



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*Program
Study Guides*

**For
September 2021**



Created in the Image of God

Have you considered the _____ God created you in His image? Being created in God's image is no small _____! Let's take some time today to consider it. We're here to _____ the Scriptures for God's will. In SEARCH of the Lord's Way _____ broadcasting 41 years ago on September 1, 1980. Mack Lyon was its founder and speaker for _____ years. He passed away in 2015 at the age of 93. We thank God for his _____ for God and people and for his hunger to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When God saw all that He had made, He said it was very _____. God created man in His likeness and knew that the more each person _____ to be like God the better for all humanity. Like God, man could reason, could choose, and could communicate. God gave each person a conscience that gave them a self-awareness, and led them to evaluate their _____ behavior. They knew when they had done something _____ and they knew when they did something that was _____.

God expects those who turn to Him as Christians to live in a _____ that reflects the image of God. Ephesians 4:21-24 says, "if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him (that is, in Jesus), just as _____ is in Jesus, in reference to your former manner of life, that you lay aside the _____ self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the _____ self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." God gave us the Bible so that we may know what it means to _____ the Lord and live righteous lives. While God created each of us with the _____ to be like Him, we must be willing to follow His teaching.

Our reading today comes from the first book of the Bible, Genesis 1:26-31, and discusses the creation of mankind.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that You have created us in Your image, we're thankful Father for all the blessings that You've given to us through all of these years, and Father we pray that You will continue to be with us, and help us to be devoted to You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Hebrews 12:9 says that God is the _____ of spirits. The spirit you have and I have came from God. While other creatures on earth are _____, only man was given a spirit and created in the likeness of God. What does that mean? How do humans _____ from the other creatures God made? William Grasham in his commentary on Genesis published by Truth for Today presents several differences between mankind and animals. First, only man can think above himself and _____ about his thoughts. He can ask the most important _____, "Who am I?", "Where did I come from?", "Why am I here?", or "What will happen to me after I die?" Only man considers his _____ or tries to discover his origin or heritage. Only man wants to know about his _____ for existing or evaluates his place in life. Animals never struggle over such concepts; they just _____.

Second, only man is able to _____ from experience, to accumulate knowledge from others, and to share that knowledge and wisdom with those who follow. Man is the only creature to whom _____ and the past are important. He accumulates knowledge from the past and cares enough to share it, so that the following generations _____ more knowledgeable than his own. As William Grasham noted,

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“Man can preserve knowledge in both oral and written forms, so that his children and grandchildren don’t have to discover everything anew.”

Third, only man has dominion or _____ over the earth and all the animal kingdom. God gave mankind this rule, when He created them; but this rule is a sacred trust and stewardship. While man’s physical body requires food, water, and air as the animals do, man is the _____ creature who can hear and meditate the words that God revealed. Certain animals have physical abilities that far exceed humans, but God made man _____ as well as physical.

Fourth, only man shows restlessness with the _____ things of life. Perhaps this is true because God “has also set eternity in their _____” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). While man longs for more than he has, animals are _____ with the necessities of life. While man fails to be satisfied with who he is, what he looks like, what he knows, what he experiences, or what he accomplishes, animals don’t _____ to see, hear, or experience something new all the time.

Fifth, only man is a moral being with a _____ of oughtness. His conscience makes it mandatory for him to _____ with right and wrong. His conscience bears _____ to his behavior and his thoughts alternately accusing or defending him (Romans 2:14-16). He longs to have a _____ conscience (1 Peter 3:21). While animals act on instinct doing what comes _____, mankind constantly evaluates his thoughts and actions morally and ethically. Only man is a _____ moral agent with the ability to choose how he will live.

Romans 6:16 says that we can present ourselves as _____ for obedience to sin that results in death or to obedience to God, which results in righteousness. Verses 17-18 remind us that we can _____ course: “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of _____ to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” We thank God that we don’t have to be trapped by enslavement to sin, that we can become the people God intended!

Sixth, only man has an aesthetic nature that allows him to _____ art, music, and poetry. Animals care nothing for aesthetic matters because such things don’t _____ their well-being. Though birds can instinctively weave intricate nests from things they find on the ground, and spiders can instinctively produce and weave intricate webs from the silk strands coming from the tiny organs called spinnerets in their abdomens, only man shows the ability to _____ many different intricate and beautiful things.

Seventh, only man has a concept of a _____ life beyond the grave. Only man thinks to _____ for the life beyond. He may fear death and mourn the departed, but he has _____ for life beyond. He sees this life as precious but realizes it’s not the _____. He also realizes there will be a _____ that affects his eternity. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must _____ appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his _____ in the body, according to what he’s done, whether good or bad.” Only man works to lay up _____ in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy.

