jesus is quite unique. Who else was born of a virgin? Who else fulfilled so many Old Testament prophecies? Who else arose from the dead? Who else could raise the dead, heal the sick, or walk upon water? If these are just myths, how do you account for so many disciples holding to them with their last breath?

How do you account for the ________ that Jesus fulfilled? He was ________ in Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2. He was the seed of woman. He had his hands and his feet ________ as Psalm 22:16 says. He was betrayed for thirty pieces of ________ as
Zechariah 11:12 says. He was to die with the wicked, and be buried with the _____ as Isaiah 53 prophesies. Oh, there are dozens of prophecies in the Old Testament about the _____ of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled _____ one of those prophecies. No other person in all of _____ has done that or could do that. To fulfill so many specific prophecies shows that He is from _____ . Centuries before he was born and centuries after, men still looked to Jesus as the ______ person of all history. This is still ‘AD 2016,’ “the year of our Lord, 2016.”

Unfortunately, many have ________ the Lord Jesus. I was shocked when I learned that the fastest ________ religious group in America describe themselves as unaffiliated. Nearly one in four Americans say that they have _____ religion. Many of these came from Christian ________, and for whatever reason they abandoned their faith in Jesus. They are the “unchurched” and place no allegiance in anything ___________. Perhaps you’re a person choosing to be “without God and without hope in this present world.” When you abandon God, realize this! You also abandon God’s help and hope, His peace and joy, and His love and grace.

Where will you go, my friend, to find what _____ the Lord Jesus can give? No one else has what He has. No one can give you what He can give you. No one will ever love you the way the Lord loves you. You might have a thousand friends in your lifetime, but which of your friends has ever _____ for you? Which one ever felt the repeated _____ of a cruel whip on his back? Which one ever took ______ through his hands and feet? Which one ever _______ suspended between heaven and earth until he could breathe no more for you? Which of your friends ever took your _____ upon himself and died for them? You can search the world over and never find anyone who will love you like Jesus did.!

The apostle Paul said, “For while we were still ________, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the ______ man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet ________, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8). The Lord Jesus died for us, not because we had befriended Him, but because He had come to ______ us. We were helpless, ungodly, and sinners; but Jesus died for us anyway. You can’t ________ that kind of love; it’s much deeper than a casual friendship. It’s the kind of love that we all long for, the kind of love that we cannot ignore or forget.

It’s hard for me to understand what ________ in the heart of a person who forgets what Jesus did for him. The Hebrew writer warns, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that _____ ______ from the living God. But _________ one another day after day, as long as it’s still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12-13). Yes, sin can deceive our _______ and harden them. People can become enslaved to some favorite sin to the point that they’ll ________ the church and the Lord.

You may not be caught up in sin, but your sin can _________ you from God and His people. If you say _____ to Jesus, who then will love you like He did? Who will you find to
______ for your sins? No one will, and no one can. You must _______ the consequences of your sin on your own. **Read 1 Timothy 2:3-6.** Jesus is the _______ one who could ransom you from sin.

If you reject Jesus, there is no other Savior who can __________ you from the consequences of sin. Peter said there is none other name under heaven, whereby we must be _________ (Acts 4:12). There is only one Savior, and that’s Jesus Christ. If you choose sin over Him, you need to know what Paul said, “For the _______ of sin is death, but the free _______ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). The wages of sin have not changed in all these years—it’s still death. I would hate to see you ________ your heart against God. If you do, realize that God will say no to you for the life hereafter. My friend, once this life is over, you can’t turn back the _______. You can’t wish your choices away. You will face the Lord!

Whether you face the Lord on that day, the Day of Judgment, with joy and peace or with dread and panic is up to you. You’re actually choosing life or death by your choice of whether to _______ the Lord or not. If you reject the Lord, you will not find any __________ for the hereafter. You might find great success today; you might become rich and famous; you might have great power and influence, and have the pleasures of life at every turn; but if you don’t have the Lord Jesus in your life, you’re putting your _______ at risk of being lost eternally. Paul said, “she who gives herself to wanton __________ is dead even while she lives” (1 Timothy 5:6). I suspect today there are many, many people physically _______ but spiritually ________ in their trespasses and sins.

