



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>

*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
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## God's Plan for Marriage Matthew 19:3-6

In the beginning, God \_\_\_\_\_ male and female and \_\_\_\_\_ them as one, making the first family. Thousands of years have passed and nothing is \_\_\_\_\_ than God's plan for marriage. God in His \_\_\_\_\_ created us to be the way He wanted us to be, male and female united together as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the family and of society. The Lord's way is \_\_\_\_\_ the best way. Great confusion about what constitutes family and marriage now permeates our \_\_\_\_\_. A Pew Forum survey released in 2010 said 39 percent of Americans believe marriage is \_\_\_\_\_. This change in thinking profoundly impacts our country and especially our \_\_\_\_\_. In 1960, 72 percent of adults in America were married. Today, only \_\_\_\_\_ of all adults are married. Many are \_\_\_\_\_ until later in life to marry, and the number of divorced people has tripled since 1960. The number of couples living together \_\_\_\_\_ marriage has grown dramatically.

From the beginning, God made a \_\_\_\_\_ for the home. A pattern is a form or \_\_\_\_\_ designed to be imitated or copied. Psalm 145:17 says, "The LORD is righteous in all His \_\_\_\_\_ And kind in all His \_\_\_\_\_." When people \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord's way, they find \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 119:2 says, "How blessed are those who \_\_\_\_\_ His testimonies, Who \_\_\_\_\_ Him with all their heart." **Read the advice we should all take from Proverbs 3:5-7.** Sadly, some think they have a \_\_\_\_\_ way than the Lord's way.

### **Our reading today comes from the Gospel According to Matthew 19:3-6.**

God's pattern for the family \_\_\_\_\_ at creation. **Read what the Lord God said in Genesis 1:26-28.** God saw that it was not \_\_\_\_\_ for man to be \_\_\_\_\_ according to Genesis 2:18. Though Adam was surrounded by every living creature, "for Adam there was not a \_\_\_\_\_ found that was fit for him" (Verse 20). **Read Genesis 2:21-25.** God showed his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ by giving a woman to Adam, giving him just what he \_\_\_\_\_. She was a helper \_\_\_\_\_ specifically for him. He didn't need another male exactly \_\_\_\_\_ himself; he needed a female. Man and woman \_\_\_\_\_ each other physically, socially, and spiritually. Like a lock with a key or a bow with a string, each needs the other to function \_\_\_\_\_. Alone neither can accomplish what God \_\_\_\_\_.

God uses this story to speak to every age, "Therefore a man shall \_\_\_\_\_ his father and his mother and \_\_\_\_\_ to his wife, and they shall become \_\_\_\_\_ flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Our Lord Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ this very passage in Matthew 19:5. Marriage uniquely \_\_\_\_\_ a male with a female physically and emotionally. The man and woman were to become one flesh, an

intimate relationship that took \_\_\_\_\_ over all the others. Because of this physical bond, a man should \_\_\_\_\_ the bonds he has even with his parents and \_\_\_\_\_ hold fast to his wife.

God gave us a \_\_\_\_\_ for marriage to bless us with a way that would be \_\_\_\_\_ for everyone. First, God showed his wisdom and love toward mankind by providing marriage as the basis and the model for \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ of marriage as God designed it are numerous. God's plan for marriage provides for \_\_\_\_\_. That is God's \_\_\_\_\_ commandment to man found in Genesis 1:28. It's undeniable that it takes \_\_\_\_\_ a male and a female to produce a child. Second, God's plan for marriage provides the best environment for \_\_\_\_\_ children. Every child needs both a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_. Each parent has a necessary and meaningful \_\_\_\_\_ in the rearing of children. A mother cannot do everything a father can do, and a father cannot do what a mother can do.

Third, God's plan for marriage provides a \_\_\_\_\_ where righteousness dwells. God said, "Marriage is to be held in \_\_\_\_\_ among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will \_\_\_\_\_" (Hebrews 13:4). When parents simply live together without being married, they provide a \_\_\_\_\_ compromised home for their children. They cannot fulfill God's \_\_\_\_\_ to fathers to "bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Fourth, God's plan for marriage shows great \_\_\_\_\_. When a man and a woman honor their \_\_\_\_\_ to live together after the ordinance of God until \_\_\_\_\_ parts them, they provide security for one another and for their children. They turn their \_\_\_\_\_ into a \_\_\_\_\_, a dwelling filled with love and happiness.

It's not an \_\_\_\_\_ that in the original Greek New Testament the word for husband (aner) is the same word for male and the word for wife (gune) is the same word for woman. According to the New Testament, all husbands are males and all wives are females. First Corinthians 7:2 says, "But because of the \_\_\_\_\_ to sexual immorality (fornication), each man should have his own wife (that is, gune) and each woman should have her own husband (that is, aner)." Scripture here is specific; marriage is between a \_\_\_\_\_ (aner) and a \_\_\_\_\_ (gune). A husband cannot marry \_\_\_\_\_ husband, and a wife cannot marry \_\_\_\_\_ wife. Males are physically and sexually \_\_\_\_\_ for females, and females for males. The Bible doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ us about God's will on this matter. We also see that a man is to have his \_\_\_\_\_ wife, not wives; and a woman is to have her \_\_\_\_\_ husband, not husbands.

Some argue that any two people who \_\_\_\_\_ each other and are sexually attracted ought to have the \_\_\_\_\_ to marry. Some say love and desire are more important than the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. They believe they can set God's pattern for marriage \_\_\_\_\_. But if any love relationship permits marriage, then should we \_\_\_\_\_ adults to marry little children? Or should \_\_\_\_\_ marry \_\_\_\_\_? Recently, communities are forming \_\_\_\_\_ relationships consisting of multiple husbands, wives, boyfriends, and girlfriends. Such behavior \_\_\_\_\_

chaos and it \_\_\_\_\_ the moral and social fabric of the home. It will surely \_\_\_\_\_ to loneliness, betrayal and broken hearts.