Yes, God created mankind in His image; and man is unique. Grasham observed, “The blessing of this uniqueness is attached to a _____ responsibility to serve and to praise the Creator.” We exist to give _____ to God, our Creator. The twenty-four elders of Revelation 4:10-11 _____ God who lives forever and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created.” God wanted the _____ for mankind, but mankind lost sight of God.

Though made in God's image, people _____ to follow their selfish desires and ignored the warning of the Lord God. They chose evil and _____ themselves much suffering and heartache. First, it was Adam and Eve sinning by _____ from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God punished Adam and Eve by expelling them from the Garden of Eden. Adam had to _____ for his food by the sweat of his brow. God caused Eve to _____ at childbirth and yet to desire their husbands who will "rule over you." God also cursed the _____ because of Adam's sin; "both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you" (Genesis 3:17-18).

Genesis 4 tells how Cain offered up a _____ that God didn't accept, but He accepted Abel's offering. This resulted in Cain becoming _____ at his brother and murdering him. First John 3:12 describes Cain as one "who was of the _____ one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his _____ were evil, and his brother's were righteous." Evil grew in Cain's _____ to the extent that he would murder his innocent brother.

Years later the Lord witnessed how evil had multiplied throughout humanity. Genesis 6:5-7 says: "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was _____ on the earth, and that every intent of the thought of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was _____ that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, 'I will _____ man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.'" God decided to destroy the world, but Noah found _____ in God's sight. No matter how bad things got, God was still wanting to offer _____ that people could live right before God. Noah built an ark just as the Lord _____, and God brought eight people safely through the water. First Peter 3:21 says, "Corresponding to that, baptism now _____ you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Just as the ark gave hope to Noah, the _____ of Christ that saves through baptism can give us a good conscience.

Scripture can _____ us about the glory and power of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture can open our _____ so that we can see God's holiness; it also helps us to see ourselves as God sees us. Isaiah 6 tells of Isaiah's vision of God. The Lord was sitting on a _____, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim, that is heavenly beings stood above him, and one called out, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, The whole earth is full of His _____." When Isaiah saw the majesty and the holiness of the Lord, he said in verse five, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I'm a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have _____ the King, the LORD of hosts."

We sometimes compare ourselves with _____ people, because we can always find someone who is morally lower than we think we are; but if we _____ ourselves with our holy God, we know that we can never measure up. We can begin to see ourselves as we truly are: sinners in _____ of salvation. Like the prophet Isaiah, we realize that without the Lord Jesus, we too are _____. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes us when we're separated from Christ, "And you were _____ in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the _____ of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

If the Scripture had stopped there, we'd all have to face being children of _____. Ephesians 2:12 reminds the Gentiles, who had come out of paganism into Christianity, what their way of life was like before coming to Christ: "remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the

commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no _____ and without God in the world.” I can think of nothing worse. The pandemic of 2020 separated us from one another, which was heartbreaking; but to be separated from God and without hope is the _____ condition of all.

I’m thankful for verse 13: “But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought _____ by the blood of Christ.” You might be living in a way that’s far off from God, filled with guilt and regret; but you can draw near to God because of the _____ of Jesus Christ. You can _____ and become a new creature. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a _____ creature; the _____ things passed away; behold, new things have _____.” People who are without God and without hope can come to Christ and find hope and live for the God who created them. You can break from the old ways and be _____ again.

Because of the blood of Jesus, you can be _____ and become a child of God. Ephesians 2:19-22 describes what became of the converted Gentiles who came to Christ: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you’re fellow _____ with the saints, and are of God’s household (His family), having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy _____ in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” In Christ, you’re no longer a _____ to God but part of His family. You’re a fellow citizen with the saints. Every person in God’s family, the _____, is now a saint. A saint is a person whom God considers holy. We are washed, sanctified, and justified by the _____ of Christ. You can leave hopelessness for hope and wrath for salvation. You were created in His image; now become God’s child.

Let’s pray together. “Heavenly Father help us to be obedient to Your will, to turn from the things of this sinful world and to live in righteousness, knowing that we were created in Christ to be Your child. Help us heavenly Father to love You and to serve You always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

God created you in His image because He wanted you to be _____ Him and to live in love and righteousness. The Lord Jesus wants you to _____ forever a place in the Paradise that He is preparing for you in heaven. God wants us all to put away the evil of the past and to live _____ lives devoted to godly ways. Colossians 3:8-10 says, “But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.”

