



IN
SEARCH
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*Program
Study Guides*

**For
January 2014**

January 5, 2014

Stand Strong Ephesians 6:10-13

Did you know that you're facing an opponent who is after your _____? Today we're going to see _____ we can stand strong as Christians. We're here to _____ God's Word for His way. We've spent the last five years studying together, and today marks the beginning of our sixth year. Over these years, I've had the pleasure to be able to visit with many of you who watch this program faithfully, and I thank God for you. This program is the way that we spend time together studying the most wonderful book in the world, the Bible. So thanks for studying with us today; and we want to be a part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus calls us to take a stand for Him and for what He _____. Many today want a convenient Christianity that asks _____ of them. They're content to practice their faith as long as it doesn't require much or call for any real _____. They want God to commit fully to them, to hear every _____ and to give every _____; but they want to believe whatever they like and live however they want. They want a Christianity that _____ embarrasses them in front of their non-Christian friends. They don't want a strict morality or to talk about _____. They don't want to be asked to believe anything that's different from the popular _____ of the day. They want the _____ of life but they don't want to deny themselves or to take up a _____. Frankly, this kind of Christianity is a _____. Authentic Christianity means taking our faith _____.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians 6:10-13.

A spiritual war is taking place, and you're in the midst of the _____. It's not a war of guns and bombs, but a _____ fight like hand-to-hand combat. Our battle isn't _____; we aren't wrestling with flesh and blood for our lives. Our battle is _____; and we're fighting for our souls and the souls of people that we _____. The battleground isn't at Armageddon; it's in your _____ and _____. If you aren't standing at the end, you will be spiritually _____ and your soul lost. Your opponent is the _____, and he's been fighting for thousands of years. He knows how to fight; he _____; and he is very strong. The devil has a strategy, and he intends to _____. We cannot take this battle _____.

When it comes to spiritual warfare, we cannot be strong enough by _____. If we're going to have sufficient strength in this spiritual battle with Satan, we must have the _____ strength. Only the Lord Jesus has enough might to _____ spiritual battles against the demonic forces in our enemy. We cannot win on our own _____.

If you do not _____ you are in this spiritual fight, you will surely lose. Many Christians are unaware or they ignore this _____. They imagine they can live as they _____ and can still be right with God. Some believe that once they are saved they can never be _____, but this false doctrine ignores many clear Scriptures that teach otherwise. **Read the warning in Hebrews 3:12-13.** People who take their salvation for _____ will be surprised to find out the Lord expects them to stand strong in their faith. Every recruit in ancient times in the Roman army would take an oath of _____ to the legionary standards and to the emperor as commander-in-chief, swearing to obey his orders and to protect the state. Everyone in the Lord's army also _____ to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and to follow His will. Christianity is serious business.

If you aren't _____ to fight spiritually, you will surely lose to the devil. The Lord provides the _____ that we must possess in order to face Satan. The Roman soldiers of the first century were the strongest fighting force of their day. To be a legionnaire, one had to endure strict _____. His training would include marching in step, traveling twenty miles in five hours, swimming, basic tactics and battle maneuvers, and how to win at hand-to-hand combat. The Romans wouldn't send out an _____ man as a legionnaire, and nor can we expect to face the devil unprepared. You, too, must put your armor on for this fight, or you'll surely _____. Romans 13:12 says, "The night is far gone; and the day is at hand. So then let us _____ the works of darkness and _____ the armor of light." The Lord _____ for His people the armor that's necessary to win the battle. Paul wrote, "Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the _____ of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14). A Christian's armor includes "the belt of _____" The Roman "belt" or "girdle" referred to a leather apron beneath the armor that _____ the lower abdomen. The truth is like that, it's a great _____, because it keeps us right on track. It keeps us going in the right _____. Truth gives us the _____ weapon against false doctrines, against moral deceptions, or against counterfeit religion. Exposing the devil for an immoral deceiver, which he is, opens the _____ to defeat the devil.

Next, we have the breastplate of _____. The "breastplate" for the Roman army normally consisted of leather that was overlaid with metal, and it protected the _____ in a battle. Today, Christians _____ the "breastplate of righteousness." They _____ morally pure lives and "make their calling and election sure." They have peace of heart and of mind, because they know that they are _____ with the living God. They _____ righteousness. The Lord said, "Blessed are those who _____ and _____ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). We _____ righteousness. In fact, the Lord urges us, "But _____ first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). Being right with God must be our _____.