The Lord himself \_\_\_\_\_ marriage for the blessing and benefit of mankind. God's commandments relating to wedlock are just as \_\_\_\_\_ as those which relate to the plan of salvation or to worship. God's way is always best, and no alternative can \_\_\_\_\_ it. We should \_\_\_\_\_ the sanctity of marriage as God ordained it. Any civil or ecclesiastical effort to \_\_\_\_\_ God's teaching will inevitably lead to moral confusion. Just because people have a sexual attraction to another person doesn't mean we have the \_\_\_\_\_ to be with that person. We might be convinced that pedophiles are \_\_\_\_\_ with a predisposition toward sex with children, but I think only a few people would ever claim that it was moral, right, and good for a pedophile to violate a child.

Feelings cannot \_\_\_\_\_ something sinful into something moral and morally acceptable. That would be a moral \_\_\_\_\_. Imagine telling our young people: "Please live according to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. But if you discover something is really attractive or tempting to you, and if you discover that it is difficult to avoid, then it's \_\_\_\_\_." Sexual attraction doesn't make fornication or living together without \_\_\_\_\_ morally acceptable, nor does it sanctify same-sex marriage.

**Read what James 1:13-15 says.** Sexual temptation comes to us as a \_\_\_\_\_. It's a \_\_\_\_\_ enticement to sin. When people \_\_\_\_\_ to their lusts and sin, their sins bring forth spiritual \_\_\_\_\_. They are not \_\_\_\_\_ with God.

Paul described those who would \_\_\_\_\_ with the word of God as disgraceful and underhanded in 2 Corinthians 4:2. Tampering is the practice of twisting or distorting a Biblical \_\_\_\_\_ so that it says what the person \_\_\_\_\_ it to say. Tampering shows no \_\_\_\_\_ for the authority of God. By its very nature, changing the Scriptures leads to deception and the corruption of the \_\_\_\_\_. Peter spoke of those "ignorant and unstable" souls who twist the Scriptures to their own \_\_\_\_\_ in 2 Peter 3:16.

When people \_\_\_\_\_ God's model of marriage, they unalterably \_\_\_\_\_ themselves. God distinguishes sexual activity in marriage from \_\_\_\_\_ sexual behavior. "Let marriage be held in \_\_\_\_\_ among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will \_\_\_\_\_ the sexually immoral and adulterous" (Hebrews 13:4). The Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ sex outside of marriage between two or more individuals as sexual immorality or fornication; in Greek it's the word porneia. Porneia is a broad term and refers to \_\_\_\_\_ of sexual activity between unmarried people, including incest, prostitution, bestiality, and homosexuality. Adultery takes place when a married person has sexual contact with someone \_\_\_\_\_ than his or her spouse. Marriage is a covenant \_\_\_\_\_ that excludes all others.

**Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 19:4-6.** A part of the traditional marriage \_\_\_\_\_ is that the two will remain united “until \_\_\_\_\_ do us part.”

Sexual immorality of all kinds was common in pagan Corinth. Paul condemned the \_\_\_\_\_ of sexual immorality, and adultery, and homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9. By inspiration Paul \_\_\_\_\_ the Corinthians to “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his \_\_\_\_\_” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Promiscuous, sexual immorality led to the many sexually transmitted diseases that were rampant in Corinth in those days, and it will lead to \_\_\_\_\_ today. **Read what Galatians 6:7-8 says.**

Those who thumb their noses at God deceive themselves by imagining that they may have sex with whomever they please \_\_\_\_\_ consequences. The facts do not \_\_\_\_\_. Note the facts given by Dr. Amy Lansky in the sermon. Scripture describes homosexuality as \_\_\_\_\_ – **read Romans 1:26-27.** As a practice, sodomy is \_\_\_\_\_ with filth and disease. God spoke against it because it’s \_\_\_\_\_. God didn’t speak against it to be mean, but because He \_\_\_\_\_ us and \_\_\_\_\_ that troubles come from sin. Oh, Friend, let’s follow God!

I’m so \_\_\_\_\_ for my sweet wife, Jackie. We’ve been married nearly forty years; my folks were married nearly forty-five years; and Jackie’s parents were married more than fifty. We committed ourselves to live a \_\_\_\_\_ together in the holy bonds of matrimony. Divorce was \_\_\_\_\_ an option; we pledged that nothing but death will ever separate us. Our commitment to each other has provided a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ home for our four children. Following God isn’t merely a \_\_\_\_\_ thing; it’s the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ thing to do! When people follow their feelings or the way of the world, they inevitably \_\_\_\_\_ themselves. We need God’s teaching to \_\_\_\_\_ us. “I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in \_\_\_\_\_, Nor is it in a man who walks to \_\_\_\_\_ his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23).

Following the Lord’s \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation is also best and right. To be saved, to become a Christian, you must \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the Christ, \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins, \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus as the Christ, and be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. This is the consistent \_\_\_\_\_ found in the book of Acts. When people \_\_\_\_\_ the good news about Jesus Christ, they responded! They \_\_\_\_\_ with urgency! The people at Pentecost \_\_\_\_\_ received Peter’s words and were baptized (Acts 2:41). When the people at Samaria heard Philip preaching the gospel, they believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12). When the eunuch heard Philip’s sermon and saw water, he \_\_\_\_\_ to be baptized. When the jailer at Philippi found out what to do to be saved, he was baptized \_\_\_\_\_ though it was midnight (Acts 16:33). What are you waiting for? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.

