

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 LORD 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?