More than that, Christians wear “as shoes ... the readiness given by the _____ of peace,” according to Ephesians 6:15. Soldiers needed shoes like boots so they could _____ quickly without worry as they faced the enemy. The gospel of peace _____ the Christian to be strong in the Lord as he faces the enemy’s deceptions. The more we _____ others the good news of the gospel, of the love of Christ, the more we _____ our own faith. When Christians are _____ telling others the gospel of peace, they have little _____ to become self-centered and fall prey to the devil’s schemes.

Just as the Roman legionnaire had an iron or bronze _____, so the Christian must “take on the helmet of _____.” The Roman helmet protected the cheeks and it flared wide at the back of the neck to protect the soldier. So we, too, must protect ourselves with the _____ of our salvation. Knowing Jesus paid the ultimate price for me and for you to save us from our sins _____ us to love Him and to stand strong with Him. Hebrews 12:3 urges us to “Consider him who _____ from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow _____ or fainthearted.” When I see what lengths that Jesus went to save me, I grow _____ in my faith and my resolve to serve Him.

The Roman soldier had a short two-edged _____. This sword was used as a weapon when soldiers were in very _____ battle. Christians have “the sword of the Spirit, which is the _____ of God” (Ephesians 6:17). The truth of the Word is able to help us to reach in to someone’s soul and it also helps us to _____ those who believe in error.

Paul commanded, “In all circumstances take up the _____ of faith, with which you can extinguish all the _____ darts of the evil one.” Each Roman soldier carried a large rectangular shield that was four feet high; and the fronts of them were made of leather. Before battles in which flaming arrows might be fired, the leather would be wet down to _____ any fiery darts that would be launched at them. After Roman legionaries closed their ranks, the front row would hold the shields forward and those that were behind would hold them above their heads, and so they were virtually invulnerable to any attack from flaming arrows. Faith in Christ Jesus as Lord keeps us _____ from the fiery challenges of the devil. It helps us to _____ all the lies and the false doctrines that the devil hurls at us.

We have this armor to _____ us to fight. But our preparation to fight the devil is not complete without _____. Ephesians 6:18-19 urges us to be “praying at _____.” God _____ us when we pray. **Read Philippians 4:6-7.** Paul here adds two very important ways to stand strong spiritually. First, he wanted us to _____ at all times; and second, he wanted us to be _____.

The Lord Jesus said, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). Prayer keeps our focus on God rather than on selfish desires. When we prepare for that temptation, we aren’t taken by surprise. When we know that it’s coming, we can handle it much easier. Peter encourages us to be on the alert. We must keep our eyes open. First Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Lions prowl and sneak up on their prey in order to seize them. Lions tear their prey apart with their teeth.

I tell you, if you’re not prepared, you’ll lose. But I also want to say if you’re not willing to fight, you will surely lose. Whether you want to fight or not, the devil will come at you. Many Christians don’t want to get involved in this battle; they’d rather ignore the devil’s challenges. They don’t realize the devil is planting seeds of evil, immorality, and error in their hearts that can capture their souls. They fall victim to the devil’s schemes because they don’t like conflict. They don’t want to rock the boat, but the devil will rock it. Paul said, “So then, brothers, you stand firm and you hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter” (2 Thessalonians 2:15). We must hold to those divine traditions that come directly from the Lord through His apostles and prophets. The truth that they teach protect us from those false teachings and the counterfeit religion that’s proposed by the devil and by men. God’s Word alerts us to the dangers and it calls us to resist in the evil day.

If you do not give your all in this battle, you will surely lose. Ephesians 6:13 says, “take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done everything, everything, to stand firm.” Are you doing everything to prepare for that evil day of testing and temptation? If you aren’t reading your Bible and studying your Bible every day, you aren’t doing everything. If your knowledge of the Bible is so limited that you don’t know what is good or bad, right or wrong, or true or false, then you’re vulnerable to Satan’s schemes. If you aren’t worshiping regularly with brothers and sisters, you aren’t doing everything. If your prayer life is weak, you aren’t giving it your all.