Jesus Christ can help us _____ the person God intended us to be. We can leave the old sinful life and become people who _____ the image of God, who can choose the righteous path and _____ the way of sin. We don’t have to be trapped in a lifestyle of shame and guilt. We have an _____ in Jesus Christ.

Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Decide today that you will no longer practice the sins that make you guilty and ashamed. Repent. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and make Him your Lord. Be baptized into Christ Jesus, uniting with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. When you’re immersed (that is, baptized in water), God will wash away your sins and give you newness of life (Acts 22:16; and Romans 6:3-7). You can be a new creature, you can be a child of God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there’s probably a church of Christ near you. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one.

Never Alone

Living alone presents _____ emotional and spiritual challenges to adults today. Today, we're exploring what God _____ for those who live alone. We're here to _____ the Scriptures for the Lord's Way. This is God's instruction _____ for everyone, in every stage of life, and in every circumstance. Whatever struggle or heartache you face, God has some comfort and help for you in the _____. He's not forgotten or abandoned you. He knows and cares about you.

Many years ago, I did a funeral for an elderly man who had no _____ at all. Three funeral directors and I carried his casket to the graveside service; two ladies from the nursing home and I sang some hymns. No _____ else attended. Six people, no family, no friends. This man was utterly alone and buried by _____.

Loneliness is a _____ problem in our society. More than 53 percent of _____ adults in the United States are unmarried; that's over 110 million people. A study by the American Council of Life Insurance reported that the loneliest group in America are _____ students. The survey next listed divorced people, welfare recipients, single mothers, rural students, housewives, and the elderly. Loneliness is a widespread problem; in fact, one in four people complain about _____ lonely frequently. Persistent loneliness can _____ our mental and physical health.

The LORD God said to Adam in Genesis 2:18, "It's not _____ for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Living without a _____ is difficult, whether you've never married, have lost your spouse, or have been divorced. **Loneliness is painful and can confuse you into thinking that you are a loser or an outcast, but that's not necessarily so.**

Our reading today is a Psalm of David, Psalm 139:1-5.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You love us and that You watch over us every day of our lives, and that You are so close. We're grateful Father for Your promises and for Your blessings. Help us to love You and to serve You always. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Loneliness makes people _____ sad and empty, cut off from others and needing companionship. Loneliness typically includes _____ because people need to connect with family. We all _____ a companion who shares our lives and dreams, who walks through life with us, who experiences our joys and sorrows, and who shares our responsibilities and decisions. Connecting with another is more than _____ in the same house. One can feel lonely _____ when surrounded by other people.

The Bible tells of several people who _____ lonely lives. Joseph, the son of Jacob, grew up in a _____ family; but his half-brothers hated him so much they sold him into slavery. At a young age, he lived as a _____ in a foreign land. His master's wife tried repeatedly to _____ him. When he _____ her advances, she falsely accused him. He spent years in prison, _____ from home and family. I can only imagine how Joseph must have felt. However, Genesis 39:21 says, "But the Lord was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him _____ in the sight of the chief jailer." Whatever Joseph endured, the Lord was _____ him. The Lord protected and provided for him and

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the things that he needed, even if his family was _____ away. Joseph was able to _____ his hardships and keep his faith, because he knew the Lord was with him.

Jesus _____ alone much of his life. He never had a wife and children, but gave Himself completely to His mission of _____ people from sin. Jesus had people _____ Him all His life. He grew up in a household with _____ brothers and sisters. He chose and trained twelve _____ who accompanied Him in His ministry. Jesus often stayed in the _____ of friends like Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Multitudes _____ Him wherever He went. In spite of all this, Jesus faced _____ of life alone and did what no other person could do. He went to the _____ alone. While praying at Gethsemane, His disciples fell _____ and left Him praying alone. His familiar friend, Judas, betrayed Him; Peter denied Him three times; and the rest scattered.

Like Joseph, Jesus found _____ in His relationship with His Father in heaven. Jesus said, “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am _____ alone, because the Father is with Me” (John 16:32). Jesus found the strength He _____ in the Father, and so can you. Peter revealed how Jesus _____ with lonely suffering. First Peter 2:21-23 says, “For you have been called for this _____, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an _____ for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, He didn’t revile in return; and while suffering, He uttered no threats, but He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.” When Jesus suffered most, He put His life and His soul into the _____ of the heavenly Father. There He found comfort, there He found support.

Jesus began and ended His ordeal on the cross with _____. He prayed for three hours while in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord Jesus prayed in Luke 22:42, “Father, if You’re willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be _____.” While Jesus wanted to _____ the cross on one hand, He wanted to do the will of the Father on the other. His desire to do the Father’s will was _____ than His desire to escape death. His true prayer to do the Father’s will came from His _____ for the Father. Hebrews 5:7 says, “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was _____ to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.” In His pain and sorrow, the Father _____ His obedient prayer.

