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*Program
Study Guides*

For

November 2017

God's Enduring Word
2 Timothy 3:12-17

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

The Bible is an ancient book, but its _____ is relevant and authoritative today. Today, we're going to look at the _____ of God's Word. We want to know what God desires for us and _____ of us. We don't want to be deceived by popular opinions or follow the broad _____ to destruction. We want to know the Lord Jesus and to enjoy the promises that He makes to those who follow Him. God is good, and we want to _____ Him. The Bible _____ us how to be like Him and the things that we must avoid.

Though the Bible is an ancient book, it contains God's _____ message for us. We cannot afford to _____ it. The New Testament _____ what God has done for us and contains the commands that God requires of us. The grace of God is a wondrous blessing, but God's grace challenges us to _____ to righteousness. Titus 2:11-12 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." Grace doesn't excuse us from responsibility; it obligates us to change our hearts and be God's people!

The more that we know about God's goodness and love, the more we _____ we were like Him. The more we count our blessings, the more we want to _____ Him for what He has done. This appreciation of God's goodness _____ us to repent, to change our lives. We can't stand in the shadow of the _____ and still love sin and error. The cross leads us to _____ the Lord and the truth that He teaches. We can know the Lord by _____ His teaching, His Word, the Bible. That's the _____ to loving Him.

Our scripture reading today comes from 2 Timothy 3:12-17.

Let's have a heart to heart talk today and think about how we _____ the Bible. The Word of God is your key to understanding the _____ of God. Because it is the inspired Word of God, you can _____ it to tell you the truth. Sometimes the truth hurts; but I'd rather hear the truth that stings for a moment than listen to a lie that causes me suffering for _____. I'd rather _____ my thinking in this life than to find I was deceived in the life to come.

What I think of the Bible reveals what I _____ of the God of the Bible, who created me and to Whom I am accountable. When people _____ the Bible as an irrelevant book, they're dismissing the Lord Jesus also. I hear some say they want Jesus but they do not want the Bible. The Lord Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of me and of my _____, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26).

Perhaps one reason that people don't want to look into the Scriptures is that they see

themselves as they are morally and spiritually. They may not _____ what they see. **Read what James urged in James 1:21-25.**

When people both hear and do the will of God, they find the _____ that God intended. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed ... are those who _____ the word of God and _____ it!” (Luke 11:28). They are the _____ ones who build their houses on the rock and stand in times of testing according to Matthew 7:24-25. The Lord Jesus _____ of them. Hebrews 5:8-9 says, “Although He was a son, (speaking of Jesus) He learned _____ through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who _____ Him.” When you obey His Words, you’re obeying Him!

Occasionally I hear _____ against the Bible that are unfounded. First, speaking of the New Testament, some say, “God didn’t give us a book of _____.” Really? I realize the New Testament is not primarily a book of commandments, but it _____ does have laws and commands! **Read what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.**

Paul always considered himself _____ the law of Christ. He said, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so _____ the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). Paul is not alone. James 1:25 says, “But the one who looks into the _____ law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who _____, he will be blessed in his doing.” Yes, the New Testament is a law; but it’s a perfect law of liberty. Jesus said, “If you _____ in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you _____” (John 8:31-32). God’s Word sets us free from sin, free from the consequences of sin, and free to _____ righteous lives. That is a blessing! It is a law of liberty.

We call Jesus “Lord.” How can He be Lord and yet have _____ commandments? How can He _____ if there are no rules? Some say the Bible is just merely a _____, but it is much, much more. Let’s consider the imperatives in the New Testament; one student found more than _____ imperatives. An imperative is a _____. Some commands are _____, telling us to behave in a certain way; while others are _____, instructing us to avoid or to stop a certain practice. These imperatives _____ as laws or commands. They aren’t _____; they are God’s requirements. Obviously, we must consider the _____ and the ones to whom the command was given; but this doesn’t mean that God spoke them needlessly. They matter to God and should matter to us!

The New Testament distinguishes the way people live _____ of Christ and the way they should live _____ of Christ. People who know and practice the way of Christ enjoy the _____ of Christ. **Read Ephesians 4:17-24.** This passage in Ephesians is still true today. Truth is still in Jesus! If we want true righteousness and true holiness, if we want to rise above darkness, and if we want the words of eternal life, we must _____ to Jesus.