If you haven’t thought about your hope in Christ, your strength will falter. If you aren’t hungering and thirsting for righteousness, if you haven’t drawn your strength from your salvation, or if you haven’t given thought to the gospel of peace, how will you be able to stand strong when the devil comes at you?

Being a Christian is more than being part of a social club and getting entertained once or twice a week. Being a Christian is more than simply doing a few good things and being nice to others. Being a Christian demands our full commitment to the Lord. Romans 12:1 commands us to present our bodies “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God.” First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? And you’re not your own, for you were bought with a price. And so glorify God in your body.” When we become a Christian, we don’t belong to ourselves

anymore. We belong to the Lord: body, soul, and spirit. Jesus paid a dear price so that we might be saved. And we have to commit ourselves fully and give Him our all!

Without a doubt, we're facing serious, spiritual battles today, just as they faced them earlier. Satan is challenging us from every side. Whether it's the eye, the flesh, or the pride of life, this world challenges us to be self-centered rather than to love God. Satan is working overtime to produce counterfeit gospels and false religions that he may draw people away from God. Make no mistake! If you give the devil a foothold in your heart, your mind, or your life, he'll conquer your soul. Don't lose your soul; be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. First Peter 2:11 says, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." Please, don't take this warning lightly. Don't spend your days without a thought about your soul. Don't imagine the devil will challenge your neighbor, but will never challenge you. Get strong in your faith, in your hope, and in your love by getting strong in the Lord. Ephesians 6:10 says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." Christ is the source of our spiritual strength. To be strong in Him and His teaching is our duty; to remain weak or apathetic is sinful. Strong trust, strong courage, strong endurance, strong hope, strong love, and strong knowledge of His Word will come from getting right with and staying close to Him. We must maintain our fellowship with him at all costs. We must never let up, give up, or grow weary of serving the Lord.

When a person who believes repents and is baptized into Christ, the Lord at that time washes away his sins (Acts 22:16), adds him to the church, counts him as His child (Galatians 3:26-27), and saves him (1 Peter 3:21). God wants you to live with Him forever. The way to live in His house forever is to become a member of His family. The church is God's family (1 Timothy 3:15). As His child, you worship with other members of His family by attending church regularly. God has designed the church to meet your spiritual needs and to provide you a loving family. God's arms are open wide longing for you to come home to Him. Won't you come to Him, serve Him, and live with Him? Won't you get involved with a local church of Christ? Take time today to worship with them.

January 12, 2014

Never Alone Psalm 139:1-5

Living alone presents many emotional and spiritual _____. Today we're exploring what God _____ for those who live alone. The Scriptures are God's _____ book for everyone, in every stage of life, and in every circumstance. Whatever struggle or heartache you face, God has some _____ and help for you. He hasn't forgotten or abandoned you. He knows and _____ about you. I did a funeral for an elderly man who had no family at all. Three funeral directors and I carried his casket to the graveside service; two ladies from the nursing home and I sang some hymns. No one else attended. Six people, no family, no friends! This man was utterly alone and buried by strangers.

Loneliness is a growing _____ in our society. Loneliness is a widespread problem; and in fact, one in four people _____ about feeling lonely frequently. Persistent loneliness can _____ our mental and our physical health.

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

Our reading today comes from one of the Psalms of David, Psalm 139:1-5.

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

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

he _____, even if his family was far away. Joseph was able to endure his hardships and keep his _____, because he knew the Lord was with him.

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

Like Joseph Jesus found _____ in His relationship with His Father in heaven. Jesus said, "Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I'm not alone, because the Father is with Me." (John 16:32). Jesus found the strength that He _____ in the Father, and so can you.

Read 1 Peter 2:21-23 where Peter revealed how Jesus dealt with lonely suffering. When Jesus suffered most, He put His life and His _____ into the hands of the heavenly Father. There He _____ comfort and support.

Jesus began and ended His ordeal on the cross with _____. The Lord Jesus prayed, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not _____ will, but _____ be done" (Luke 22:42). While Jesus wanted to _____ the cross on one hand, He wanted to _____ the will of the Father on the other. Hebrews 5:7 says, "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was _____ because of his reverence."