## **Love and Respect**

### **Ephesians 5:22-27**

God's message to husbands is to \_\_\_\_\_ their wives; and His message to wives is to \_\_\_\_\_ their husbands. The Lord always gives the best instructions that provide for the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of His people. The Lord's instructions on \_\_\_\_\_ are no exception. God unites us in marriage and gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ that we most need to live happy and godly lives. Marriage, as God \_\_\_\_\_ it, provides love, security, and stability to our lives. It's truly the \_\_\_\_\_ of the family and the society. As Christian husbands and wives, we should do what is \_\_\_\_\_, even when doing what is right isn't \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus set the example. Read what 1 Peter 2:21-23 says. Jesus loved us \_\_\_\_\_ when we were unlovely and sinful. He \_\_\_\_\_ for us, even when we were helpless and ungodly.

All marriages go through \_\_\_\_\_ spots and challenges. I know that Jackie and I have had our \_\_\_\_\_ of parenting responsibilities, and financial challenges, and health problems. I'm certainly not the \_\_\_\_\_ husband, and Jackie has had to put up with all my \_\_\_\_\_. But through it all, we've never \_\_\_\_\_ the commitment that we made to each other in the presence of God and witnesses. Both of us \_\_\_\_\_ to love and respect each other. When we turn to Scripture, love and respect are the \_\_\_\_\_ to happiness in marriage.

### **Our reading today comes from Ephesians 5:22-27.**

The Scriptures \_\_\_\_\_ that the husband is the \_\_\_\_\_ of his wife, and she is to be \_\_\_\_\_ to him. In our day, when equality seems to be so important, some think it's \_\_\_\_\_ that God gave authority to husbands over their wives. This authority, however, never gives men the \_\_\_\_\_ to abuse or to dominate their wives. Any man who treats the woman he married unkindly is \_\_\_\_\_ God's law. He's not only disobeying God, he's also \_\_\_\_\_ himself. Only a fool believes that abusing his wife will be a \_\_\_\_\_ to him. Wise husbands know that the \_\_\_\_\_ they treat their wives, the more their wives will \_\_\_\_\_ with love and respect. When husbands \_\_\_\_\_ to love their wives, their wives \_\_\_\_\_ with behavior that shows a lack of respect. When husbands sense a \_\_\_\_\_ of respect from their wives, they often act in ways that are unloving. So these feelings of being disrespected or unloved \_\_\_\_\_ apart the marriage. But when husbands show love and wives show respect, the marriage \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. You can make your marriage brighter and better, husbands, if you can \_\_\_\_\_ to demonstrate Christian love to your wife.

If a disrespected husband will love his wife anyway, and if a wife who feels unloved will respect her husband anyway, they can \_\_\_\_\_ putting their damaged marriage back together. A wise husband pays \_\_\_\_\_ to his wife. He is able to see what she \_\_\_\_\_ to be



happy in this life and to \_\_\_\_\_ those needs. Every woman needs to feel that her husband is \_\_\_\_\_ to her and \_\_\_\_\_ about her. Many husbands keep their \_\_\_\_\_ from their wives, and their wives feel unloved because of it. Wives need husbands who will open up enough to \_\_\_\_\_ their thoughts and feelings. She \_\_\_\_\_ unwanted or unneeded when he closes up and shuts her out of his life. When he keeps his life \_\_\_\_\_ from her, she feels that he doesn't love her enough to \_\_\_\_\_ her. Wives need to know their husbands are \_\_\_\_\_ to the marriage, that he's not looking somewhere else. She also needs to know that he sees her as the most \_\_\_\_\_ person in his life, except for God. She needs to \_\_\_\_\_ that he cherishes and honors her.

The \_\_\_\_\_ important thing a husband can do is to love his wife. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.** Love may \_\_\_\_\_ with a warm feeling, but we have to \_\_\_\_\_ how to love our wives; and wives have to \_\_\_\_\_ how to love their husbands. Some folks are \_\_\_\_\_ to love than others, and love will require lots of patience and kindness. Love \_\_\_\_\_ that we set "self" aside. I can't love someone else if \_\_\_\_\_ and self-centeredness is my way. Love \_\_\_\_\_ envy, arrogance, and rudeness. It \_\_\_\_\_ to let small things slide and not be irritated all the time. Love puts up with a lot of demands; it believes and hopes the \_\_\_\_\_ for others, and endures. Love is the determination to put the best interests of another \_\_\_\_\_ our own, regardless of the \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus loved the church like that, and He \_\_\_\_\_ husbands to love their wives the same way.

Loving your wife involves taking the time to be \_\_\_\_\_ to her and to \_\_\_\_\_. The happiest couples \_\_\_\_\_ with each other, talking and listening to each other. Husbands and wives should spend a good while each day in \_\_\_\_\_ conversation. Turn the television off, get away from the computer, and talk \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. A wise husband will take the time to \_\_\_\_\_ his life with the woman that he loves. He wants to know about her and is willing to \_\_\_\_\_ his life in her by listening. To fail to pay attention to your wife is to say to her that you don't \_\_\_\_\_ what she has to say. Such behavior is abusive, not \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read James 1:19-20.** Much of the \_\_\_\_\_ in our homes would go away if people would take the time to listen and understand the people they love. Listen to your spouse; let her finish her sentences; don't act rashly or hastily. Try to understand her life from her \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

Treat her with \_\_\_\_\_. First Peter 3:7 says, "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an \_\_\_\_\_ way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." Some men have the awful \_\_\_\_\_ that because husbands are the head of the wife, that this position of authority gives them the right to dominate or abuse their wives with their \_\_\_\_\_. Any man who treats his wife like a doormat is violating the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Abusive power is a marriage \_\_\_\_\_. Husbands, treat your wife \_\_\_\_\_; tell your wife how important and valuable she is to you. Watch for the loving \_\_\_\_\_ on her face when you do that! **Read**

**what the writer said in Proverbs 31:10-11.** Notice how the wise husband trusts his wife's \_\_\_\_\_, realizing how fortunate he is to have her. It's foolishness for a man to expect his wife to love him and meet all his needs, while he \_\_\_\_\_ her unkindly and unfairly.

