



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*Program
Study Guides*

**For
May 2017**

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Christian Values Matthew 6:19-24

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

You can tell a lot about people by looking at their _____. Today, we're going to explore Christian values and what they _____. The Lord Jesus promised, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my _____ will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Nearly 2000 years have passed since the first book of the New Testament was written, and today we have billions of copies. The New Testament has been translated into more than _____ languages, and parts of the New Testament into more than 2000. Though governments have tried to _____ every copy of the Bible they could find, the Word of God continues to be the most treasured book of all time.

People often talk about family values or moral values, but they sometimes assume everyone _____ their values. The word "values" can mean many _____ things; and this word is often overused and sometimes confusing. Not everyone thinks alike or shares the same moral and spiritual _____. Our culture loves to _____ words and make them mean things they never meant before. You may speak of a value and mean one thing, while your neighbor's values are entirely different.

Because we _____ the Lord, we learn to give value to the things that God values. God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. **Read God's Words in Isaiah 55:8-9.** The things that people _____ are so important may not be important to God. We may invest our whole lives in things that will not _____. How sad it would be to live a life that _____ to lead to heaven!

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:19-24.

Today, we're talking about Christian values, and what matters to Christians? What do they hold _____? The Lord Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your _____ will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Our values capture our hearts and set the _____ for our lives. We _____ to the things that we love; we nourish and protect them. So, let's consider the things that really matter to Christians who love God.

First, they value God and His _____. Strong Christians _____ God and believe what God says. They enthusiastically _____ their children about the deity of Christ, about the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, and about the resurrection. They don't apologize for taking the Word of God seriously when it speaks about sin and the judgment.

Strong Christians take God's grace and His _____ seriously. They realize that apart from the _____ of God, they would have no blessing, no salvation, and no hope of heaven. They point to Ephesians 2:8-9 that says, "For by grace you have been _____ through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the _____ of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." They realize that God saves us, and we cannot save ourselves by _____ our way to

heaven. They also apply God's plan of salvation rather than _____ with God over what He asks of them.

If you ask me why I am a Christian, I would point first to the _____ of Christ. Jesus loves me; this I know, for the Bible tells me so. I tell you no one ever loved me like Jesus. He suffered great pain and humiliation; He shed His _____ to wash away my sins and save me. Because of the love and the grace of God, I'm willing to _____ my life to Christ. I pray that you are, too!

Christians also realize that God will, day to day, give them what they _____, help them find what they _____, and open the door when they _____ (Matthew 7:7-8. They "know" God causes all things to work together for _____ when they encounter rough days (Romans 8:28). They cast their cares on God because they know that He cares for them (1 Peter 5:7).

Second, they value _____. The early church devoted itself to the apostles' _____ (Acts 2:42); and faithful Christians today will do the same thing. Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding." Strong Christians realize the necessity of standing _____ in the truth. Paul knew the day would come when men with itching ears "will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own _____, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

The Lord Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my _____, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you _____" (John 8:31-32). To stay in God's Word means we'll be true disciples and know the truth. We have no desire to _____ from the Scriptures into human traditions or self-made religion. We want the truth!

Third, they value the _____. If the church were not important, Jesus would not have _____ it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Because the church was so important to Jesus, it should be important to us. Christians who love the Lord _____ the church with their presence, their money, and their energy. They're interested in the church growing, and so they tell everyone they know about the Lord Jesus and His love. They _____ to the cross and to the resurrection. They want everyone to have the _____ that they enjoy. They consider being a member of the church, that is the body of Christ, as the greatest privilege of life. They see the church as the very family of God. Christians are brothers and sisters with God as their Father and Jesus as their Lord.

The Scripture exhorts us to "love the brotherhood" (1 Peter 2:17). Congregations that plant other congregations in nearby areas produce _____ for generations. The churches of Macedonia and Achaia helped the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). Christians love one another and support each other throughout the _____.

Fourth, they value _____. Every person has a soul, and that soul will spend _____ either with God or without Him. God loves every person, and so do we. Because every soul will spend eternity in heaven with God or in hell without God, you and I both will all spend it somewhere. So, Christians take souls seriously. Nothing is more important than having a _____ relationship with God through Jesus Christ. In 1 Timothy 2:3-4 Paul says, "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God wants you to be _____, and so do we.