Second, some say the New Testament instructions went out of _____ with the passage of time. They were once binding, but times have _____ and they aren’t binding now. I call this the “_____ argument.” Christ once spoke against a moral or religious practice in the

minds in an ancient culture; but since we live in a different culture, His teaching no longer _____ to us today. That's the "cultural argument" that people hear. This argument simply isn't _____. What God called immoral in the first century is _____ immoral today. The practices God demanded or forbade in the _____ century, He still does. Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly _____ in the heavens." God's Word doesn't change with the passing of time. The Lord Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my _____ will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

First Peter 1:23-25 says, "you have been born again, not of perishable _____ but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains _____.' And this word is the _____ _____ that was preached to you." God's Word cannot perish and it cannot change!

The Lord Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to _____ all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus commissioned His followers to _____ the one true gospel to every person in every culture, in every nation, and in every age.

God calls everyone to _____. No one can ignore this call. "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Peter assures us, "The Lord is not _____ to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

No generation can exempt itself from accountability to the Lord. No generation can tell _____ to just hush and to leave us alone. When generations in the past abandoned God's way to follow their own ways, they found that course led to their _____. The history of Israel reveals that _____ opinions cannot turn sin into righteousness. When Israel despised God's statutes, and they embraced idolatry to be _____ nations that surrounded them, they found out that they couldn't dismiss God so easily. God judged them (2 Kings 17:14-18).

We must realize that Jesus Christ is Lord of _____. God gave Him _____ authority over every nation and every culture in every age. The Father has given all things into the hands of the Son (John 3:35). Hebrews 4:13 says, "And no creature is _____ from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

At the end of time, all nations will gather before the judgment seat of Christ. "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will _____ people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31-32). Those who _____

Him will enjoy eternal life, and those who ignore Him will face eternal punishment (verse 46).

Revelation 20:12-13 explains even more about the Judgment, “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.” Jesus will judge us by the things written in the books, not by _____. What was _____ in the first century will judge us! The universal character of the cross, the gospel, repentance, the church, and the judgment permeate Scripture. Jesus is the Lord of _____ flesh (John 17:3); He reigns over every person in every culture in every age; and there is no _____. You can now see that the passage of time does not _____ God’s Words. What was true in the first century is still true _____. What God required of the church in the first century, He requires of us today.

Someone said that facts are stubborn things; they are true whether people _____ them or not. Whether a culture accepts or rejects Jesus as Lord doesn’t change the _____ that He is our creator and will judge all people in every age and everywhere. Belief or disbelief doesn’t establish a fact and it doesn’t _____ the truth. Fact is fact regardless of cultural perception.

Since Jesus is your Creator and the One who will _____ you by His Words on the last day, shouldn’t you give serious thought to what He says? If He has the words of _____ life, shouldn’t you give serious thought to what He says? If Jesus sacrificed His _____ on the cross to bring you forgiveness of sins, shouldn’t you give serious thought to what He says?

I hear people say, “I don’t like _____.” Doctrine is merely _____; it’s God telling us what’s right and true. We all _____ teaching to know what is true and how to live. Others say, “Phil, don’t you know that doctrine is _____?” Is it really? You know it’s not God’s teaching that divides; it’s the spirit of wanting something _____ than God’s teaching that causes confusion and conflict. Division comes from people wanting to _____ to God’s teaching or to _____ from God’s teaching. Division comes when people _____ more to worldly cultures than to God Himself. They listen to _____ traditions rather than to God’s Word. When people follow their desires or some human idea rather than listen to God’s instructions, they follow that _____ path that leads to destruction. You cannot draw _____ to God if you count other voices as more important than His voice. This is why we urge you to listen to the _____ of God in every matter.

This is why we go to the New Testament itself for what we _____. We know faith, love, repentance, confessing Christ, and baptism are essential to _____. We know baptism is an immersion in water for the _____ of sins. So, we cannot follow the changes the religious world allows; so, we don’t sprinkle infants who neither believe nor are in sin. The grace of God leads us to follow the Scriptures without adding or subtracting anything. My friend, do you follow the Lord?