Jesus taught, "In everything, therefore, treat people the \_\_\_\_\_ you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). I'm amazed at how kind and good people can be to those \_\_\_\_\_ the family but treat their own families with disrespect. If we could see ourselves as we really are and how we treat our families, we might be quite \_\_\_\_\_. If we had a tape recording of our \_\_\_\_\_ or a video of our \_\_\_\_\_, we might see ourselves the way that our families see us. Some folks never consider how \_\_\_\_\_ they make their family's lives. That is why, every now and then, it's \_\_\_\_\_ for all of us to step back and take a long look at how we have treated our families. Empathy is the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ things through the eyes of another and to \_\_\_\_\_ what the other is feeling. When we look at ourselves through other's \_\_\_\_\_, what will we see? Will we \_\_\_\_\_ what we see when we look at ourselves?

A wise husband will also be the \_\_\_\_\_ leader in his home. It's spiritually important for couples to spend time \_\_\_\_\_ singing, praying, and reading the Bible. There's great \_\_\_\_\_ in a husband and wife privately praying together every day. Prayer allows husbands and wives to take their \_\_\_\_\_ together to God the Father. It allows them to \_\_\_\_\_ in each other's presence and in the presence of God their concerns and needs. When two people pray with each other, they develop a spiritual intimacy and unity that \_\_\_\_\_ their relationship. Christian marriages, where God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the home, where love and where patience and forgiveness are present, and where God's laws are obeyed, almost never end in \_\_\_\_\_. God's ways are not only \_\_\_\_\_ ways; they are the \_\_\_\_\_ ways. When people truly live out their \_\_\_\_\_, the way God intended, they find their marriages to be the happiest and most loving. Husbands, do your best to \_\_\_\_\_ your home what God would have it to be. Be the spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ in your home. God's way is truly, truly a way of blessing.

**Read what Peter said in 1 Peter 3:1-6.** Sarah is an ideal for Christian wives to \_\_\_\_\_. As an \_\_\_\_\_, Peter was inspired of God; and as an \_\_\_\_\_, Peter himself was married. He knew the great blessing of having a \_\_\_\_\_ wife.

Solomon had a lot to say about \_\_\_\_\_ in the book of Proverbs. Solomon had been given the \_\_\_\_\_ of God; and we can \_\_\_\_\_ from God through him. Solomon said several truths. "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones" (Proverbs 12:4). "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD" (Proverbs 18:22). "A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping" (Proverbs 19:13). Like a dripping faucet, a quarrelsome wife is a constant irritation. "Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD" (Proverbs 19:14). "A man who has



a godly and wise wife is doubly blessed. King Lemuel, not Solomon, gave a marvelous insight into a virtuous woman. “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). He ends the chapter by saying, “Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised” (Proverbs 31:30).

What kind of wife does God \_\_\_\_\_ women to be? Paul says wives should show \_\_\_\_\_ for their husbands. Many women find it \_\_\_\_\_ to respect men. Some have stereotyped men as crude or juvenile, and \_\_\_\_\_ of respect. Masculinity has been under \_\_\_\_\_ in our culture. Many men \_\_\_\_\_ very hard and \_\_\_\_\_ a great deal to provide for their wives and families. Many men spend \_\_\_\_\_ caring for their wives and children every day. Many men are \_\_\_\_\_ and understanding when they need to be, and \_\_\_\_\_ when they need to be. Men who love their wives and live the \_\_\_\_\_ life of honesty, integrity and purity will be men \_\_\_\_\_ of respect. Some men, sadly, treat their wives \_\_\_\_\_. Wives, however, should \_\_\_\_\_ respect their husbands. How can a wife respect her husband when he doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ it? She gives him respect, both because of who he is as her \_\_\_\_\_ and because of who she is as a \_\_\_\_\_ wife. She gives her husband respect because she \_\_\_\_\_ to God and it's God's \_\_\_\_\_. Just as I would tell a husband to love a wife that's \_\_\_\_\_ to love, I would tell a wife to respect her husband even when he is \_\_\_\_\_ to respect.

If you \_\_\_\_\_ a better marriage, start looking at \_\_\_\_\_. How are you \_\_\_\_\_ your spouse? Instead of constantly \_\_\_\_\_ your spouse, why not \_\_\_\_\_ yourself? You can \_\_\_\_\_ your marriage best by starting with yourself, rather than \_\_\_\_\_ a finger at your mate. Let's clean up our own lives \_\_\_\_\_ we focus on the faults of our spouses. We can't change our spouses by making unreasonable \_\_\_\_\_, but we can change ourselves. When we make changes for the \_\_\_\_\_ in ourselves, our spouses will appreciate those changes and will want to do \_\_\_\_\_ as well. Improving our marriages begins with improving our \_\_\_\_\_. Nothing makes a better, more giving and more loving heart, than entering into a loving \_\_\_\_\_ with God. When the love of God is in your \_\_\_\_\_, you will become more loving and respectful to your family.

Does the love of God \_\_\_\_\_ in you? Are you a \_\_\_\_\_ Christian? To become a Christian you must have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for the Lord Jesus Christ. Loving God means \_\_\_\_\_ away from the sinful and hurtful ways of the world and embracing and loving the righteous ways of Christ. This is repentance, a change of \_\_\_\_\_ that leads to a change of \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord asks you to be \_\_\_\_\_ in His name, immersed in water for the forgiveness of your \_\_\_\_\_. In baptism, you'll be united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection ( Romans 6:3-7). At that time, the Lord will \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins; He will \_\_\_\_\_ you to His church. You'll be in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, blessed by Him.