As they crucified the Lord Jesus, He was praying, “Father, _____ them; for they do not know what they’re doing” (Luke 23:34). Instead of focusing on their cruelty and the pain of large nails going through His hands and feet, Jesus thought about their _____, praying for them to be forgiven. We often focus on the _____ in life, but Jesus focused on saving people from their sins.

Matthew 27:46 says, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ... ‘My God, my God, _____ have you forsaken me?’” Did you know these words are a quotation of Psalm 22:1. Psalm 22 is the _____ Messianic of David’s psalms. It begins with a feeling of forsakenness, and speaks of wagging heads in verse 7, predicts the piercing of His hands and feet in verse 16, and speaks of the dividing of His garments in verse 18. But verse 27 speaks of all the nations turning to and worshiping the Lord. Could it be the Lord Jesus was reciting this Scripture to Himself and reassuring Himself that His death was not in _____?

Jesus _____ entrusting Himself to the Father. Luke 23:46, “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I _____ my spirit!’ And having said this He breathed his _____.” From the beginning to the end of His excruciating ordeal, Jesus found His strength in _____. His example will help us in our _____ of pain and loneliness. First Peter 4:19 says, “Therefore, those

also who _____ according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is _____." When you're lonely, entrust your soul to a Creator who won't let you down.

The apostle Paul provides another example for those who _____ as singles. While some may think he may have been married at some point, he says in his _____ that he is unmarried. He says, "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to _____ single as I am" (1 Corinthians 7:8). He realized that not everyone had the gift to _____ the single life, and yet felt there were many advantages to living as a single. Paul knew having a family would get in the way of his ministry, and he wanted to be free of any responsibility except to Christ. Paul often _____ great difficulties. They put Paul in prison five times, and he spent five years of his life incarcerated. Paul wrote Philippians while he was imprisoned, but Paul wasn't depressed or defeated, even though he was imprisoned. But he spoke of the _____ in that letter, the letter of Philippians, more than twenty times.

Paul learned the secret of being _____ in whatever circumstances he found himself. In context, Philippians 4 is speaking of Paul's financial wellbeing; but this is likely _____ of other circumstances of his life. He explains, "I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I've _____ the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do _____ things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:12-13). Paul found God's _____ was sufficient for him, even when he was suffering. Having _____ in his life made up for all the things that he didn't have.

Paul also understood what it's like to _____ death alone. God spared Paul's life the first time he appeared before Caesar. Paul said, "At my first defense no one supported me, but _____ deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord _____ with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will _____ me from every evil deed, and bring me safely to His heavenly _____; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy 4:16-18).

When you're lonely, think on the _____ of God. They'll reassure you. The Lord God said, "A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation. God makes a _____ for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, Only the rebellious dwell in a parched land" (Psalm 68:5-6). If you have God with you, you have far _____ than many of the largest families. The Lord Jesus promised, "and lo, I am with you _____, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The Lord Jesus dwells with His people. I love the Lord's _____ in John 14:23, "If anyone loves me, he will _____ my word, and my Father will love him, and we'll come to him and make our home with him." The Father and the Lord Jesus make their _____ with those who love Him enough to obey Him.

The Lord God promised Joshua, "No man will be able to stand before you _____ the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be _____ you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). This promise is repeated to Christians in Hebrews 13:5. David said in Psalm 37:25, "I've been young, and now am old, and yet I've not _____ the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread." What's true in practical matters is also true in our relationship with the Lord. David said, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the LORD will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). When no one else was there for David, God was.

God said to the people of Jerusalem through the prophet Isaiah, "Can a woman _____ her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will _____ forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hand; Your walls are continually before Me"

(Isaiah 49:15-16). God thinks continually of His children. He thinks of their _____ welfare, their _____ strength, and their _____ needs. The Lord Jesus reminds us that “your Father knows what you need _____ you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). The Lord is a blessing to all of us.

David kept himself _____ of the presence of God. Our reading today came from Psalm 139:1-5. Where he said, “O LORD, you’ve searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.” David describes how intimately God _____ him. God knew everything about him, how he acted, how he talked, even what he thought. David said, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it” (verse 6).

God had known David from his conception in his mother’s womb. In Psalm 139:13-14 David said, “For you _____ my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully _____. Wonderful are your _____; my soul knows it very well.” No one knows us as intimately as God. He’s _____ over us every day of our lives, He’s heard every prayer we’ve ever made, He has known every thought we’ve ever had, and provided every need. You can’t go anywhere outside the presence of God.