Words like “lost” and “saved” seem _____ to many people. Sadly, many people don’t know their _____ are lost and need to be saved. To be lost means that they’ll spend _____ without God. People are lost because they’ve sinned. Sin takes place when someone breaks God’s _____ or fails to keep what God wants them to do. First John 3:4 simply says, “sin is lawlessness.” When a person ignores God’s laws and goes outside of them, he becomes lawless. “So whoever knows the right thing to do and _____ to do it, for him it is sin” (James 4:17). When people sin, they break God’s law, and God’s _____. God is gracious and doesn’t want anyone to be lost.

People speak about big sins and little ones, but in God’s eyes _____ sins matter. Every sin is offensive to God. God is utterly _____ and cannot approve of sin, any sin. God said, “Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who _____ shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). Again, Romans 6:23 says, “For the _____ of sin is death, but the free _____ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This death is not physical, but spiritual. Death is a separation. Physically, death is the separation of the body and the spirit. Spiritually speaking, death is the separation of man from God. Sinners are no longer in fellowship with God. **Read Isaiah 59:1-2.** Spiritually, dead people stand outside the _____ and _____ of God.

Christians teach people the good news, the gospel, about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ because they _____ them. They challenge them to believe and _____ the Lord. They ask them to give up their sins and to _____ to the Lord. Evangelism is both confrontational and persuasive. Christians speak out about sin because they _____ the consequences of sin. Christians try to persuade people to forsake their sins and to come to the Lord because they _____ their souls. Christians aren’t your _____ because they ask you to repent of sin. They teach you the gospel because the gospel opens the _____ to your salvation from the consequences of sin. Someone who teaches you the gospel of Christ is your _____!

Fifth, they value righteousness. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who _____ and _____ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). Oh, how I wish people today not only knew what righteousness is, but also would _____ it! Faithful Christians understand that God Himself, not _____, ultimately defines righteousness, holiness, and morality. Christians recognize that they are accountable to God, not man, for their eternal _____. They realize that God has the _____ word in all matters, and that no one can silence, change, or overrule His voice. You can disagree with God; you can propose a new theory about things; you can even act as if God does not exist; but in the end, God will have the last say.

Hebrews 12:14 tells us, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will _____ the Lord.” If you wish to see the Lord, you must turn from sin to live a _____ life. First Peter 1:14-16 says, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your _____, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” The world has always been, well..., “worldly.” It’s always followed its own _____. **Read what Paul explained in Ephesians 4:17-24.** Because Christians value holiness and the world doesn’t, we must be _____ in a dark world, hoping to lead everyone to Christ.

Sixth, they value _____ others. Paul said, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the _____ of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your _____ is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Christians view serving others as if they were serving the Lord Jesus personally. Jesus said this about inviting in the stranger, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick, “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40).

Serving others builds _____ in the servant and produces thanksgiving in those who they serve. While no one _____ for disasters like a tornado, a fire, or an earthquake, such events provide outstanding opportunities for Christian service and compassion to those in need. They open doors that might not open otherwise. When hurricane Katrina destroyed much of the Gulf Coast, churches of Christ in many states _____ quickly to the needs of the people. Congregations not only sent financial aid but also thousands of _____ into the devastated region. In the wake of the disaster, workers planted five new congregations. These Christian servants not only blessed a devastated region, they also built up their home congregations as well.

Last, they value their relationships with other people. They value their _____ and _____. The greatest wish of any Christian is for God’s _____ to come upon all the people they love. They take seriously the command to love one another. The Lord Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my _____, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Because Jesus loves us, we learn how to love one another and even love our _____. Wouldn’t you like to have Christian values in your life?

Do you love the Lord and value Jesus? Do you value what He did on the cross, His grace, and His teaching? Do you value Him enough to give yourself to Him _____ and _____ for the rest of your life? We must be God’s people, doing God’s work God’s way, so that we may one day _____ with Him in glory. Paul said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is _____” (Philippians 1:21). I think of the old song, “He is my everything; He is my _____,” and that’s the way it should be. I don’t want to spend one day without Christ as the center of my heart and life. Loving Jesus means listening to Him and obeying Him. Jesus said, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23). If you want to live with God in the next life, you must be willing to serve God in this life.