Only One Life Ephesians 5:15-21

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

You have only one life; what are you _____ with it? Does your life matter, or are you chasing after the _____? The Bible teaches us _____ to live an abundant life. It helps us to distinguish what's wise from what's foolish; what's important from what doesn't matter; what's good from what's evil. You can search the world over and never find a book that will _____ you like the Bible.

Living without God's teaching in your life is like sewing with a needle that has no _____ or like writing your biography with a pen empty of _____. Some years ago psychologist William Marston asked 3000 people, "What do you have to live for?" He found that 94% were simply enduring the present while waiting for the _____. They were waiting for something to happen someday. They wanted to finish school, or watch their children grow up, or take a long vacation, or retire. They were _____, not realizing that all anyone ever has is today, because yesterday is gone and tomorrow is only a hope.

Solomon said, "Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was _____ and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:11). You might look at your life and wonder what _____ you've made in this world. Is your life merely a striving after wind?

C. T. Studd, nearly a hundred years ago, wrote two lines that make one pause and consider what _____ in life. He wrote "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last." Because there's _____ to life than the here and now, we must consider our eternal destiny and what matters when this life is over.

Our reading today comes from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:15-21.

God gives us life one day at a time, and it's _____. Jacob, when he was 130 years old, told Pharaoh, "few and unpleasant have been the years of my life" (Genesis 47:9). One hundred and thirty years still seems long to me, but Jacob called them "_____." David said, "LORD, make me to know my _____ And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere _____" (Psalm 39:4-5).

How we live matters, and whether we remember God through our lives is crucial to how we spend _____. The Preacher, Solomon, wrote, "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to _____ for all these things" (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

We must take notice of God's Word where he says, "Therefore be _____ how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). I'd like to suggest some things that we must take time to do:

First, take time to _____. God said through the prophet Isaiah, "Incline your _____, and come to Me: hear and your soul shall live" (Isaiah 55:3). Above anyone else, we must listen to _____ and hear His voice in all matters. The psalmist said, "Thy testimonies also are my _____; They are my counselors" (Psalm 119:24). God's Word always gives the best counsel, because God has no limits to His _____. God's Word is also a blessing in _____ times. Psalm 119:50 says, "This is my comfort in my affliction, That Thy word has revived me." Again, in verse 52, "I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O LORD, And comfort myself."

Read Psalm 1.

The Scriptures also encourage us to listen to _____, to wise people. Everyone needs a listening ear at times. Listening is the first _____ to loving. Listening encourages and solves _____; it brings comfort and it brings healing. Your life will be richer by far the more you _____ to listen. Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is _____." Proverbs 15:22 says, "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they _____." Getting godly and wise advice can make the difference between success and failure. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

Second, take time to _____. I don't know everything that I want to know, for sure; but I suspect you feel that way too at times. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a _____ to my feet, And a _____ to my path." I want to know what God says. Psalm 119:98-99 says, "Thy commandments make me _____ than my enemies, For they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation." God gives us _____ wisdom that guides us now and leads us to eternal life.

Psalm 119:133 says, "Establish my footsteps in Thy _____, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me." We need to know what will _____ us and what will _____ us.

The Lord Jesus promises, "If any man is willing to do His _____, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself" (John 7:17). The more you put God's Word into _____, the more you realize the Bible truly is from God Himself.

The Scriptures _____ us how to think, how to deal with others, and how to behave. Paul said, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Could you say that? Could you encourage _____ to live like you live, to think like you think, or to treat others the way you treat them? When we follow Christ, we know we're doing the _____ thing. You can study many things, but only knowledge of God can give you _____ life. How sad to think that many people are brilliant when it comes to _____ things but know nearly

nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Third, take time to laugh and _____. Proverbs 17:22 says, “A joyful heart is _____ medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Many people have forgotten how to laugh or _____ life. Their lives are sad, dreary, and drab. We should learn to laugh at ourselves, to enjoy others without embarrassing them, and especially to rejoice in the _____. Paul, while in _____, wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). He found a way to _____ joy in life even in the harshest of circumstances.