What should you do if you find that you are living without the _______ of the cross? Take a long, long look at the cross; __________ the love of Christ with the way that you’re living your life. The cross has a way of humbling us and convicting us of sin. We’ve all grievously fallen short of the glory of God. We all deserve to be lost, but the Lord out of love paid the price to rescue us.

Perhaps you feel like David. King David _____ Bathsheba taking a bath, and apparently she was unclothed. Being tempted, he _____ for Bathsheba and the Bible said that he slept with her. When Bathsheba found that she was pregnant with David’s child, David then ________ to bring Uriah the Hittite back to cover up his sin. He tried this and that, but all of them failed. He eventually had Uriah _________ in battle and then he married his widow to try and cover things up. David’s sin, however, caught up with him. “Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and he said, ‘There were two men in one city, the one _______ and the other _______. The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing except _______ little ewe lamb, which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would _____ of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And it was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him’” (2 Samuel 12:1-6).
“Then David’s ________ burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, ‘As the LORD lives, surely this man who has done this deserves to ______. He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and he had no compassion.’” If I were David and heard such a story, I too would be angry at this selfish and unjust behavior! David had felt the ________ of his sin but thought he had covered it up so no one else would know. What Nathan said next must have stunned David. Nathan then said to David (verses 7 to 9), “You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘It is I who anointed you _____ over Israel and it is I who ________ you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your care, I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! Why have you despised the _______ of the LORD by doing evil in His sight?’”

The most important day of our lives comes when we __________ that we too have sinned and we need a Savior. We may not have been an adulterer or a killer like David, but our sins are still ______. They can deceive us; they can harden our hearts; they can ______ us our souls. We need a Savior! We need Someone who will step in to ________ us, who will pay the price for our sins. That’s what the ________ is all about. That is why He died upon the cross! First Peter 2:24 says, “He Himself _______ our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might _______ to sin and _______ to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” If you need spiritual healing, look to the cross where Jesus is lifted up and come to Him, penitent and obedient!

We live in a confusing world with many competing voices, each crying out with a different ___________. How can we know what is true? Today, some are like Pontius Pilate, who asked Jesus, “What is truth?” Jesus told Pilate, “For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to ________ to the truth. And everyone who is of the truth _______ My voice” (John 18:37). The way to the ________ is Jesus Christ. You can _______ Him! You will not be deceived or fooled.

Jesus’ actions shout that He is real and genuine. His empty tomb ________ out that He did indeed rise from the dead. If Jesus arose from the dead, then He truly is _______ and the Son of God. We can trust His words. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; and no one _______ to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6). He promised in John 8:31-32, “If you ________ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you ________.” In our confused world, it’s reassuring to know the One who is the Truth! By His Word, we can _______ right and wrong. By His Word, we can know what’s true and what’s false!

If you believe in Jesus Christ and you love Him for dying on the cross, repent of every sin, confess Him as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water. When you’re baptized, God will wash away your sins (Acts 22:16); He’ll add you to His church (Acts 2:47); He’ll make you His child (Galatians 3:27); and He’ll raise you up to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). So, obey the Lord today!
Pleasing God
2 Corinthians 5:6-9

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

Each day we’re choosing what is __________ to us. Who are you __________? Who is important to you? Today, we’re going to explore the ______ to please God. The Scriptures teach us how to ______ God and to be ______ to our fellow man. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your ________, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” The Word of God is good. We should welcome the _________ it brings to our lives. If you want to be a better person, follow the _________ standard found in God’s Word.

Each day we’re choosing what _________ and the direction of our lives. Some choose a _______ path, while others choose the _________ way. The Lord Jesus said, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). The broad way is _________ and easy. It attracts lots of people, but they may not know their __________. The things that seem attractive and popular may be destructive.