To become a Christian, _____ in the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Repent of your sins! Turn from them and turn to the Lord in love and devotion. Confess your faith in Jesus and be _____ in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. Colossians 2:12-13 says, “having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.” In baptism, we are buried and raised with Christ through faith in God’s _____. When we are baptized, God forgives us of all our sins. I hope you won’t wait another day to enjoy God’s grace and forgiveness. Oh, become a Christian today!

In Christ

Luke 13:24-29

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

Many people _____ about being “all in.” Are you “all in” with Christ? Today, we’re going to _____ what it means to be “in” Christ. Because God has spoken in Scripture, we can know what is _____. There are so many voices in this world, and not all voices tell the truth. If you want to know the truth about spiritual matters, go to the _____ of God. God will never lie to you; He’ll never lead you astray; and He’ll never take back what He’s spoken; He’ll always keep His _____. You can trust God to tell you truth in His Word. So read your Bible,; study it; memorize it; and take it to heart. You’ll never regret doing the right thing.

There is a great _____ between being “in” Christ and “out” of Christ. That difference will _____ every aspect of our lives on earth and determine our eternal destiny. The Lord Jesus said, “I am the _____, and the _____, and the _____. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus is the only door to the Father; there is no other. The apostle Peter said about Jesus to the Jewish leaders, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be _____” (Acts 4:12). We must go to Jesus if we want the forgiveness of sins and the hope of heaven.

The apostle Paul said, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone _____ in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me” (Colossians 1:28-29). We could certainly say the same. That’s why this program exists. We want you to be mature in Christ and to _____ with Him forever.

Our reading today comes from Luke 13:24-29.

Of all the blessings I’ve ever received, _____ compares with the joy, the peace, the hope, and the love found in being in Christ Jesus, my Lord. Being in Christ means more to me than anything else. I wouldn’t want one day, one hour, one minute, or even one second to pass outside of Christ. I want to belong to Him, and I want Him one day to say to me, “Well done, good and faithful _____. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the _____ of your master” (Matthew 25:21).

There are many blessings that _____ to the one who is in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with _____ spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” We have every spiritual blessing in Christ we could imagine. I think of the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” Each of these things is a _____ in life. We find them

in an abundant life in Christ, _____ from misery. If we don't have it; oh, how miserable we are. Can you imagine how _____ our lives would be without love, without joy, without peace, without patience, without kindness, without goodness, without faithfulness, without gentleness, or without self-control?

In Christ, we can find the _____ of life! Even while Paul was in prison, he found _____ to rejoice in the Lord! In Christ, we find the secret of contentment. Philippians 4:8-9 says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, _____ about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of _____ will be with you."

In Christ, we have a sure _____ and a sure promise. Paul said, "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. For _____ the promises of God find their Yes in him. That's why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory" (2 Corinthians 1:19-20). God doesn't tease or take back what He promises. You can count on God to _____ His Word!

In Christ, you can count on God to love you. Even in the hardest of times; in Christ, we never leave the love of God. The early church went through terrible persecution, and many lost their lives. **Read what Paul asked in Romans 8:35-39.** God's love does not _____ regardless of what happens to us on earth. In Christ, we have God's love ever with us.

In Christ, we have God's forgiveness. Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Him we have redemption through his _____, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." We should never think of our forgiveness as _____. It cost God His Son Jesus; and it cost Jesus a painful death on the cross. Jesus shed His blood for our _____ so that we could be forgiven. Paul reminds us of what we were _____ Christ and what we are in Christ. Paul told the Gentiles, "remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no _____ and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought _____ by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:12-13). Because of the cross, we could be _____ from sin. Because of the cross, we can come close to God. Ephesians 2:19 describes what forgiveness through the blood of Christ does. "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are now fellow citizens with the saints and _____ of the household of God." Paul explains, "For our sake he made Him" (Christ), "to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him" (Christ), "we might _____ the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The blood of Jesus has delivered us and brought us into the _____ of God. "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and _____ us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14). When we're in Christ, we're in the _____, the kingdom of God. When we're in Christ, we're no longer following darkness and sin, but we're following righteousness.

Sin brings spiritual death and separation from God, but Christ brings redemption and _____. Ephesians 2:4-7 says, “But God, being _____ in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were _____ in our trespasses, made us _____ together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Being in Christ means I’m saved by grace; it means I’m raised up with Christ and I’ll live with Him in _____. In Christ, I’ll enjoy all the immeasurable riches of God’s grace and kindness in the ages to come! I tell you that promise alone makes me want to _____ Christ all my life!