Rejoicing is not merely being _____. Rejoicing comes from something _____ and precious. Ezra 8:10 says, “the joy of the LORD is your _____.” Because we know the Lord, we can rejoice in all His _____ and _____. This joy gives us strength, hope, and promise. After love, joy is the second quality of the _____ of the Spirit. The more we count our blessings, the more that we’ll find joy in life. God is the giver of all _____ gifts. James 1:17 says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from _____, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” God gives us every good thing that we _____. Let’s learn to rejoice _____ day. “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Fourth, take time to _____ others. There are many _____ things happening all around us, calling for us to lend a _____. Mark 9 tells of the boy who was afflicted with a _____ that made him deaf and mute. This demon often _____ him to have convulsions and be thrown into the fire and the water. When Jesus commanded the demon to come out of him, the boy convulsed on the ground and lay motionless like he was _____. Verse 27 says, “But Jesus took him by the hand, and _____ him up.” Jesus gave him the _____ that he needed. Jesus forgave _____, gave sight to the blind, healed the _____, raised the dead, and gave _____ to the poor (Luke 4:17-21). He blessed _____. He came in contact with.

Galatians 6:2 urges us, “Bear one another’s _____, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” There are still many surrounding us who need a helping hand of _____. Many people are too _____ with personal pursuits and pleasures to lift the less fortunate; but the more we bless others, the more we find blessing. Send a note, make a phone call, give a compliment, smile, encourage, and show that you _____. First Thessalonians 5:11 says, “Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” You have “only one life; ‘twill soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Fifth, take time to _____. First John 4:16 says, “God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” The man who doesn’t love is not _____—he’s just merely existing. Everybody needs love and to be loved. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.** Because Jesus loved us, we can know _____ to love others. **Read 1 John 3:16-18.**

I have a dear friend who _____ his wife a few years ago. Each time we meet, Jasper

reminds me to _____ and spend time with my wife and my loved ones while I can. I know he's right. It's time to love our families and our neighbors as _____. Today is all you have; all any of us have. When you take time to love, you're _____ God. More than anything, we _____ to love God and love other people! **Read Colossians 3:12-14.** Beyond _____, put on love. "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."

If your life isn't what you want it to be, today is the best day to _____. You can begin today to listen, learn, laugh, lift, and love! You can become the salt and the light of the world by becoming a _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father _____ through" Him (John 14:6). The Lord Jesus came that you "may have _____ and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Don't waste your life chasing after _____ in the here and now and then miss heaven. If you place all your _____ on your passions and your pleasures in this life, they will soon _____; but if you place your hope in the Lord, you can find _____ blessings in this life and the life to come.

Read Isaiah 1:18-20. In Christ, we have hope that we can be _____, that we can transform our lives into the kind of people that God can use to _____ the whole world. You only have one life, and it will not _____ on this earth forever. Serve the Lord and make the _____ of your days! The most important things in life are always expensive; but there is a far greater _____ to doing nothing and being unprepared. Life is brief; and as we age, each year passes more quickly than the last one. This means what matters becomes more and more _____. Cougan Collins recently asked, "If you knew the day you would die, would that _____ the way that you live?"

There are many uncertainties in life, and we can't foresee what the _____ holds; but you must prepare for at least one divine appointment. One day you'll stand before the throne of God to give an _____ for your life. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is _____ for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:10). What do you see when you look at yourself? Are you the person that God could _____? Are you living for the Lord or are you chasing after the wind? Don't waste your life with the things that don't matter. Build your house upon the rock by _____ to the Lord Jesus and doing what He says! Make your life count for eternity!

The best thing you can do is to place your _____ in Christ Jesus who created you. Since you're made in the _____ of God, let God work in and through you to make a difference in this world. Trust in the Lord and in His words and promises. Turn from sin and follow the Lord in repentance. Confess to everyone that you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and let _____ know that you belong to Him. Upon confession, be _____ into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Act 2:38). Your commitment to follow Jesus will be the most important decision that you'll ever make. So do it today!