Jesus urges us to __________ the small gate and the narrow way that leads to life. The choice is whether to follow the _________ or to follow Jesus. Choose Jesus, because He alone can lead you to _________ life. The apostle Paul asked, “For am I now seeking the _________ of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10). What are you choosing?

Our reading today comes from 2 Corinthians 5:6-9.

The Lord Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father _________ Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I _________ do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:28-29). Jesus lived to please His Father in heaven. He was entirely unselfish. He gave up everything to do the Father’s will and to save mankind from sin. Because our world _________ us often to be self-centered, we find it hard to understand how anybody could devote himself totally to the will and pleasure of someone else. Many think that the only way to happiness is to be their own _________ and to serve no one. They think selfish ambition will lead them to greatness. They may even suppose the _________ apply to everyone else, but not to them. The Lord Jesus, who has passed through the heavens, and the King of kings and Lord of lords, however, chose to be a ____________.

The Lord explained to his disciples, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over
them, and their great men exercise __________ over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28). The Lord Jesus saw greatness not in possessions or power, but in __________ and __________.

So, we must ask ourselves, “how do we __________ God?” The Scriptures give us the answer. First, we must place our ______ in God. Hebrews 11:1-2 says, “Now faith is the assurance of things ______ for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval.” The blessing of God comes only to those who ________. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” You cannot expect to please God if you ________ to believe in Him or in what He teaches. Believing in God means believing what God says. You believe what He teaches and you’re willing to ________ His instructions.

Second, we cannot ______ sin and ______ sin and still please God. Read 1 John 2:15-17. Each day we’re choosing whether we’re going to follow our passions and the love of this ________ or whether we’re going to follow the ________ and love Him.

The world tells us that we may pursue whatever fleshly passion that we ________. But just because the world says something is okay doesn’t mean God is pleased by it. Read Romans 8:5-8. You can’t continue following the __________ of the flesh and think God won’t mind. He knows your heart, and a mind set on the flesh cannot please God.

So, Paul urges us, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please” (Galatians 5:16-17). When people follow the flesh and the world, they actually make themselves an __________ of God according to James 4:4. Following the world will do nothing but ______ your life and your soul. Galatians 5:24 says, “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” My friend, do you follow Christ or do you follow your passions?

Third, we must love God _______ than others. The Lord Jesus said, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 10:37-39). The Lord expects us to put Him _______ in all things, even before our loved ones. We may have a family member who challenges our __________ to Christ. We cannot let our love for anyone in our family lead us ________ from God or from His teaching. If we let people come between God and ourselves, we’re not _______ of Christ. Though we are to love all people, even our enemies, we must love Christ even more.

John tells of some Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus but loved their friends more than they loved God. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless many even of the ________ believed in
Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for _______ that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” They believed, but were unwilling to ________ it openly. They didn’t want to lose their status in the community. So, they feared the Pharisees more than God and loved their place in the community more than the approval of God.

Fourth, we must love Christ more than our ____________. Paul is the perfect example of someone who gave up ______________ in his past in order to follow Christ. Read what he said in Philippians 3:4-8.

Paul left his place in Judaism to become a Christian. He “was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions” (Galatians 1:14). But, all that heritage, all of it couldn’t do what ________ could do for him. He wanted Christ! He wanted to be right with God! My friend, do you?

Fifth, we need to __________ the Lord in the way that pleases Him, not ourselves. Worship by its very ________ is a means of honoring, praising, and showing respect for the Person that we worship. We want God to be pleased with our sacrifices. Hebrews 13:15-16 says, “Through Him (that is, through Christ) then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of ________ to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such ___________ God is pleased.” God wants His people to ________ their hearts, their lips, and their lives in worship to Him.

God accepted the worship that Abel offered, but He refused to accept Cain or his sacrifices. Hebrews 11:4 explains, “By faith Abel offered to God a ___________ sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.” Abel’s gift was by ________, while Cain’s gifts lacked that quality. We need faith in God when we worship. That means that we ___________ to His instructions, His commandments, and do them.