In Christ, God doesn’t look at you like He once did. He doesn’t see the _____ person who was lost in sin and had no hope. God now sees the _____ person who has been forgiven and transformed into the likeness of Christ. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a _____ creation. The old has passed away; behold, _____ things have become new.” In Christ, I’m no longer what I used to be. God has caused me to be _____ with a new kind of life. Romans 6:4 says, “We were buried therefore with Him by _____ into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in _____ of life.” In Christ, we don’t think or act as we did before that time when we became Christians.

In Christ, we have presented ourselves to the Lord as _____ of righteousness. We have stopped the _____ and started living holy and loving lives. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for _____ works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should _____ in them.” Instead of living selfish lives, we now give of ourselves to the service of _____ and to the blessing of _____. We’ve been created in Christ for good works.

Read what the apostle Paul explains in Ephesians 4:17-24.

As Christians, we’re not perfect, but as time passes we _____ to put away the old sinful habits and to start new and godly habits. We’ve left the old ways to be _____ Christ. “Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are _____ one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest _____ with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting _____ come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:25-29). The new man can no longer think, talk, or act like he once did. He is indeed a new creature!

The new Christian must also _____ other people differently than he once did. He can no longer let his selfish _____ get in the way of loving others. Ephesians 4:31-32 says, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be _____ to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ

forgave you.” Because God has forgiven us, Christians forgive one another, love their enemies, and show compassion. To practice forgiveness is no small matter in Christ. One of the real differences between Christianity and many other religions is the ability to _____. The inability to forgive has caused multiple wars and acts of violence, even in today’s world.

For this and many other reasons, Paul could say, “But whatever _____ I had, I counted as _____ for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may _____ Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (Philippians 3:7-9). Oh, this is why being in Christ matters!

Are you in Christ, or on the outside? Will God’s favor and love be yours because you _____ to Him? The Lord Jesus said, “Strive to enter through the _____ door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ But He’ll say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’” (Luke 13:24-27). Some will _____ living with God forever, because they didn’t believe in Christ, or they wouldn’t repent of their sins, or they wouldn’t obey God’s instructions found in the Bible. My friend, don’t be shut out; come to the Lord!

Even though the church in Laodicea was lukewarm and so distasteful that Jesus wanted to spit it out of His mouth, He still _____ the people. He urged them to _____ and said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if anyone _____ my voice and _____ the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Even when we shut God out, He’s knocking on our door, wanting back in our lives, and wanting to have a _____ relationship with us. God wants us to be with Him forever.

May I ask, “Do you have a _____, loving relationship with God? Are you _____ with God?” The only way to God is _____ Christ Jesus, our Lord. So if you wish to be right with God, you must be “in” Christ! You must be asking how can we get into Christ. The Scriptures give us the _____. Some folks will tell you that we _____ into Christ; and others will say we _____ a little prayer into Christ; but the Bible doesn’t teach these things.

God has told us how we get into Christ. Romans 6:3 says, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His _____?” Galatians 3:26-27 says, “For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through _____. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have _____ Christ.” We come into Christ when by faith and repentance we’re baptized into Christ. We put on Christ and become God’s child in baptism, and not before and not until!

Consider Matthew 7:13-20

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

Can you consider for a moment the possibility that someone has told you something that's _____? We value the truth of God's Word! We want to measure all we believe and practice by the standard of the scriptures. God's living Word is imperishable and will remain forever.

The Lord Jesus lived among people who were heavily burdened by the _____ traditions of the Pharisees. These traditions had numerous _____ that you couldn't read in Scripture. The Pharisees claimed that these traditions came from Moses himself, and were part of an _____ law that was passed down. Sadly, the people believed what they were _____, even though the Lord, Himself, never taught these things. It was simply a tradition of men. People can repeat an appalling _____ for so long that a populace will believe it. People can pass down ideas from one generation to the next until people never imagine that _____ produced it rather than God.

Jesus told these Jews who were caught up in human traditions, "You are of your _____ the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a _____ and the father of lies" (John 8:44). We all can fall to the temptation of believing things that may not be _____. This is why we must study the Word of God! "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be _____, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). That's what we strive to do! We want to hear what God teaches, we want to believe it, and _____ it.

Today's reading is the Words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:13-20.