Be Thankful Colossians 3:12-17

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

You can measure the _____ of a person not only by his attitude but even more so by his gratitude. Today, we're going to examine the _____ to be thankful. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a _____ to my feet And a _____ to my path." The Word of God enlightens us about the most important _____: Where did I come from? Why am I here? What will happen to me when I die? What is sin? Can I go to heaven? How should I live? How can I draw close to God? I'm so thankful for my Bible!

Psalm 92:1-2 says, "It is good to give _____ to the LORD and to sing praises to your name, O Most High; To declare Your loving kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night." During the Thanksgiving holiday, we remember our _____ and express our thanks to God for them. But thanks should be on our lips _____ day. We can never say thank you _____ to family, friends, and especially to God. Thanksgiving is not just something that we do to be _____; it also blesses us. When thanksgiving becomes an integral part of your life, you'll find your attitude and life _____. You'll become more positive, gracious, loving, and humble.

We're all wholly _____ upon the God who created us for life. He provides all our _____. God's preparation of our universe allows us to breathe, to have fresh water, to have food, and to have night and day; this shows His _____ for us. Creation is not an accident. God made this world for our blessing, so we need to _____ God for all that He's done and to be thankful. The act of giving thanks leads to _____ hearts, minds, and lives. Giving thanks also will _____ us to take God and His ways seriously. Nothing is more important!

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Colossians chapter 3, verses 12 to 17.

God has always _____ His people to be thankful. Paul urged the church to, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an _____ of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). He had already given the reason for this; it's because of what the Lord Jesus has _____. He said, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude" (Colossians 2:6-7). He said walk as you were instructed and overflow with gratitude. Gratitude will make your life brighter and better. It will fill your life with joy.

The Christian life should _____ with gratitude. How do we do this? Colossians 3:15-17 says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Let Christ's peace be your _____, sing with thankfulness in your heart, and do everything in His name while giving thanks. These changes will

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lift your spirits and encourage your _____. Your focus determines your attitude and your _____. Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a _____ of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”

It takes _____ to keep focusing your mind on God. Life is _____ changing, distracting, and often unfair. We can’t predict what misfortunes may lie ahead, but we can _____ our blessings that we now enjoy with confidence. We can _____ that we are victorious in Christ. We can be certain that God will keep His _____, for He Himself has said in Hebrews 13:5, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”

So, we must follow God’s teaching in 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, “pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s _____ for you in Christ Jesus.” You mean in everything? Yes, in everything. In the _____ times and in the _____, give thanks. When life is unfair, give thanks for what you have in Christ; He’s been _____. Even if you suffer for the name of Christ, give thanks! **Read 1 Peter 4:12-14.** The “here and now” isn’t everything; the Lord will _____ those who love and serve Him.

Our struggles _____ us for something better, so be thankful even for struggles. “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various _____, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in _____” (James 1:2-4). God is shaping and molding us for service in this life and for eternity, so don’t _____ when you face a struggle. Learn to be thankful for everything. Why?

First, when you’re thankful, you’ll _____ complaining and grumbling. Throughout their journey in the wilderness, the Israelites _____ against God. God counted their grumbling as a lack of trust; First Corinthians 10 regards grumbling as _____ as idolatry or sexual immorality. **Read Philippians 2:14-16.** When you complain, you _____ to appreciate what good the Lord has done for you.

Second, when you’re thankful, you’ll _____ being so anxious or worrisome. Philippians 4:4-7 says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, (that is, stop worrying about anything) but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” When we rejoice in the Lord and _____ our burdens and our cares to Him, He blesses us with _____. He’ll put a _____ around our hearts and minds! Start rejoicing over the things God has done for you, and life will _____ more positive and joyful. Proverbs 15:30 says, “Bright eyes _____ the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones.” Count your blessings, focus on the _____, and rejoice in Jesus Christ! Put away the _____ and focus on the good. Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence (that is, moral excellence) and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” Let your mind make its _____ there. Think about them all the time.

Third, when you're thankful, you'll _____ more humble and less prideful. Remember, God is the _____ of every blessing. James 1:17 says, "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from _____, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." This is why the Lord asks us to _____ to God, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). You may work a job and think it all _____ on you, but remember God is at the source of every blessing.