## Overcoming Hurts Ephesians 4:26-32

Living with the people that we love isn't always \_\_\_\_\_. God's word teaches us how to have \_\_\_\_\_ lives in spite of our weaknesses. When people \_\_\_\_\_ God, they find their lives grow richer and better. God's \_\_\_\_\_ found in the Word truly leads us to the abundant life. Nothing could be better than to have a happy home filled with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Following the Lord is the way to \_\_\_\_\_ just such a home. God \_\_\_\_\_ marriage for the happiness of us all. Sociologist Linda Waite and researcher Maggie Gallagher in their book, *The Case for Marriage*, declare, "The \_\_\_\_\_ from four decades of research is surprisingly clear: A good marriage is both men's and women's best bet for living a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ life." Men and women in their first marriages, on average, enjoy significantly \_\_\_\_\_ levels of physical and mental health than those who are either single, divorced or living together. We also need to realize that our \_\_\_\_\_ affects our marriage. When two committed Christians get married, they are \_\_\_\_\_ likely to end their marriage in divorce than those who have \_\_\_\_\_ religious affiliation. Committed Christians who know and love the Lord deal with conflict and offenses \_\_\_\_\_ than those who don't have faith in God. Their love for God means that they take their \_\_\_\_\_ seriously and they strive to work through their \_\_\_\_\_ rather than give up when times get tough. The love of God opens the door for them to show their love to their spouses in ways that keep the marriage \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We can overcome the hurts and offenses of life by following the Lord Jesus.

**Our reading today comes from Ephesians 4:26-32.** Perhaps your marriage has \_\_\_\_\_ from years of unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict. We know we can't change the \_\_\_\_\_, but we can start fresh for the \_\_\_\_\_. We need to begin by taking responsibility for our \_\_\_\_\_ in the conflicts. Husbands and wives have \_\_\_\_\_ experiences, concerns, and perspectives about resolving conflicts. We must \_\_\_\_\_ to handle our conflicts correctly, so we can keep our marriages healthy. First Peter 4:8 says, "Above all, keep \_\_\_\_\_ in your love for one another, because love \_\_\_\_\_ a multitude of sins."

Every day, spouses need to \_\_\_\_\_ their love and respect for one another. Saying, "I love you," "thank you," "I appreciate you," and shows them that we \_\_\_\_\_ by being open and honest. And by listening attentively and carefully we build intimacy and trust into the relationship. Our marriage is what we \_\_\_\_\_ it. If you feed it with good things, it will \_\_\_\_\_ happier; but if you neglect your spouse and become selfish, you'll \_\_\_\_\_ your home. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is \_\_\_\_\_ for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will

give grace to those who hear.” We need to keep thinking of our \_\_\_\_\_ as more important than ourselves. **Read Philippians 2:3-4.** To maintain a healthy marriage, we must watch our \_\_\_\_\_. When you disagree with your spouse, are you being \_\_\_\_\_? Are you acting as a \_\_\_\_\_? Are you trying to \_\_\_\_\_ things from your spouse’s point of view? Have you considered that your spouse may be \_\_\_\_\_ to something offensive that you’ve done?

Don't avoid conflict by the \_\_\_\_\_ treatment. This only makes a \_\_\_\_\_ barrier. Anger and shouting \_\_\_\_\_ any opportunity for communication and working through problems. Instead, become an active and empathetic \_\_\_\_\_. Work hard at \_\_\_\_\_ to understand what your mate is saying. Control your \_\_\_\_\_ and your emotions. Frustration causes much \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage. Men don’t usually frustrate their wives by what they’re doing so much as by what they \_\_\_\_\_ to do. Failing to communicate, neglecting the needs of their wives, and indifference are forms of cruelty, and they lead many women to \_\_\_\_\_ their marriages. Selfish and unfeeling women who \_\_\_\_\_ the needs of their husbands, and who put their husbands last in their priorities, and who constantly criticize and complain often alienate their husbands. Neglecting our spouses \_\_\_\_\_ to great frustration and unhappiness. If the frustration doesn’t stop, life \_\_\_\_\_ can become unbearable.

Deal with your problems \_\_\_\_\_, and don’t let them grow. Though every marriage has its bumps and its bruises, don’t let them \_\_\_\_\_ your marriage. If we allow our unresolved anger to grow, it will eventually \_\_\_\_\_ into deep wounds and great hurt (Ephesians 4:26-27). Each of us may need a little time to \_\_\_\_\_ off before we begin looking honestly and fairly at our differences (Proverbs 29:22). Don’t let the sun set on your anger, but \_\_\_\_\_ your anger before you speak. Let your love for each other \_\_\_\_\_ the differences between you.

Some people think that manliness or strength of character means never saying you’re sorry, but \_\_\_\_\_ to apologize is selfish and prideful. Refusing to apologize deeply \_\_\_\_\_ others and builds barriers between people that take many years to overcome. We all need to be \_\_\_\_\_ to say, "I was wrong, and I'm sorry. I know that I hurt you and I don't want to hurt you again. Please forgive me." Accept responsibility for your \_\_\_\_\_. We can’t maintain a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with God if we’re unwilling to deal with our sins against our spouses (Matthew 5:23). How we treat our spouses matters to \_\_\_\_\_! (1 Peter 3:7).

Sometimes it’s better to be defrauded, neglected, and hurt than it is to \_\_\_\_\_ your spouse for every transgression. “Love \_\_\_\_\_ a multitude of sins.” God is merciful to us when we \_\_\_\_\_ mercy. Marriage can be hard and harsh at times; and the real test of love is if it can \_\_\_\_\_ the tests of the unlovely. Not every matter is \_\_\_\_\_ confronting your mate over. Sometimes love

means \_\_\_\_\_ them to be what they are, even when it irritates. Philippians 4:5 says, “Let your \_\_\_\_\_ spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.” We all need a gentle spirit that’s \_\_\_\_\_ to let our love cover a multitude of sins and weaknesses. If you’re having problems, \_\_\_\_\_ on finding a solution to your differences rather than arguing, or accusing, or blaming.