The crafty, old serpent, Satan, loves to plant _____. He did it with Eve in the garden when he asked her the question, "Did God actually say, 'You shall _____ eat of any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you _____.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will _____ surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your _____ will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:1-5). With stealth and evil, Satan _____ doubt into a lie. The woman _____ the lie and ate of the fruit and even urged Adam to eat. Adam knew the truth, but gave way to the _____ of his wife.

First Kings 13 tells of a man of God who _____ out against Jeroboam and Israel. God told him that he was to neither _____ bread nor _____ water on his trip and that he was to return by a different way. There was an old prophet who _____ this man of God, telling him that God had spoken to him and he was to come to his house to eat and drink; but the old

prophet lied to him. When the man of God listened to the lying prophet, he _____ God and was punished for it. We must be _____ about what we hear. First Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, “but _____ everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” What God says matters.

Jeremiah 23 tells of false prophets who _____ to speak for God. “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with _____ hopes. They speak visions of their own _____, not from the _____ of the LORD’” (Jeremiah 23:16). Then Jeremiah explains, “I did not _____ the prophets, yet they ran; I did not _____ to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my _____ to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds” (Jeremiah 23:21-22).

Does truth really matter? Yes! Jeremiah 23:32 says, “Behold, I am _____ those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people _____ by their lies and their recklessness, when I didn’t send them or charge them. So they do not _____ this people at all, declares the LORD.” Believing a lie will not be of any _____ to you. It may soothe your conscience today, but it may _____ you tomorrow. You cannot bury the truth deep enough that it will not surface again!

The Lord Jesus said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by _____ word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). We need God’s Word to live spiritually; we need to hear it, to believe it, to love it, to memorize it, and to practice it. Nothing else will assure us that we are truly _____ with God. Feelings will fade; human traditions will wilt; false gospels will fail; and false promises will fall short. The Lord Jesus said, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be _____ up” (Matthew 15:13). That’s God speaking, not my opinion!

The New Testament lists several prophecies of men _____ away from the truth and believing a lie. The Lord Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their _____” (Matthew 7:15-16). He explains in verses 21 to 23, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who _____ the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works and we did that in your name?’ I’ll declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” Lawlessness takes place when people go outside the Word of God and follow their _____ ways and their own desires. You cannot ignore the will of God and please Him at the same time.

Read what the apostle Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus, Acts 20:28-32. One of the strategies of the devil, is to _____ the truth just enough to deceive people. Of course, when people follow the devil they _____ the ways of God. **Also, read what Paul warned the young man Timothy about false teachers in 1 Timothy 4:1-3.** Some people

have no conscience; they will deceive the unsuspecting; and they'll lead them into _____ that God never commanded nor wanted.

Paul was concerned that the truth _____ through the generations. **Read Paul's challenge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-4.** I'm amazed at how some have bought into religious and secular myths that have no _____ in Scripture.

Where in Scripture does it teach someone other than Jesus is _____ of the church? Where is sprinkling taught for _____? Where is _____ baptism ever mentioned? Where are the instruments of music in Christian _____? Where is evolution? Where is purgatory? Where do you read of _____? Where is Ash Wednesday? Where are women preachers or women bishops? Where are the prophecies of _____ prophets? Where do you find salvation by faith _____ or once saved, always saved? There are many other things just like this. If they are not in Scripture, they are humanly produced, and destined to be uprooted.

Read what the apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 2:1-3.

Jude, the brother of Jesus, wrote, "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to _____ for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who _____ the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (Jude 3-4). God gave us the faith only _____, and He did it in the first century. He wants us to contend for our faith, and this is to show why what we believe is true and why what is false is wrong.

When Paul faced some Jewish Christians who were trying to bind the Law of Moses and circumcision on Gentile Christians, he said: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to _____ the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel _____ to the one that we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9). The truth matters! When people preach something other than what God teaches, they put their _____ at peril.

The inspired apostle John faced opposition as well. He wrote, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works" (2 John 7-11). Abiding in God's Word, staying in the Word, keeps us _____ with God; but when we go beyond the Word, beyond the Bible—whether it's this specific teaching

about Jesus coming in the flesh, or some other essential doctrine, we _____ to have a relationship with God. Don't support something that's false.