Moses reminded the Israelites as they were about to enter the promised land – **read Deuteronomy 8:11-14**. Pride _____ to forgetfulness. He urged them in verse 18, "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you _____ to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." God is the source of all that we possess, all we are, and all we _____ to be. First Corinthians 4:7 asks some arrogant people, "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you _____ as if you had not received it?"

Some folks focus on their own _____ and their own righteousness. When a person gives thanks to God _____ for what he possesses within himself, he's actually bragging about himself more than thanking God. The Lord Jesus _____ the arrogant person with the person who recognizes his total need and dependency on God. Look at Luke 18:11-14. "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to _____: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'" This man wasn't really praying or thanking God; he was reading his _____.

"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the _____!' I tell you, this man went to his _____ justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." Gratitude to God, knowing that we have an _____ need for God, removes our pride and makes us more humble.

Fourth, when you're thankful, you'll be more gracious to _____. The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Giving thanks for God's _____ leads us to be willing to forgive 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, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." A gracious person who knows the kindness of the Lord realizes the _____ of being kind to others. He opens his heart and his wallet to help those in need and doesn't _____.

Fifth, when you're thankful, you'll _____ your love. We're thankful the Lord Jesus willingly and lovingly sacrificed Himself upon the _____. "We love, because He _____ loved us" (1 John 4:19). Giving thanks helps me _____ my focus on the Lord and on what really matters. Gratitude for what Jesus did is at the _____ of our conversion. Gratitude leads us to be committed disciples who want to _____ the Lord in all that we do. We can't look deeply at the cross and then _____ as if nothing matters. Our thankfulness will not let us.

Does the cross matter to you? Surprisingly, some act as if the cross never _____; and others live as if it didn't _____. Perhaps you remember when Jesus healed the ten lepers. "As He entered a village, ten leprosy men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have _____ on us!' When He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they were going, they were _____. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving _____ to Him. And he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17:12-16),

When people _____ to remember God, honor Him, or thank Him, they lose sight of the blessing of living as God's people. An ungrateful person will _____ apathetic and callous toward God. When people lose sight of God, they also lose sight of morality and _____. They don't realize that when they stop honoring God, they start dishonoring themselves.

Romans 1:21-24 described the pagan Gentiles this way: "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give _____, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the _____ of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them."

Giving thanks matters. When you love God, you want to _____ Him with all your heart. Psalm 50:23 says, "He who offers a _____ of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God." Truly giving thanks comes from our hearts and shows in our _____. Thanksgiving leads to thanks-living. Are you thankful?

I look forward to going to heaven and _____ Jesus. The first thing I want to do is say to Him "Thank you. Thank you for dying for me. Thank you for shedding your blood to cleanse me from all my terrible sins, so that I could live with you." But I don't have to _____ till I go to heaven to express my thanks to God. I can do it now by getting _____ with Him and by worshiping Him. I don't want to miss a _____ Lord's Day, the first day of the week, without prayer and singing praise to Him. I don't want to miss gathering around the Lord's table to _____ of the Lord's Supper, remembering the Lord's body and blood which were given for me.

The word "thankful" actually comes from the old English word "think-ful." Being thankful comes from being think-ful. When we realize how blessed we are, we should _____ to the love and goodness of God. How often people today want and want from God, but never _____ to give their praise, or their thanks, or their hearts to Him. Have you?

God's goodness _____ us to repent and obey the gospel. If I thank God for His grace, I'll gladly _____ and _____ Him. God's love leads us to _____ Him, to _____ of our sins, to _____ His name, and to be _____ into Christ. According to Romans 6:3-7, we die with Christ in baptism, we're buried with Him, and we're raised with Him to walk in newness of life in baptism. God wants you; He wants your heart, your life, and your soul. Won't you serve Him and follow Him always. Thankfulness begins when people _____ the Lord Jesus in their hearts every day and serve Him. We hope you'll not wait another day to put on your Lord in baptism.