No matter how troubled, frustrated, or angry we become, we must \_\_\_\_\_ our tongues. Spoken words can cut and bruise the \_\_\_\_\_, and they are not easily forgotten. If you say something that cuts and hurts, \_\_\_\_\_ for it immediately. Using the word “divorce” can break a person’s heart. This word wounds, rejects, and abandons hope for a continued relationship. Spouses who use such words plant the seeds of hopelessness and failure. If there’s physical abuse, unfaithfulness, or drug or alcohol abuse, then seek help to keep your marriage alive. Everyone in an argument needs to step back in \_\_\_\_\_ and ask, “Is winning this argument really worth losing my spouse?”

When you love and respect your spouse, you want to build them up and \_\_\_\_\_ them. You want them to know that you \_\_\_\_\_ them and are \_\_\_\_\_ to have them as your partner in life. Just as we ought to encourage our \_\_\_\_\_ family (1 Thessalonians 5:11), so we ought also to encourage our spouses and to \_\_\_\_\_ them of our love. If someone verbally attacks, or criticizes, or blames you, don’t respond in the \_\_\_\_\_ manner (Romans 12:17, 21). Think of the wonderful \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus found in 1 Peter 2:23. Even while \_\_\_\_\_ on the cross, Jesus didn’t verbally abuse or threaten anybody. Your spouse might get angry with you, but you don’t have to respond in the same way (1 Peter 3:9). Choose to respond with gentleness (Proverbs 15:1).

There’s no greater \_\_\_\_\_ in a relationship than to apologize and to forgive. When you’ve done something \_\_\_\_\_, apologize immediately. When your mate has penitently asked your forgiveness, then by all means \_\_\_\_\_. Forgiveness means that \_\_\_\_\_ you’ve forgiven your mate, you \_\_\_\_\_ bring up the transgression again or hold it against them. Forgiveness opens the door to reconciliation, which means that we become “\_\_\_\_\_” again. When God forgave us, He never again counted that sin against us (2 Corinthians 5:19). Psalm 103:12 says, “As far as the east is from the west, So far has He \_\_\_\_\_ our transgressions from us.”

We have to \_\_\_\_\_ the temptation to start figuring out ways to hurt the one who hurt us. We must not \_\_\_\_\_ everyone we know that he or she said or did something to offend us. We should never bring up our spouse’s faults in front of \_\_\_\_\_. Holding a grudge \_\_\_\_\_ any opportunity to grow beyond a problem. **Read what the Bible says in Ephesians 4:31-32.**

Forgiving our loved ones is not just God’s \_\_\_\_\_. It’s God’s \_\_\_\_\_! When we fail to forgive our spouses, we \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves (Matthew 6:14-15). Instead of being haughty

when we approach our loved ones who've hurt us, we should \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves and approach them \_\_\_\_\_ (Galatians 6:1).

When we decide to forgive, we're \_\_\_\_\_ to begin a more healthy method of resolving conflict. Here is what \_\_\_\_\_ happen between Christian husbands and wives. When a spouse is truly hurt and needs to deal with an offense, he or she needs the \_\_\_\_\_ to gently and humbly tell the one who offended, "I was hurt when you said this or did this." They need to explain \_\_\_\_\_ hurt them and \_\_\_\_\_ it hurt. In response, the other spouse needs to say \_\_\_\_\_ and penitently, "I'm sorry I hurt you; please forgive me. I will make every \_\_\_\_\_ never to do this again." Once a sincere and penitent apology is given, the offended spouse needs to say, "I \_\_\_\_\_ you, and I will \_\_\_\_\_ bring this situation up to you again." This process of \_\_\_\_\_ with conflict is vital, because it \_\_\_\_\_ the door to reconciliation. The promise not to repeat the offense and the promise not to hold it against the offender gives a \_\_\_\_\_ to maintain the relationship. This is how \_\_\_\_\_ treats us and how He wishes us to treat one another.

Once the fires of marriage begin to \_\_\_\_\_, it's easy to take our spouses for granted and become complacent. People \_\_\_\_\_ being as kind and courteous as they ought. They may \_\_\_\_\_ their spouse's needs and selfishly \_\_\_\_\_ their own desires. In the end, someone gets devastated. I hope you aren't listening today with a \_\_\_\_\_ heart. I hope that your marriage is everything that you \_\_\_\_\_ for. But if you're broken hearted, you may be asking, "How do I forgive this \_\_\_\_\_ wound in my life? How do I stop \_\_\_\_\_ these offenses against my spouse?" How did Jesus forgive you of \_\_\_\_\_ you have done to Him? Can you recall the \_\_\_\_\_ sins you have ever committed, the sins of which you're most ashamed? When you became a \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus forgave them. Can you recall the \_\_\_\_\_ sins that you've ever committed, things that you don't think are so bad but which offend God? When you became a Christian, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ them, too. Every one of those sins – big or small – brought and still brings spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ if not forgiven. Where would we be without the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus? His forgiveness and His grace is a \_\_\_\_\_ to us. If the Lord Jesus could forgive us, can we not \_\_\_\_\_? Forgiveness is \_\_\_\_\_ than forgetting, because forgiveness offers the hope of reconciliation.

Forgiveness brings reconciliation, making friends \_\_\_\_\_; and Jesus bore the cross paying for our sins so that we might be forgiven and may be able to be a \_\_\_\_\_ to God. God wants us to remain \_\_\_\_\_ to Him, so He made the \_\_\_\_\_ possible through the blood of Jesus for us to be forgiven. To become a Christian you must \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord Jesus with all your heart. Out of love for Him, you must \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins by turning away from all evil and turning to what is good. Upon the confession of your faith, be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ. In baptism, the blood of Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins. Get right with God today!