Worshippers in Isaiah’s time thought they could live any way they pleased and God would accept their ________. We find these words in Isaiah 1:15-17: “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, (God says) I will _____ My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not ________. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.” Their immoral and wicked lives made their ___________ unacceptable to God. Only when they repented would God ________ their prayers and accept their worship.

Sixth, we must not let other ________ interfere with our service to God. The apostle Paul told the young preacher Timothy, “You therefore, my son, be ________ in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, you entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of
everyday life, so that he may ________ the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:1-4).

We can get so ________ with our own lives that we ________ our commitment to God. The Lord Jesus described how some hearts were like seed sown on thorny soil. “The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no ________ to maturity” (Luke 8:14). You can hardly serve the Lord when you allow every ________ that blows to come before Him, and His instructions, and the way He wants you to live, and going to church. Whenever you let other things interfere with your ________ God, then you really can’t please Him.

Seventh, God is pleased when His people ________ Him. God told Saul to go and utterly destroy all the Amalekites and all of their livestock, but Saul ________ to obey God. He brought back King Agag; and the best of the sheep and oxen to offer up as sacrifices. God regretted that He had made Saul king, because He_______ back from following Me and has not carried out My commandments. Saul feared the ________ and forgot about God. When he was confronted, the prophet Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much ________ in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in ________ the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than ________, And to heed than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22). Obeying God means doing His will, pleasing Him, and serving Him the ________ that He instructs. Look at your life, look at your attitudes! Are you, pleasing to God? Second Corinthians 5:6-9 says, “Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we’re absent from the Lord—for we ________ by faith, not by sight—we’re of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be ________ to Him.” What is your ambition? How badly do you want to be ________ with God? How badly do you want to be ________ from sin? How badly do you want to be “at home with the Lord”?

God wants you to come home to Him and live with Him ________. He sent Jesus to the cross so you could be ________. God loves you and wants to ________ you. That love and grace of God calls you to ________ to Him in faith and love. Love for God means that you’ll see your sins differently than you did in years past. You’ll wish you had ________ committed them and don’t ever want to commit them again. It’s that penitent, contrite ________ that pleases God. David said about God, “For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You’re not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:16-17).

God wants to forgive you. Trust in Him, trust in His Word; repent of your sins and turn to the Lord; confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God; and be ________ into Christ. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water. When you’re baptized, you can ________ God’s gift of forgiveness. You can be a child of God and an heir of heaven. Why wait even another day to get right with God? There’s no better day than today to make your calling and election sure!
Where is God?
Proverbs 3:5-7

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

Some folks think God is _________ in our world today; others say that God is _______. Is God ________ and active in the world today and working for our ________? We want to know all we can about God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; and the way to know God is through a __________ of His Word, the Bible. So, we go again and again to Scripture.

How we view God matters greatly in how we view _______ and how we understand our purpose and role in this world. An atheist does not believe God _______ at all. An agnostic says he doesn’t know whether God exists, because he thinks God is unknowable. Some believe God got the world going and then abandoned it. Others hold that belief in God was relevant in ancient times, but God is now dead. We no longer ______ God in our lives today according to them.

Several years ago in graduate school, I spent a couple of semesters studying skeptics and atheists. One thing I found was that skepticism and atheism grew more out of an __________ than it did out of evidence. Atheists and skeptics tended to __________ on the disorder and the ugly in life. They seemed to __________ the order, the beauty, the grandeur, and the wisdom so evident in our universe. They were intelligent people, but they missed the intelligent __________ that’s all around us. I’m amazed at how easily people can ______ into a very narrow view of life and of God. Some folks close their eyes and their minds to the __________ of God and see only the evil and the ugly. God is good and actively __________ us every day. Thankfully, we can know Him and what He’s done for us to bless us and give us __________ life.