A Christian Acts 26:24-29

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

A Christian? What does it _____ to be a Christian? Today, we're going to explore _____ is a Christian and what it means to be one. We don't want to be Christians in _____ only; we want to _____ God with all our hearts and souls. We don't want to be part of a social _____ or merely belong to a popular worship society. Our Lord _____ us to something much higher and nobler. The Lord has called us to be part of His family, to _____ in His ways. In Christ, we must _____ to sin and _____ for righteousness. In Christ, we _____ for those who hurt and make every effort to lead everyone to faith and obedience to Christ.

When someone mentions the word "Christian," what do you picture in your _____? Some picture Christians as people who genuinely _____ the Lord and strive to follow His teaching. Others say, "My _____ were Christians, so I'm a Christian." Being a Christian, however, isn't like being an American. We can say, "I was _____ in America, so I am an American"; but Christianity isn't like that. Many children are born in a Christian environment and _____ Christian ways in early childhood; but this by its self doesn't make them Christians. They become Christians when they _____ to follow Christ and give their lives to Him.

This is not a childish choice; it's the most critical and important _____ that you'll make in your lifetime and it will affect every other choice you make. When a person becomes a Christian, he no longer _____ to himself. He's taking on Christ as his _____ and Master. He's taking up his _____ to follow the Lord. If he's serious, he'll never be the same. I hope and pray that you're serious about your faith in Christ Jesus.

Our reading today comes from the book of Acts 26:24-29.

Every Christian is first a _____. A disciple is a _____ of Jesus Christ. The term "disciple" means a "learner" or "pupil." The disciples of Christ, however, were _____ than mere students. They _____ themselves to Christ and His teaching. In the last words of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, "Go therefore and _____ disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Christ's disciples were to observe _____ that Jesus taught. They were never to choose to follow some commandments while ignoring others.

Jesus described what He _____ His disciples to be and what they were to do in several passages. Jesus gets specific in three passages in the Gospel of John. First, 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 _____ that you are my disciples, if you

have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Being a disciple of Christ _____ you to love other Christians in the same way Jesus loves them. A disciple is _____ to lay down his life for others just as Jesus did. When Christians love each other, people notice that. They notice that love and are _____ to it. They want some of it.

Second, the Lord Jesus wanted people to focus on and remain in His _____. He said, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you _____” (John 8:31-32). A true disciple does not make his own _____ or do his own thing. He makes his home in the words of Jesus found in the New Testament. He knows _____ the truth can set him free. He abides in the words of Jesus so he may know the truth. He’s not willing to settle for anything _____. He’s not willing to go into human traditions. He’s not willing to listen to _____. He wants to _____ what the Lord Jesus has to say.

Third, the Lord Jesus wants us to bear much _____. The Lord said, “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so _____ to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you _____ my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love” (John 15:8-10). Christians, that is, disciples, bear fruit by serving others and by teaching others the _____. As disciples, they imitate their Master in kindness and love. They make it their business to _____ people to Christ and to honor God with their lives.

At first, everyone who followed Jesus was called a _____. Acts 6:7 says, “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became _____ to the faith.” Jewish priests became Christians because they knew that He was indeed the Son of God, and they wanted to _____ the Lord. In time, however, the name of Christ began to be _____ to the disciples. They were more than merely _____; they belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word Christian is more than an adjective; it both describes and identifies those who _____ Christ. The word “Christian” adds the suffix “-ian” to the word “Christ.” This suffix originally applied to _____. It came to denote the adherents, or the followers, of an individual or group. A Christian is a slave or adherent of _____. He is committed to Christ and follows His _____. The New Testament uses the word “Christian” only _____ times. The first is in Acts 11:26. “And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” These believers, these disciples “were first called Christians in Antioch” because their behavior and their speech were _____ Christ. This passage fulfills a _____ found in Isaiah 62:2 that, “The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a _____ name Which the mouth of the LORD will designate.” The word for “called” in Acts 11:26 is not the usual word, but one that has the force of a divine _____. This is not a term of derision like some think, but one that _____ Himself designated.

The second use of “Christian” is found in Acts 26:28. “Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In (such) a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?’” Paul was defending himself in Caesarea

before Agrippa and Festus and giving him _____ to believe. Paul responded, “I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these _____” (Acts 26:29). Anyone who knows the love of Christ _____ for everyone else to know that love and grace.