October 27, 2013

## Building Intimacy Proverbs 5:15-18

How can husbands and wives grow \_\_\_\_\_ and make their marriages \_\_\_\_\_? We're going to discuss building intimacy in \_\_\_\_\_. We study God's Word because we \_\_\_\_\_ Him and we want to stay \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. The best way to truly know God is to \_\_\_\_\_ what He has revealed about Himself in His Word. We also realize that the One who blessed mankind with the marriage of Adam and Eve still has the best \_\_\_\_\_ for men and women today.

Intimacy is the close \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves with our mates – our thoughts, feelings, plans, hopes and dreams – our very souls and bodies. Intimacy has two essential elements: first, the \_\_\_\_\_ of being truly loved, accepted, and valued for what we are. Second, the significance and privilege of making a substantial, lasting, positive \_\_\_\_\_ on another person that we love. When we love and stay close to each other as God wills, we make each other \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The Scriptures in Malachi 2:14 call marriage a \_\_\_\_\_, a lifelong relationship in which a man and a woman have vowed to remain true to each other until death parts them. It will take \_\_\_\_\_ to keep any marriage strong and warm for a whole lifetime. Close marriages don't just \_\_\_\_\_. Men and women must \_\_\_\_\_ to have good marriages and be willing to invest their hearts and time into that relationship. They must be willing to make their marriages a \_\_\_\_\_ and must be willing to grow together. Whether you are in a problem marriage or you've grown complacent, there's \_\_\_\_\_ for you. If you're willing to make some \_\_\_\_\_, you can have a great marriage.

**Our reading today comes from Proverbs 5:15-18.** It is impossible for a \_\_\_\_\_ marriage to exist without intimacy. If you don't know how your partner \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ about various issues or concerns, he or she is somewhat of a \_\_\_\_\_ to you. For two hearts to be \_\_\_\_\_ together, they cannot be strangers. Some people \_\_\_\_\_ that intimacy automatically occurs between married partners. But I've seen far too many "married strangers." I've talked to too many husbands and wives who feel \_\_\_\_\_ from their spouses and \_\_\_\_\_ even after many years of marriage. I have heard statements like: "We share the same house, the same table, and the same bed, but we might as well be strangers." Or, "We've lived together for twenty-some years, and yet I don't \_\_\_\_\_ my spouse any better now than when we first married." Or, "What really hurts is that we can spend a weekend together and I still feel \_\_\_\_\_. I think I married someone who would have preferred to be a \_\_\_\_\_ in some ways." No, intimacy is not automatic; it takes work to \_\_\_\_\_ a good marriage.

There are three types of intimacy in marriage. The first is \_\_\_\_\_: loving support, sharing of burdens, sharing of goals, affirming that you esteem the other person, and loving attention. True



intimacy is more than a physical desire; it must involve the \_\_\_\_\_ person, so that we can say with The Song of Solomon 6:3, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” It’s two hearts and two lives that are so intertwined that they \_\_\_\_\_ to each other and they \_\_\_\_\_ for each other.

A second form of intimacy is \_\_\_\_\_: it’s affection, touching, sharing in duties, the sexual act. Genesis 4:1 says, “Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, ‘I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.’” God regards this physical intimacy between husband and wife in marriage as \_\_\_\_\_. First Corinthians 7:2-3 says in the English Standard Version, “But because of the \_\_\_\_\_ to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.” Physical intimacy is not only approved, but it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God in marriage.

A third kind of intimacy is \_\_\_\_\_: shared prayer and devotions, shared morals and values, shared spiritual goals, and a shared style of handling forgiveness and reconciliation. I think of Aquila and Priscilla. When you read about \_\_\_\_\_, you read about the \_\_\_\_\_. When Apollos came to Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila pulled him aside “and \_\_\_\_\_ to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). Aquila and Priscilla had a \_\_\_\_\_ meeting in their house (1 Corinthians 16:19). Read Romans 16:3-4. Aquila and Priscilla shared their \_\_\_\_\_ and their \_\_\_\_\_ together. When couples share faith and values, they are able to \_\_\_\_\_ others the gospel and give their \_\_\_\_\_ an unconfused message about God. When a husband and wife \_\_\_\_\_ over morals, and spiritual truths, and values, they leave their children \_\_\_\_\_ as to what is right and wrong. Couples need to be united spiritually in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s Word.

How can I \_\_\_\_\_ this intimacy in my marriage? First, I must \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ my spouse as my \_\_\_\_\_ throughout my whole life. All husbands and wives have \_\_\_\_\_ in the way they think, the way they do things, what they like to eat, and the way they react to many things. Accepting my spouse means I will love and respect him or her, even though we may \_\_\_\_\_ on things that don’t matter. Some things \_\_\_\_\_ and some don’t. We need to \_\_\_\_\_ our spouse in everyday matters that are neither right nor wrong. I’m not speaking here of accepting or approving of \_\_\_\_\_. Should your spouse sin, loving your spouse means humbly confronting the sin in the \_\_\_\_\_ they will \_\_\_\_\_. But in those matters which don’t involve sin, your spouse needs to \_\_\_\_\_ you love and accept them as a person.

Second, everyone \_\_\_\_\_ affection that’s non-sexual. They need to know that they are cared for through loving \_\_\_\_\_ and through physical \_\_\_\_\_. Hugs and kisses are \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage. Sweet notes, caring deeds, and expressions of love ought to \_\_\_\_\_ between husbands and wives. Virginia Satir, a family therapist, said, “We need \_\_\_\_\_ hugs a day for survival. We need \_\_\_\_\_ hugs a day for maintenance. And we need \_\_\_\_\_ hugs a day for growth.” Five times the Scriptures urge Christians to \_\_\_\_\_ one another with a holy kiss or a kiss of love. Everyone needs affection.