How does all this _____? Because you too can say, “I’m not _____; the Lord is with me.” You too can say that His _____ is sufficient for you. You too can say that He will _____ leave you or forsake you. Give yourself to God, and He will be with you.

Let’s pray together. “Heavenly Father we’re thankful for Your loving presence that surrounds us at all times, that You hem us in before and behind, that You lay Your hand upon us. Father, help us to be devoted to You and to Your will always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

The outspoken atheist Madalyn Murray O’Hair, who went to court to take prayer out of the schools, clearly sensed something was missing from her life. She wrote in her diary in 1977 that she had failed as a wife, as a parent, and as a politician. In half a dozen places in her diaries O’Hair wrote, “Somebody, somewhere, love me.” We all long to be loved and to love. There’s one place in your heart and soul that no one can fill but God. The most lonely person in the world isn’t the one who lacks family but the one who has rejected God.

Some let their love for God fade as years pass. The Lord Jesus said to the lukewarm church at Laodicea, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; and if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him (or dine with him), and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20). The Lord Jesus wants to restore the warm and intimate fellowship that He once had with the church in Laodicea, and He wants to have that same intimacy with you. Do you have a close, loving, peaceful relationship with the Lord?

Draw close to God; make Him part of your life every day! Become a Christian by placing your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He will never lie to you and He wants to save you from your sins. So, out of love, repent of your sins by forsaking them and by following the Lord. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ, and united with Him. We’re crucified with Christ in baptism so that our body of sin might be done away with according to Romans 6:3-7. God washes away our sins in baptism according to Acts 22:16. Become a Christian today, and have God in your life.



When You Face God

You have an appointment that you cannot _____. One day you will _____ God in the Judgment. Today, we're exploring what it means to face God. We're here to _____ the Scriptures for God's will. Since the time is coming when all of us will face God and give an account for the lives that we've lived, it's necessary that we take time to see what the Scriptures _____ about our accountability toward God. Hebrews 4:12-13 says, "For the _____ of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the _____. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are _____ and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Facing the God who already knows our hearts and our lives is not an _____ thing. Thankfully, through Jesus we have _____.

Many people think, like Adam and Eve, that they can do as they _____. They think of God as one from whom they can _____ their deeds. After they ate from the _____ of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve discovered they were naked and hid from God in the bushes. God knew what happened, just as He knows _____ things. Adam and Eve _____ against God by eating of the fruit that was forbidden to them.

People today still think of God, and how He doesn't _____ what we do. God reported the sins of the wicked in Psalm 50:21, "These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just _____ you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes." God knows and will confront us one day.

Our reading today comes from Genesis 3:8-13.

Many in our culture think little or nothing about the _____ when they're going to face God. They live their lives on their own terms according to their own _____. Many _____ God from their minds and their morals. Some have no _____ for God, and they'll be surprised one day to realize God is still God. He's still our Creator and our Judge. There will be _____ atheists on Judgment Day. No one can replace God, and no one can dethrone Him. No one can _____ His laws. He alone is the One who _____ heaven and earth.

It's astonishing what ways people _____ themselves rather than admit anything they've done is sinful. Solomon remarked, "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have _____ out many devices" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Some blame _____. Adam blamed Eve and God for giving her to him, and Eve blamed the serpent. Some blame God for making them the way they are and never consider their _____ responsibility.

James 1:13-16 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I'm being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by _____, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he's carried away and enticed by his own _____. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to _____; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth _____. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren." If we sin, it's not because God led us into sin; but we sin because we gave into our _____ that carry us away into sin and spiritual death. We're responsible for what we do.

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Some _____ to themselves and try to relabel their sins as something harmless and innocent, but they aren't fooling God. There is an old riddle which asks, "How many legs does a dog have if you call the _____ a leg?" Some might say, "five" but the answer is four. You see, calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg. You can't _____ God's truth or God's morals no matter how hard you try.

Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seems _____ to a man, But its end is the way of death." People don't like facing the _____ of sin. They would rather _____ it or act like their sin doesn't and didn't happen. Proverbs 30:12 says, "There are those who are _____ in their own eyes but are not washed of their filth." They think what they are doing is acceptable in our _____, and so it must be acceptable to God; but God sees them as they really are. Proverbs 30:20 says, "This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and she wipes her mouth, and says, 'I have done _____ wrong.'"