Then there is the third use of the word Christian. It’s found in 1 Peter 4:15-16. “Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be _____, but is to glorify God in this name.” Those who wear the name of Christian must live to _____ Christ. It’s a worthy name. Their behavior and words should _____ that they gladly belong to Him!

If you’re a Christian, you’re also a _____. Yes, a saint! The word for “saint” and the word for “holy” are really the same word in the original Greek. The word “holy” is an adjective, while the word “saint” is a noun. When people are sanctified (that is, made holy) by the _____ of Jesus Christ at the time of salvation, God makes them saints. So, _____ saved person is a saint. Ananias told Paul that he was to go to the Gentiles, “to open their eyes so that they may _____ from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified (that is, made holy) by faith in Me” (Acts 26:18). If you have been sanctified, that is, made holy by the blood of Christ, you are a saint.

Paul greeted the Christians in Corinth, “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those (who are) sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2). **Read what Paul said to the church at Ephesus that was made up of Jews and Gentiles in Ephesians 2:19-22.** The New Testament knows nothing of some _____ class of “saints.” This concept was developed many centuries _____. If you’re a Christian, you want to _____ to Jesus and what comes in the Bible, not to those other things.

If you’re a Christian, not only are you a saint but you’re a _____ of God. Yes, a child of God! John 1:11-13 says, “He (Jesus) came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the _____ to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Only God can make a child of God. Only God can make a saint, a Christian or a disciple. Children of God are born again by the _____ of God. Galatians 3:26-27 tells us how: “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ (that is, immersed in water into Christ) have put on Christ.” When people believe and put on Christ in baptism, they become children of God, saints, disciple and Christians.

If we’re God’s children, let’s _____ like our Father in heaven. Philippians 2:14-15 says, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” A child of God must act differently than the _____ acts. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:44-48.**

If you're a Christian, a disciple, a saint, you're a _____ or _____ in Christ. Hebrews 2:11 says, "For both He (Jesus) who sanctifies and those who are sanctified (made holy) are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to _____ them brethren." All of the Christians are brethren. When Paul and Peter wrote their letters, they frequently addressed people in the _____ as "brothers and sometimes as sisters." **Read what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:22-23.** You have to _____ the gospel to be a child of God. As children of God, we must love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

God wants us to be _____ as brothers and sisters. We unite on His _____. **Read what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:10-11.** Instead of holding fast to one another in Christ and His Word, they were splitting into _____. **Read Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13.** As brothers and sisters we must _____ united behind the Lord Jesus and not be split into groups and denominations. **Read what the Lord Jesus prayed for in John 17:20-21.** The current division among people who call themselves Christians is a _____ block to those in the world.

Brothers care about each other and stay united. Galatians 6:1-2 says, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."

Are you a true Christian, a disciple, a saint, a child of God, and a brother or sister in Christ? Have you denied yourself and taken up your cross? In God's eyes, our highest calling is to wear and honor the _____ of Jesus Christ. We must _____ become a fair-weather Christian, a pretend Christian, or a Christian in name only. Christians should truly honor the name of Christ in every aspect of their _____. A true Christian has denied himself, taken up his cross daily, and given his _____ to follow the Lord. Sadly, many who wear the name of Christ _____ to understand that they truly belong to the Lord Jesus. When you confess Christ and you're baptized into Christ, take your commitment seriously!

Read Peter's description of a Christian in 1 Peter 2:9-10. One who takes God seriously realizes what God has _____ for him to save him and to give him an inheritance in heaven. He realizes how much _____ God's marvelous light is than the darkness of the world. He knows he belongs to God!

Who do you belong to? Do you belong to Christ? To become a Christian and to belong to Him, you must _____ that He is the Christ, the Son of God. You must _____ of your sins and turn to the teaching of Christ. Upon confessing your faith, you must be _____ into Christ, born again into the family of God. When you're baptized, immersed into Christ in water, God will _____ away your sins; He'll make you holy, and add you to His family as His child. Acts 22:16 says, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Oh, how I wish you would become a Christian today!