Third, husbands and wives need \_\_\_\_\_. They need the feeling of gratefulness from their spouse. Nothing hurts more than to feel unappreciated for what you do for your \_\_\_\_\_. Everyone needs to be acknowledged for the \_\_\_\_\_ that they do. Saying “thank you” and “I appreciate you” ought to be \_\_\_\_\_ of our everyday conversation with our mates.

Fourth, we must give our spouses our undivided attention, interest, and support. By withholding attention from your spouse, you’re saying, “I don’t \_\_\_\_\_ about you.” When your spouse needs you, don’t selfishly \_\_\_\_\_ them. Giving your spouse your attention is how you let them \_\_\_\_\_ that you genuinely care for them and respect them.

Fifth, when your spouse hurts, give them \_\_\_\_\_. Comfort means coming to their side with tender words, putting an arm around them, and \_\_\_\_\_ their hurts with them. When Mary and Martha lost their brother Lazarus, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ with them. **Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.** When those we love hurt, we \_\_\_\_\_ to hurt with them and to comfort them.

Sixth, everyone needs \_\_\_\_\_. Husbands and wives need to know their spouses \_\_\_\_\_ in them and want them to move forward and to grow as a person. All Christians need encouragement (1 Thessalonians 5:11). We especially need encouragement from the person that we \_\_\_\_\_.

Seventh, we need to be \_\_\_\_\_ in our relationship with the one that we love. We need to know that they will help us remain free from \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. A secure and stable home, where mom and dad love each other, is the best place for children to \_\_\_\_\_ and prosper. Every parent wants his child to grow as Jesus did (Luke 2:52).

Last, husbands and wives need to \_\_\_\_\_ one another. Each one needs to know that he or she has someone to walk alongside and \_\_\_\_\_ carry the loads of life; someone to \_\_\_\_\_ their victories and their grief, someone who understands their burdens and their dreams. Marriage is a partnership of two people who \_\_\_\_\_ each other and who help each other succeed in the challenges of life. Just as the Lord supports and watches over us, we as married couples need to say to our spouses, “I will never \_\_\_\_\_ you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).

It’s vitally important for husbands and wives to \_\_\_\_\_ together. When a man and a woman marry, they no longer think and act as a \_\_\_\_\_ person. It’s no longer “\_\_\_” but “\_\_\_\_\_.” Everything you do \_\_\_\_\_ this significant person. You’re a team of two, and when both of you participate, you function \_\_\_\_\_. When you confront problems, and you will, it’s a tremendous source of comfort and support to know that here is another person who will pray \_\_\_\_\_ you and \_\_\_\_\_ you. To be able to share the burden with your spouse \_\_\_\_\_ the load.

Couples need to pray together for the \_\_\_\_\_ of their marriage. The vows that you took at your wedding will be \_\_\_\_\_ on all sides by Satan and by others. Praying together will make your marriage \_\_\_\_\_ as well as help \_\_\_\_\_ you from allowing the challenges of life to separate

the two of you. Couples who have prayer lists and pray daily and fervently will come to see the \_\_\_\_\_ of answered prayer. When couples pray together, it has an \_\_\_\_\_ on disagreements, conflicts, and anger expressed toward each other. When you see your spouse as a \_\_\_\_\_ of God, valuable and precious in His sight, someone that He sent His Son to die for, wouldn't that have an effect on \_\_\_\_\_ you pray for him or her? I want my wife to pray for me and with me. Praying together brings \_\_\_\_\_ for a couple (Philippians 4:6-7).

Why discuss intimacy? Because intimacy with our spouses is what \_\_\_\_\_ our marriages strong and secure. When people grow close to each other, intimacy allows each to see the other as they \_\_\_\_\_ are. They see their strengths and weaknesses, their beauty and their flaws. This kind of closeness may seem to open the \_\_\_\_\_ to vulnerability, but it also provides the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ of security. It allows each to say, "My spouse loves me in \_\_\_\_\_ of my flaws and weaknesses." When I think of the love that my devoted wife Jackie has given me all these nearly 40 years in spite of my weaknesses, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ to her and for her. Because of her faith in God and her love for me, she "\_\_\_\_\_ all things, \_\_\_\_\_ all things, \_\_\_\_\_ all things, \_\_\_\_\_ all things." Her love never \_\_\_\_\_. True devotion doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ loving, even when people are unlovely. God loves that \_\_\_\_\_, and so should we as husbands and wives.

Willard F. Harley in his book, *His Needs, Her Needs*, suggests, "Give your undivided attention to your spouse a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ hours each week, meeting some of your spouse's most \_\_\_\_\_ needs." I hope you husbands and wives are spending \_\_\_\_\_ together. The things that \_\_\_\_\_ husbands and wives fall in love are the things that \_\_\_\_\_ them loving. There simply isn't any substitute for \_\_\_\_\_. When you marry for a lifetime, you pass through several \_\_\_\_\_ of life, and each one of those stages is different. Only by maintaining a close intimacy can two people \_\_\_\_\_ to grow together for life. When you give your spouse your time, you're giving him or her your most precious possession – \_\_\_\_\_.

That's true of marriage, and it's true of our relationship with \_\_\_\_\_. You can't be close to God if you \_\_\_\_\_ spend time with Him. Every day \_\_\_\_\_ from His Word; every day \_\_\_\_\_ fervently to Him; every day \_\_\_\_\_ Him in song; and every day count your blessings. When you give God your time, you're giving Him your most precious possession – \_\_\_\_\_.

When we become Christians and are added to the Lord's church, we \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ in a covenant relationship. We have the promise of His grace and love, but we must \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. To enter into that relationship, that covenant relationship, we must \_\_\_\_\_ His words, \_\_\_\_\_ our faith in Him, \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins and determine to take up our cross, and be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ. When we are baptized into Christ, we're baptized into His \_\_\_\_\_. At that time, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus washes away our sins, and unites us with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. In baptism, we are crucified with Him and we rise to \_\_\_\_\_ in newness of life according to Romans 6:3-7.