As they were crucifying the Lord Jesus He was praying, "Father, _____ them; for they do not know what they're doing" (Luke 23:34). Instead of _____ on their cruelty and the overwhelming pain of large nails going through His hands and feet, Jesus was _____ about their souls. Jesus prayed for them to be forgiven. We often focus on the _____ and the _____ in life, but Jesus focused on saving people from their _____.

In Matthew 27:46, the Lord Jesus "cried out with a loud voice, saying ... 'My God, my God, why have you _____ me?'" Did you know that these are words from Psalm 22:1. Psalm 22 is the _____ Messianic of all the psalms of David. It begins with a _____ of forsakenness; it speaks of the wagging of the head in verse 7; predicts the piercing of His _____ and _____ in verse 16; and speaks of the _____ of His garments in verse

18. Verse 27 speaks of all the _____ turning to and worshiping the Lord. Could it be the Lord Jesus was reciting this Scripture to Himself and reassuring Himself that His death was not in _____?

Jesus _____ entrusting Himself to the Father. Luke 23:46 says, “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my _____!’ And having said this he breathed his _____.” From the beginning to the end of this excruciating ordeal, Jesus found His strength in _____. His example will _____ us in our times of pain and loneliness. First Peter 4:19 says, “Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall _____ their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.” When you’re lonely, entrust your soul to a _____ who will not let you down.

The apostle Paul provides another _____ for those who live as singles. He said, “To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to _____ single as I am” (1 Corinthians 7:8). He realized that not everyone had the gift to live the single life yet he felt there were many _____ to living as a single. Paul knew that having family would get in the way of his ministry, and he wanted to be _____ of any responsibility except to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul _____ faced great difficulties. They put Paul in prison five times, and he spent about five years of his life in _____. If you read through the book of Philippians, you wouldn’t think of Paul as depressed or defeated even though he was in prison when he _____ it. Instead, he spoke of his _____ in that letter more than twenty times.

Paul learned the secret of being _____ in whatever circumstances he found himself. He explains, “I know how to be brought _____, and I know how to _____. In any and every circumstance, I’ve _____ the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things _____ him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:12-13). Paul found God’s _____ was sufficient for him, even when he was suffering. Having God in his life _____ _____ for all the things that he didn’t have. Paul also understood what it’s like to face _____ alone. **Read what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:16-18.**

When you’re lonely, think on the _____ of God. They will _____ you. **Read what the Lord God said in Psalm 68:5-6.** If you have God with you, you have far _____ than many of the largest families. The Lord Jesus promised, “and lo, I’m with you _____, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). The Lord Jesus _____ with His people. I love the Lord’s promise in John 14:23, “If anyone loves me, he will _____ my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our _____ with him.” The Father and the Lord Jesus make their home with those who love Him enough to _____ Him. The Lord God _____ Joshua, “I will not fail you or forsake you” (Joshua 1:5). This promise is _____ to Christians in Hebrews 13:5. David said, “I’ve been young, and

now I'm old, yet I've not seen the righteous _____ or his children begging for bread" (Psalm 37:25). When no one else was there for David, _____ was (Psalm 27:10).

Read what God said to the people of Jerusalem through the prophet in Isaiah 49:15-16.

God thinks continually of His _____. He thinks of their physical _____, their spiritual _____, and their emotional _____. The Lord Jesus reminds us that "your Father knows what you _____ before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8).

David kept himself aware of the _____ of God. Our reading today came from Psalm 139:1-5. David describes how intimately God _____ him. God knew everything about him, how he _____, how he _____, even what he _____ about. God had known David from his _____ in his mother's womb (Psalm 139:13-14). No one knows you and me as intimately as _____. He's watched over us every day of our lives, heard every prayer, known every thought, and provided every need. You cannot go anywhere outside the _____ of God.

How does this help? Because you too can say, "I'm not alone; the _____ is with me." You too can say His _____ is sufficient for you. You too can say He will _____ leave you or forsake you. Give yourself to God! The outspoken atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who went to court to take _____ out of the schools, clearly sensed something was _____ from her life. She wrote in her diary in 1977 that she had failed as a _____, as a _____, and as a politician. In a half dozen places in her diaries O'Hair wrote, "Somebody, somewhere, _____ me." We all _____ to love and to be loved. There's one place in your heart and soul that no one can fill but God. The loneliest person in the world isn't the one who _____ family, but the one who has _____ God.