Our reading today comes from the book of Proverbs 3:5-7.

Paul said, “I pray that the _______ of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Ephesians 1:18-19). God wants our hearts to be open to His __________. God’s power towards us who believe is __________ than we think!

Have you ever experienced an "aha!” moment—awakening to something that’s a great _______ that had eluded you? That’s what Paul wanted for the Ephesians. He wanted them to understand what God causes to happen—God is at ______! God has great power—and His power works in the _______ of His people.

You might ask how God is at work. He’s working in a variety of ways. First, God works in the _______. As a prophet, King David said, “The heavens are telling of the _______ of God; and their expanse is declaring the _______ of His hands” (Psalm 19:1). One can hardly __________ at the beauty, the order, and the wisdom of the universe and not see how wise and
how powerful God is. The God who makes the sun shine and flowers bloom, the God who regulates times and seasons has such great power and wisdom that it’s truly __________ our understanding. Paul proclaimed: “And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without __________, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:16-17). All that we have, all our blessings ______ from God!

Jesus is not only our Creator, He’s also the one who keeps this world together. Colossians 1:15-17 says, “And He (speaking of Jesus) is the __________ of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were __________, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things ______ together.” God’s power and wisdom cause our seasons, cause the earth to rotate every 24 hours making night and day, cause the moon to revolve around the earth every 28 days and control the tides of the ocean, and cause the earth to go around the sun every 365 and one fourth days determining our year and our seasons. This could not just happen on its own; God has been in __________.

The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, “Give us this ______ our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). We’re blessed to have food to eat each day, food that God ________. Have you ever thought about the ______ of one seed planted in the ground? One kernel of corn planted in the ground, watered, and fertilized can produce an ear of corn with sixteen rows and 800 kernels. Many cornstalks will have more than one ear! God created that kernel of corn with the information and the ability to reproduce itself that way. God is indeed powerful! Read what the Lord Jesus said in Mark 4:27-29. God has been taking ______ of us in marvelous ways for a very long time.

Second, God is at work in your ___________. God sent His Son to die upon the cross; God through the Holy Spirit inspired men to ______ the Bible including the gospel, which has the power to save; and Christ built His ______, who are the saved. From the very beginning, God has been ________ toward your salvation and mine. Read what the apostle Paul said by inspiration in Ephesians 2:4-9.

The salvation that we ______ through Christ was not easy. It’s the ______ of God, and for that we are thankful. But great gifts are not cheap, and our redemption came at a ______ greater than silver or gold. God sacrificed his Son Jesus, and Jesus sacrificed His ______ on the cross for you and me. We must not take our salvation for granted or treat it ______ as if it were trivial. People who mock the Lord, people who ignore the cross, or criticize the church are usually unthankful for what God has done to ______ them. They don’t realize what He sacrificed to give them ______ life. The Bible is the message of that life. Without the message of the Bible, we would all be in great peril—without hope and without God in this present world.

The Bible teaches us how to come to Christ, and how the ______ of Christ cleanses us, and how we can have ______ life with Christ. Read what the Bible says in Colossians 2:12-13. You may not realize it, but it is God who is “at work” in __________.
In baptism, God ________ us with Christ; God washes away our sins; God takes away that old man of sin; God ________ us with Christ; and God ________ us up from spiritual death to newness of life. In baptism, God adds us to the ________ and God makes us His children. Oh, God is very busy working on us in  ________ . For this reason, I cannot quite understand why anybody would say baptism is unnecessary for our salvation. Baptism is when God works on us.

God doesn’t ________ us once we’re saved. Every Christian ________, and that’s unfortunate. Christians wish they could keep from sinning, because they love God and they ________ it when they sin and they want to stop it afterward. God knows that we’re ________, but He’s also provided for our weaknesses. The Bible says, “Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw ________ to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). That’s what Jesus is ________ right now for us. He’s interceding with the Father on our behalf, asking the Father to ________ us and to continue blessing us, even when we have sinned. Oh, I am so thankful for the Lord who loves me enough to pray for me.