No one likes to _____ he or she has been deceived, but the devil has been a deceiver and a pretender for a very long time. Paul faced some _____ apostles in his day, and there are pretenders today as well! He wrote, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of _____. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). They'll be lost. If you wish to keep from being deceived, my friend, study, study, study the Scriptures, study thoroughly! The Scriptures are a _____ to our path to keep us from straying into error and falling for a counterfeit religion.

Why does this matter? When people stray from the truth, they want everyone to _____ with them, and then they try to justify themselves. They'll teach others, who teach others. As time passes, later generations never even consider the possibility that they've followed someone into _____. Lies that are passed down through the ages can be the most dangerous, because by this time the deceived will swear that they believe the _____. The devil laughs, because he's fooled them. He's hidden the truth and _____ their souls. When that happens, the Lord weeps. The Lord wants all people to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding." We want nothing _____ and nothing _____. We must hold to the truth found in God's Word. We need to be like the Bereans! Acts 17:11 says, "Now these Jews were more _____ than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures _____ to see if these things were so." Have you checked what the Word of God says? Have you examined what you believe and practice? Have you compared those things to God's Word? You might be surprised at how _____ you are to the faith once delivered to the saints. Can you consider for a moment the possibility that you believe something _____?

The Lord Jesus promised, "If you _____ in my word, then you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you _____" (John 8:31-32). Don't settle for anything less or more than the _____. Don't ignore what God says and don't add to what God says. Simply _____ and _____ the Word of God!

To become a Christian you must believe and confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You must leave sinful ways and embrace the Lord's way. There is no salvation without repentance. When out of love you have repented and confessed, obey the Lord by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins. Peter told the guilt-stricken people at Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). When you're baptized, God washes away your sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, and He adds you to the church.

Jesus and His Promises

Acts 2:36-41

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

If I could stand on the highest hill and speak with the loudest voice, I would say, “God _____ His promises!” Today, we’re considering Jesus and His promises. A promise is only as _____ as the one who makes it and his ability to keep it. We love it when someone keeps a promise; but we’re unhappy when someone _____ a promise. You’ve probably suffered the heartache of a _____ promise, or you may have made a promise to someone and found that you couldn’t keep your _____. Those things disappoint all of us. People may be well intentioned, but we’re all _____ and forgetful. God, however, isn’t weak or forgetful; He _____ His promises. God is faithful, loyal, and trustworthy. You can _____ on Him. Moses explained, “God is not a man, that He should _____, Nor a son of man, that He should _____; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19). Moses went through lots of struggles in His life, but He never _____ _____ on God to keep His promises.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul faced afflictions, struggles, conflicts, and even death; but he said about God, “He who calls you is _____; he will surely do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24). He didn’t doubt, but he said, “But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him” (that is, Christ), “they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us” (2 Corinthians 1:18-20).

Our reading today comes from words of Peter on the Day of Pentecost when he’s preaching to the Jews in Acts 2:36-41.

Joshua is one of my favorite characters in the Bible. The Scripture always speaks _____ of him, and he was a courageous and faithful leader in Israel. Joshua lived through the ten plagues; he crossed the Red Sea on dry ground; he led Israel into battle; he ascended Mount Sinai with Moses; he spied out the _____ land and gave a good report with Caleb; he stood beside Moses in all the wanderings; and he led the people into the promised land. He fought until the Israelites had conquered all the _____ that was promised to Abraham.

When he was an old man, he called all Israel together, and he said, “Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not _____ word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has _____” (Joshua 23:14). Here is a man who saw God in _____ for many decades of his life, even when things seemed nearly

impossible! Yet he never wavered in his _____ that God would keep every promise!

We can trust God to keep His promises for many _____. First, God is all _____; and nothing is impossible for Him. God can _____ do things that you and I cannot do. Job said, “I know that you” (speaking about God) “can do all things, and that no _____ of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2). Jeremiah 32:17 says, ““Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too _____ for you.” I am reminded of Ephesians 3:20-21, which says “Now to him who is _____ to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the _____ at work within us, to him be glory in the _____ and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” Yes, God can and will _____ His promises!

Second, God loves us and _____ for us, His people. We only need to look at the _____ to know how much the Lord loves us. First John 4:10 says, “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and _____ His Son to be the propitiation” (the atoning sacrifice) “for our sins.” God sacrificed His Son—and I tell you that this is no small or easy gift. Paul explained, “He who did not _____ His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). God is not _____ with His love and care for you and me!