The Lord Himself said, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, _____ the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his _____" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Because of this, Jeremiah the prophet said, "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to _____ his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Hebrews 9:27 reminds us that "it's appointed for men to _____ once and after this comes judgment." God one day will _____ each of us according to the way that we've lived. Paul told the Stoics and Epicureans in Athens in Acts 17:30-31, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should _____, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished _____ to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Many think God's _____ means He doesn't judge anymore. They see God in an unbalanced way. While God is the God of _____, He is still the Holy God, who is just and punishes sin and lawlessness. We can't intentionally live any way we _____ and then presume upon the grace of God. God's grace came at the ultimate _____ of the precious blood of Jesus Christ; and we have no right to cheapen or take that grace for granted. Will God judge us today? Yes He will! He distinguishes the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the unrighteous.

Paul spoke to those who refused to repent, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you're _____ up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will _____ each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, He will give _____ life; but to those who are self-serving and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, He will give wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every _____ of mankind who does evil, for the Jew first and also for the Greek, but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who does what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:5-11).

The apostle Peter also speaks of God's judgment and distinguishes the righteous from the unrighteous. Second Peter 2:4-10 says, "For if God did not spare _____ when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved _____, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an _____ to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul

tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to _____ the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.”

There will be a Judgment Day for us all. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all _____ before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive compensation for his _____ done through the body, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad.” How we think, how we talk, how we treat others, how we observe God’s morals, and whether we follow the Lord will matter on that day. On that day, we’ll come face to face with the Lord and have to _____ him in the eye. Romans 14:12 says, “So then each one of us will give an _____ of himself to God.” God Himself is our final judge, and He will judge us by the _____ of Jesus Christ. His words will judge us on the last day (John 12:48).

We may consider the things that we say and do are like the culture around us, but being like the _____ hardly makes us right with the living God. Just because our _____ believes something doesn’t mean that God approves of it. Just because the masses approve or participate in some activity doesn’t mean God approves of that activity. God has determined what is right and wrong, good and evil, and righteous and unrighteous. God doesn’t _____ His mind simply because something becomes fashionable and acceptable in society. Because the Lord Jesus will judge us on the last day, the Lord Jesus will have the _____ say. Since Jesus knows everything about us, we won’t be able to overrule or even to object to His _____. The Day of Judgment will come on the last day when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven and appears in the sky. That day every person will be _____ from the dead, and the earth and its works will be destroyed.

We don’t want to be like the five foolish virgins who failed to _____ for the coming of the Master. The Lord Jesus tells about what it will be like on that day of reckoning, “Then the _____ of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they didn’t take extra oil with them; but the prudent ones took oil in flasks with their lamps. Now while the groom was delaying, they all became drowsy and began to _____. But at midnight there finally was a shout: ‘Behold, the groom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. But the foolish virgins said to the prudent ones, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’ However, the prudent ones answered, ‘No, there most certainly would not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the groom came, and those who were _____ went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Yet later, the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not _____ you.’ Be on the _____ then, because you do not know the day nor the hour” (Matthew 25:1-13).

My friend, no one can _____ for you. You have to do that on your _____. You may know many religious people, even some righteous people; but that doesn’t make you righteous or prepared. Jesus doesn’t accept everyone; He accepts those who _____ God’s will. The Lord Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the _____ of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; _____ from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matthew 7:21-23).

The book of Revelation gives us a picture of that last day when every person will stand before the white _____ of the Lord Jesus. “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and _____ were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their _____” (Revelation 20:11-12). You’ll notice that the present heaven and earth have _____ away; Revelation 21:1 says they have “passed away”; that is they are no more. You’ll also notice that we’re judged by what is _____ in the books. What books? The books found in the _____; they are God’s laws and commandments. They can’t be changed, and no one can _____ them on the last day. What God, through Jesus and through the Holy Spirit, said in the first century will stand as the whole _____ on the last day. God’s word is unchangeable.

Will you be ready to meet the Lord or will you hide from Him? Can you say, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus”; or will you have dread and fear the day that Jesus comes again?

God has called you to an appointment that you cannot _____. You’ll face God one day to give an account for what you’ve _____. Solomon wrote, “Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of your young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will _____ you to judgment for all these things” (Ecclesiastes 11:9). Wouldn’t it be _____ to have lived in rebellion to God only to find out God is real and He means what He says. He wants you, and He wants to make you His child and to _____ you forever and ever. Don’t turn from Him and lose your soul.

We often sing an invitation song: “Careless soul, why will you linger, Wand’ring from the fold of God? Hear you not the invitation? Oh, prepare to meet thy God. Careless soul, oh, heed the warning, For your life will soon be gone; Oh, how sad to face the judgment, Unprepared to meet thy God.”