Third, God is at work answering ________. The Bible says, “It will also come to pass that before they call, I will ________; and while they are still speaking, I will ________” (Isaiah 65:24). God wants to hear your prayers. In fact, He ________ you to pray to Him. The Bible says, “Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from ________, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow” (James 1:17). God loves us enough to hear our prayers and to help us when we ________ Him. The apostle Paul reminds us, “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding 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” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Fourth, God is busy shaping our ________. He works in us. The Bible says, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good ________ in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6). Yes, God prepares His people to do His work, so that we may ________ for an eternity in heaven with Him. What God is doing in us now ________ us for the life to come. The Bible says, “So then, my beloved, just as you’ve always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). God is shaping our hearts, our attitudes, our will, and our lives to conform to His ________, so that we might live with Him always.

God also saved us so that we might be His ________, doing good works and impacting the world for love and righteousness. The Bible says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should ________ in them” (Ephesians 2:10). So much ________ is being done in the world because of the love of God and the teaching of the Bible: Christians feed the hungry, they take care of widows and orphans, they help unwed mothers; they provide help to the lonely and homeless; and they point sinners to righteousness.
I saw a book written by a skeptic, called *The God Problem*. His subtitle suggested that God never addresses the problem of _______ in the Bible. I wondered which Bible he was reading from because it’s not the Bible that I’ve spent my life studying. God knows all about our _________, and the cross of Christ demonstrates God’s willingness to suffer for us. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for _______ to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” God doesn’t stop every event of suffering, but God does use even suffering to work for our _______. We don’t always understand what God is doing or why; but we know that God _______ us and will use every circumstance in our lives, pleasing or painful, to work for good in some way. We can trust God!

**Read what David, who was inspired of God, said in Psalm 103:1-5.**

God has been working in our lives a very _______ time. He isn’t hidden, but we do get distracted by life and sometimes we’re unable to _______ what He’s doing. The Bible reminds us of all the good that God is doing _______ us and _______ us. Paul said, “And now I commend you 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). Oh, God’s Word is far from being __________. It’s the source of love and life and good and righteousness. Oh, we need the Bible every day to help us grow and to live as God intended.

I join Paul in His prayer in Ephesians 1:18-19: “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.” God can work in your _______, IF you let Him. He won’t twist your arm; He won’t make you do anything. But if you out of love put your life into His hands, God can do __________ things.

It’s not the _______ of God that is lacking. It’s not the willingness of God to _______ in our lives that is lacking. What is lacking is our willingness to _______ God into our hearts and our lives.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the L ORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” You’ve got to _______ Him and let Him work in you. God desires that we _______ in Jesus Christ enough to obey Him and to trust His promises.

That starts by trusting Him enough to _______ of your sins and _______ the name of Christ before others. Christ doesn’t want a _______ disciple. He wants you to confess with your mouth that He is your Lord and that you believe He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. After you’ve repented and made that confession, God wants you to be _______ into Christ, where God cleanses you with the blood of Jesus and makes you into one of His own children. Won’t you do that today? Won’t you obey the gospel and put the Lord first? Will you let God work in your life?
Jesus Blesses Us
John 1:9-13

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

The Scriptures reveal several reasons why Jesus came into this world, and each of those reasons describes a __________ for mankind. The Lord’s coming into the world touches each of our lives and opens up a wonderful way for us to ________ God. The Bible teaches us the truth that we ______ to know, the truth that we ______ know. That’s why we keep studying this marvelous book. We work to _______ interested people to the Lord Jesus and to His Word, the Bible. God’s Word has all the ________ for our spiritual lives. It teaches us where we came from, why we’re here, and where we’re going after we die. The Bible is God’s marvelous ___________ for us. It gives us all the information that we need to know for life and godliness. It brings us to Jesus and teaches us how to live so that we might _______ Him.