Third, He is the God who cannot _____ (Titus 1:2). **Read how Hebrews describes the very character of God when He makes promises – Hebrews 6:17-18.** God’s _____ guarantees His oaths and promises. You can count on God!

So... let’s think about some promises that we have in Christ. It matters greatly whether we’re _____ Christ or _____ of Him. God’s promises are for those who love Him and _____ Him. First, Jesus promises those who love, believe, and obey Him to _____ their sins. Hebrews 8:12 says, “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will _____ their sins no more.” Forgiveness is such a great blessing. Second Corinthians 5:19 says, “in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not remembering their trespasses against them.” When God forgives, He makes friends with us and no longer holds our sins against us.

When the guilty people at Pentecost asked what they _____ to do, Peter said to them, “Repent and be _____ every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the _____ is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself” (Acts 2:38). Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and _____ away your sins, calling on His name” (Acts 22:16). The atoning _____ of Jesus Christ will wash away our sins when we repent and are baptized. God promised it and God will do it! When we _____ God’s conditions, God keeps His promises.

A Christian will sometimes find himself still committing sins and still in _____ of forgiveness. First John 1:7 says to the Christian, “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son _____ us

from all sin.” Cleansing comes to Christians who _____ in the light. John continues, “If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We must be _____ with God about our sins and confess them. God then responds by cleansing us from _____ unrighteousness—every sin. Jesus also stands by Christians with the Father. Christ doesn’t _____ us to sin, but He knows our weaknesses. **Read what John wrote in 1 John 2:1-2.** Oh, I’m thankful the Lord Jesus “always lives to make intercession” for me.

Fourth, Jesus promises that God will take _____ of us. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-33, “Do not _____ then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father _____ that you need all these things. But seek _____ His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” If we’ll put God first, He’ll _____ our needs. David wrote in Psalm 37:25, “I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous _____ Or his descendants begging bread.” Paul said, “And my God will supply _____ your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Hebrews 13:5 reminds us, “Make sure that your character is _____ from the love of money, being _____ with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’” God will take care of us.

Fifth, God promises to listen to our _____. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-11.** God knows what we need even _____ we ask. He will indeed _____ our prayers!

Even in times of great stress and difficulty, we can _____ out to God. While he was bound with chains as a _____ and in danger of death, Paul wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your _____ spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your _____ be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7). When we call out to God, He _____ us! He’ll set a guard around our hearts and minds to give us that _____ that passes all understanding. Oh, that’s a powerful reason to rejoice!

Sixth, God’s _____ will never leave us. Romans 8:35-39 says, “Who shall _____ us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are _____ than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to _____ us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” No matter what has happened to you there’s never been one _____ when the Lord God didn’t love you. We can say with Peter, cast “all your anxieties on Him, because He

_____ for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Seventh, Jesus will not give us more than we can _____. The Lord Jesus said, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you _____. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). The Lord gives us a livable _____ and a bearable _____. Christianity is not an impossible religion. You can live the Christian life and you can go to _____. Some people imagine God has no interest in saving them, but that’s simply not true. God wants all men to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4). God takes no delight in people losing their _____.

Last, Jesus has prepared a _____ for you. Jesus knew that when He died He would _____ to be with the Father who sent Him, according to John 7:33 and chapter 16:10. He promised, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s _____ are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to _____ a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and _____ you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3). We have _____ of eternal life and of living with God in heaven forever.

Ephesians 2:4-7 says, “But God, being rich in _____, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were _____ in our transgressions, made us _____ together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and _____ us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing _____ of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” God wants to save you and bring you home to heaven so He might _____ you for all eternity. This is our hope! What a marvelous promise!

The question for many of us is not whether God is faithful to us but whether we’re going to be faithful and _____ to Him. Many who start out strong in faith and attend church regularly grow _____ and fall away. They stop reading the Bible, praying, attending worship, giving to God, being kind to others, and avoiding sin. They meant to do right but _____ away from God. Hebrews 2:1-3 says, “Therefore we must pay much closer _____ to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be _____, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we _____ such a great salvation?” My friend, are you right with God?

God will forgive and redeem you only after you first place your _____ in Jesus Christ as the Son of God; second, _____ of your sins and follow the Lord; third, _____ your faith; and fourth, be _____ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Being baptized into Christ takes place when we’re immersed in water, and that means we’re baptized into His _____, and His blood washes us _____ from sin and gives us newness of life.