There is a need to be prepared, and we do this by faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. A saving faith is one built upon Scripture. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Faith leads us to repent of our sins, denying ourselves so that we can serve Christ. Saving faith is always obedient, so we receive the word and are baptized into Christ, just as they did in Acts 2:38-41. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water that unites us to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and frees us from sin according to Acts 22:16 and Colossians 2:12-13.



Will God Hear My Prayer?

Will God _____ my prayer? Does God really _____ about my problems? Today, we're exploring _____ God hears our prayers. We're here to _____ the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible opens a marvelous treasure chest of _____ that prospers our lives and our souls. God's Word enriches us in a thousand ways and touches _____ aspect of our lives. Solomon told his son, "How blessed is the man who _____ wisdom, And the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver, And her _____ better than fine gold. She is more precious than _____; And nothing you _____ compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths are _____. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast." (Proverbs 3:13-18).

A recent report said that 84 percent of Americans prayed within the last _____. Even six percent of _____ say they pray every single day. We sometimes _____, "Will God hear my prayer? Will praying make a _____?" Prayer is an amazing _____ of God; we should rejoice over it and be thankful. But like any gift, it only works if we practice it; and only works if we practice it according to the _____ of God. God answers prayer, but God doesn't grant _____ request. Some prayers _____ the will of God; and some prayers come from selfish or disobedient _____. Prayer's not like rubbing a _____ and having a genie grant you wishes. We pray to a holy and righteous God, who wants us to be holy and righteous.

Our reading today comes from the book of James 1:5-8.

Each of us faces times when we _____ to pray. We need God's _____. We want to know God will hear us and _____ our requests. Certainly God hears the prayers of those who _____ and follow Him. Jesus said, "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For all the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father _____ that you need them all. But seek _____ the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33). First, when you pray, you're praying _____ your Heavenly Father. Second, your Father knows what you need and has heard your _____ prayer. Third, He promises to supply your needs _____ you put Him first in your life.

The Father loves us and deals with us as His _____. Jesus said, "Suppose one of you has a _____, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the _____ has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he'll get up and give him as _____ as he needs" (11:5-8). God is _____ than that. He gives to us out of love, not because we are a bother.

Paul, with lots of experience, said, "my God will _____ every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). God the Father wants to _____ His children and supply their needs, just as any father might. God _____ us to pray. We don't have to apologize to God for taking up His _____. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find;

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who _____ him!” (Matthew 7:7-11).

Jesus wants us to _____ confident in prayer. Some think that when they _____ God doesn't want to be around them, so they withdraw from God and they _____ praying. That's exactly what God doesn't want. He wants us to cease from sin, yes; but He also wants us to come _____ to Him for help. Hebrews 4:14-16 says: “Since then we have a great high priest who's passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold _____ our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been _____ as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of _____, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of _____.” Rather than avoiding God, let's draw near to get the _____ we need for temptation.

It matters how we _____, whether we believe, and whether we seek first the kingdom, if we wish the Father to hear our prayers. First Peter 3:12 says, “For the _____ of the Lord are on the righteous, and his _____ are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do _____.” Ephesians 3:20 says that God “is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the _____ that works within us.” Many _____ God out and wonder why He doesn't hear their prayers. You can't live a wicked life and expect God to _____ you. If that's the case, whose prayer will God not hear?

James 4:1-3 says, “What's the _____ of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your _____ that wage war in your members? You lust and you don't have; so you commit murder. You're envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You don't have because you don't _____. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with _____ motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” If I'm praying to God, and what I'm praying is selfish and wasteful, I shouldn't _____ God to help me do what's wrong. Think about _____ you're praying and how the Father thinks. Some people's prayers are so self-centered and hurtful to others that God wants no part of it.

When you pray, remember that God treats you the way that you treat _____. Jesus taught us to pray “forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). Jesus explains, “That if you forgive others their trespasses, then your heavenly Father will _____ forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15). How can you expect God to forgive you, if you aren't _____ to forgive others? If we're children of God, we ought to have the _____ tenderness and compassion for others that God has shown to us.

Proverbs 15:29 says, “The LORD is _____ from the wicked, But He _____ the prayer of the righteous.” God allows us to _____ our ways, so we can have a loving relationship with Him. Nobody is perfect, though we strive to _____ God. God distinguishes the person who sets his heart to do right but sometimes _____ and the person who lives his life to serve his _____ desires but sometimes does good. We can't be perfectly sinless, but there's a difference between endeavoring to do _____ and having no intention of following God. One is one way, the other is the other. The Father will not hear the person who has _____ his heart away.