Of all our blessings, nothing could be more important than having a _________ relationship with Jesus Christ. Someday this _______ and all it possesses will be burned up and destroyed. What will matter on that day is your _________ relationship with God, the God who loves you and gave His Son, Jesus, to die for your sins. Jesus Christ is the perfect _______ of love, of righteousness, of service, and of obedience. Because of Jesus, we can _______ the truth, and the truth can set us free (John 8:32). Because of Jesus, we have hope and peace and a future.

We need Jesus Christ in this generation as much as any generation could. I cringe when I think of people mocking _______ or ignoring Him. How foolish to turn down an opportunity to know and follow the Son of God! Jesus came into this world to _______ us. I don’t want you to miss out, and I don’t want to miss out. I want you to have every blessing in Christ.


I’m deeply ______ that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world. Our lives would be immeasurably ______ if Jesus had not come. We can know so many things that we wouldn’t have known, because Jesus came. We can have a ________, loving relationship with the Father, because of Jesus. We have a living _______ beyond this grave because, of Jesus. We have a home in _______ forever and ever because, of Jesus. Today, we’ll explore five reasons why Jesus came into the world. These are not the only reasons, but they are vitally important to our spiritual well-being.

First, Jesus came into the world so that we might _______ God. The Bible says, “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him” (John 1:17-18). Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; and no one _______ to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My
Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him” (John 14:6-7).

Second, Jesus came into the world so that we might know God’s will for our lives. Read John 3:1-2. Jesus was first and foremost a teacher; He wanted people not only to know God but to know the _______ of God. So, Jesus held this teaching to be essential to us. John 6:63 says, “the words that I have ________ to you are spirit and are life.” We must know and _______ the words of the Lord. Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23.

You cannot say no to the _________ of the Lord without saying no to the Lord Himself. Jesus wanted us to know His teaching because it will be the basis for our __________ on the Last Day. Jesus took special _______ to deliver the teaching accurately and faithfully. Read what the Lord said in John 12:48-50.

When the Bible teaches something, you can be _______ it’s what the Lord Jesus wants us to know. Don’t trust your feelings, or your assumptions, or the teachings of men, or anything but what you can ______ in your New Testament. The only way that you can know the will of the Father for ______ is by looking at the words of Jesus Christ.

Third, Jesus came into the world so that we might have a relationship with God. Read what the Bible says in John 1:11-13. God wants everybody to come to Him and to be His ________, but not everyone wants to do His will.

God will forgive anyone’s ______ who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of sin, and be baptized. The gospel is for _____, Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave or free. Anyone who loves the Lord and is willing to obey Him can be _______ and become a child of God. The apostle Peter said to the Roman Gentile, Cornelius, “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who ______ Him and does what is _______ is welcome to Him” (Acts 10:34-35).

People who _______ to be close to the Lord but are unwilling to do the will of God fool themselves. You can’t continue to live in rebellion to the will of God and then expect to have a __________ relationship with the Lord. The Lord wants to draw close to you; but if you reject His will, you’re rejecting Him, and His blessing.

Fourth, Jesus came into the world so that we might be __________. In Matthew 1:21, an angel of the Lord told Joseph about Mary: “she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will _______ His people from their sins.” In John 1:29, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the _______ of the world.”

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that He ______ His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This passage has so much to say about God’s ______ for us. The Father loved us enough to _______ His Son, Jesus, on the cross so that we might have forgiveness of sins and become children of God; to me, this is amazing. God gave up His Son to a crucifixion, the worst and most shameful death that a man could _______. He did it because He truly loved us and truly _______ what sin
has done and would do to us. He gave Jesus as the only way to _______ for our sins.

In Luke 19, the New Testament tells the story of Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, the wee little man who followed Jesus. When the people grumbled that Jesus had gone to be the _______ of a man who is a sinner, Jesus said, “Today _______ has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was _______” (Luke 19:9-10). The Lord Jesus has graced the _______ of so many sinners, people who thought they would forever be enslaved to a life for which they are ashamed. The Lord gives us hope that we can _______ and be freed from the guilt and the hold of sin over our lives.

On another occasion when Jesus was eating with tax-collectors and sinners, the Pharisees asked His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and _______?” But when Jesus heard this, He said, ‘It’s not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are _______. But you go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners’” (Matthew 9:11-13).

Jesus went where the need was greatest, to those who needed Him _______. He wasn’t like the Pharisees who thought they were _______ than others; He wanted to heal the spiritual diseases of people. He knew everyone had a _______, and so He didn’t pick and choose which people He liked and ignore the rest. He loved everybody and suffered on the _______ for every person.

Many believe the Lord predestined or arbitrarily chose which people He would _______ and which would be _______. Because of this false teaching, and it is false teaching, some believe that they can’t ever be _______ with the Lord, no matter what. I tell you, nothing could be farther from the _______. Jesus loves everybody and He died for the sins of _______ person.

Titus 2:11 says, “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men (all people).” Those who say Jesus shed His blood only for the _______, or the saved, contradict the Word of God. The inspired apostle John wrote to the elect in the church that Jesus “is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but also for the sins of the _______ world” (1 John 2:2). The Lord’s heart is not small; He has a place in His heart for you, my friend.

The apostle Paul, who described himself as the chief of sinners, realized that God’s _______ was greater than his sins. Read what Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:15-16.

Jesus came to this earth to _______. He was born with a body, a body destined to _______ for the sins of the world. Hebrews 10:4-7 says: “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a _______ have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your _______, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

Jesus Christ gladly suffered and sacrificed His life so that we might _______ with Him for
eternity. The Lord said, “For this reason the Father _______ me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father” (John 10:17-18). Jesus Christ gave His body and His life as an ______ of great, personal love for you and for me.

Fifth, Jesus came into the world to give us an abundant _______. The Lord Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This promise of God has proven _______ on so many levels. The Lord Jesus has given us an abundant life here and will provide for us a _______ in heaven. Ephesians 1:3 reminds us that God “has blessed us with _______ spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Oh, God hears our _______; God grants us forgiveness and peace; God gives us living hope through the resurrection of Jesus; and God gives us His Word, the Bible, to instruct and guide us, and to encourage us each day.

Jesus blesses us so richly that I cannot imagine even one day _______ from the Lord. Spiritual death takes place when a person _______ against God. The word “death” describes a separation. Physical death, according to James 2:26, is the separation of the physical body from the _______. Spiritual death takes place when we sin against God and separate ourselves from God. Jesus died to reconcile us, to bring us back together with God. The blood of Jesus atones for our sins and allows us to come back into the grace and _______ of God our Father. His blood opens the _______ for us to live as children of God and to have hope in the hereafter. Don’t let a single day, not a single hour, pass without the blessing of Jesus Christ in Your life.

When I think about Jesus Christ coming into this world, I recall the time that my wife Jackie and I visited Israel. We saw much of the nation. We especially liked our trip to the northern town of Banias, what the Bible calls Caesarea Philippi. The New Testament records a heart-searching question, a question that we must also ask ourselves. Read Matthew 16:13-15.

Who is Jesus to you? How do you _______ Him? That may be the most important question you ever answer. Some today say that He was only a _______; others say that He was only a _______; and still others say that He was a great moral teacher. Peter answered Jesus by saying, “You are the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of the living God.” Can you say that, too? Is He your Lord? Do you say that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God? If we _______ the Lord and commit our lives to Him, we can enjoy His blessings. If we turn Him down, we’ll lose the blessing that He came to give.

You can commit your life to Him by loving Him with all your heart, placing your _______ in Him as the Christ, turning away from all sin and then committing yourself to live as He wills, and by being _________ into Christ. Baptism is the immersion in water of a repentant believer. When you’re baptized God washes away your sins (Acts 22:16). He gives you newness of life (Romans 6:4). My friend, today is the best day for you to commit your life to God.