Peter speaks to husbands, “husbands, live with your _____ in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your

prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7). A man who mistreats his wife or children cannot expect to draw close to God and be _____. God will treat him in the _____ way that he has treated his family. Don’t let a lack of kindness toward those whom you love put a barrier between you and God.

Faith is necessary. The Hebrew writer said, “without faith it is impossible to _____ him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). If we seek God’s help and blessing, we need to believe that He will keep His _____ and will bless us. James said, “But let him ask in faith, without doubting, for the one who doubts is like the wave of the _____ that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he’ll _____ anything from the Lord; because he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:6-8).

Repentance also comes into this discussion. Some folks think God is supposed to be at their beck and call, but they continue their sinful behaviors. They think God will _____ all their sins. Some folks think they can _____ with God. “I’ll change Lord, if you just grant me this _____.” God’s no fool. You can’t bargain with repentance. Some people repent just _____ enough to get what they want and what they’re after, but their change is temporary and not _____. You can fool yourself, but you can’t fool God with a negotiation. If you want God to hear you, then first change your _____.

Isaiah 59:1-2 says, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have _____ his face from you so that he does not hear.” You can’t hang on to sin and expect to have the _____ of God listening to you. The Psalmist wrote, “If I had cherished iniquity in my _____, the Lord would not have listened” (Psalm 66:18). Here the Psalmist is clarifying for us the point. You can’t let sin be cherished in your heart and find _____ for God too. He won’t hear your heart’s request, if your heart’s real desire is sin.

Continuing in sin and failing to repent builds up a _____. Tear down the wall. God said, “When you spread out your hands [that is, when you pray], I will _____ my eyes from you; even though you make _____ prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; _____ the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s case. ‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord: ‘though your _____ are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken’” (Isaiah 1:15-20).

God has always wanted His people to pray and to love Him, but people don’t show love to Him when they live in sin and ignore His _____. You can’t love the world and love God at the same time. First John 2:15-17 says, “Do not love the _____ or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is _____ in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the _____ and the desires of the _____ and the pride in possessions or life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is _____ away along with all its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” We must keep Him close and live righteously if we wish to have God’s blessing.

I’m thankful for the opportunity and the privilege of prayer. God not only _____ us to pray, He asks us to pray. He wants to hear our hearts and to _____ our requests. In John 14:13-14 Jesus said, “Whatever you ask in My _____, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you

ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” We can approach God because we have a _____ relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. God hears us when we speak in His name.

I don’t know how _____ you are to God, but I know prayer is a precious privilege. To be able to speak our hearts to God and to know that He will hear us is a great _____. I don’t want to build some kind of a barrier between God and me by neglecting God or ignoring God, or by sin. I want my _____ to say to God, “God I love You and I serve only You.” I don’t want to disappoint my Heavenly Father by participating in _____ compromise or error. I want to stay close to Him in this life, so that I can _____ with Him forever in the next life. My friend, are you close to God? Are you living in such a way that you draw near to Him, or have you _____ Him away? If you want God close to you, then you move close to Him.

Let us pray. “Heavenly Father, we are so grateful to You that You hear our prayers, and that our prayers matter to You. Father, help us to live in such a way that we glorify Your name and that we do Your will. Father, we pray that You will grant our requests and help us through the difficult times. Be with us, give us wisdom, give us strength, and give us courage so that we may live in such a way to glorify You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

God speaks to us through His _____, the Bible; and we speak to God through _____. Prayer is powerful, because God is powerful. Our Father wants to hear our prayers and _____ us. We should tell God “I love you,” “thank you,” and “forgive me” every day. When our hearts are burdened, the Lord can help us _____ our burdens. When we’re weak, He can strengthen us. When we’re fearful, He can reassure us. Prayer is a blessing. Let’s maintain a close, peaceful, loving relationship with God. Jesus said, “Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation” (Matthew 26:41). Prayer keeps us from sin and keeps us close to God.

First Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.” This passage isn’t speaking about praying _____ minute. It’s saying, “Keep on praying. Keep loving Him, thanking Him, praising Him, and asking Him for help.” Live with love and _____ the teaching of Christ. Keep worshiping at _____. Keep serving others. Don’t start even a single day without prayer, and you’ll find life is richer and fuller. Time with God is time very well spent.

To become God’s child, believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Galatians 3:26-27 says, “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” When we’re baptized into Christ by being immersed in water, God unites us with Christ (Romans 6:3-7) and washes away our sins (Acts 22:16). In baptism, He adds us to His church (Acts 2:41-47) and causes us to be born again (John 3:5). In baptism you begin your walk as a follower of Christ and a child of God. Can you think of anything better than having Christ as Lord and Savior?