Some folks allow their love for God to _____ as years pass. **Read what the Lord Jesus said to the lukewarm church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:20.** The Lord Jesus wanted to _____ the warm and intimate fellowship He once had with the church in Laodicea, and He wants to have that same intimacy with you. Do you have a close, loving, peaceful relationship with the Lord?

Draw close to God; make Him _____ of your life every day! Become a Christian by placing your faith and your _____ in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He will never _____ to you and wants to _____ you from your sins. Out of love, _____ of your sins by forsaking them and following the Lord. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be _____ into Christ, united with Him. We're crucified with Christ in baptism that our body of _____ might be done away with according to Romans 6:3-7. God _____ away our sins in baptism according to Acts 22:16. Oh, become a Christian today!

Keeping My Zeal**2 Peter 1:5-11**

Some Christians live their lives to the fullest, while others _____ aimlessly. Some passionately pursue their _____, while others are lukewarm. How can we keep our passion and zeal for God _____? We love to study the Bible because we know the real _____ of the Bible is God. Peter said, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit _____ from God" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Men didn't _____ up the words of the Bible; rather God's spokesmen, the prophets, were _____ by the Spirit to speak. They said what God _____ for us to know, to believe, and to do. Because the Bible is from God, we can _____ to understand the heart of God and His love for us.

Today we're asking the question, "How can I _____ my zeal for Christ and _____ my passion for God?" I don't want a bored and dull _____. I don't want to _____ what the Lord has done for me. The Lord created me, loved me, protected me, provided for me, taught me, disciplined me, and is preparing a home for me in _____. How could I become apathetic toward one who has heard my _____ and opened doors for me? David expressed my heart, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my _____ pants for you, O God. My soul _____ for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1-2). God is our hope, our joy, and our Savior. Staying close to Him will _____ our passion alive.

Our reading today comes from 2 Peter 1:5-11.

Have you _____ been thirsty, really thirsty? The kind of thirst that _____ you find some water? Israel knew what it was to have _____ water available. Israel had seasons of rain and seasons that didn't have much rain. Their _____ would flow in the rainy seasons and _____ up at other times. They could collect water in their _____, hoping to have enough water to last until the rains returned. In the seventh century B.C., Israel turned its back on _____ and followed after the vain _____ of nations surrounding them. God said about Israel, "for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the _____ of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). By forsaking God, they also had forsaken the _____ of life. Don't imagine something else can take the _____ of God. Nothing and no one can. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and _____ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." When was the last time that you were thirsty for

righteousness or for God? When did you last feel that being close to Him, worshiping Him, or listening to Him was an immediate _____? It's easy to forget what you have and take God for _____. God _____ when people ignore Him, and forget Him, and forsake Him. Do you imagine that God will _____ to your side when you have neglected Him for many years?

Good relationships demand _____ and _____. Just like a marriage or any relationship, it can grow _____; and so our love for God can grow _____ over time. If we want to strengthen our relationship, then we must take the _____ to make it grow and develop. We must first start paying close _____ to what God says. **Read Hebrews 2:1-3.** If we _____ to listen to God's Word, we'll fail to please Him and risk the salvation of our souls. Some people ignore God until they _____ Him. They focus their minds on the things of this world while they slowly _____ away from God to pursue their _____ interests. They _____ going to worship at church; they stop studying the Scriptures; they stop praying; and they begin talking and acting like the _____. When some disaster then comes along, they feel God is _____. God doesn't forget His people, but His _____ frequently forget Him.

If you really want to have God in your heart, take a long look at what the Lord endured on the _____. The Lord Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will _____ all men to Myself" (John 12:32). The Lord Jesus _____ you beyond measure. He opened His heart to reach out to _____. He bore the cross to die for the _____, not just of the whole world, but also for you. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own _____ toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He didn't rule you out because you were _____. The only people Jesus died for were _____. See the _____ of thorns on His head, see the _____ through His hands and feet, see His _____ bloodied by the scourge, see His _____ pierced by the soldier, and see His _____ offered for you. He suffered the _____ of people mocking Him. He sacrificed Himself, "and with his _____ we are healed." "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us _____" (Isaiah 53:6). If the _____ of what happened on the cross doesn't touch you like it once did, perhaps it's because you've let other things cause your _____ to harden. Worldliness and sin cause people's hearts to grow _____.

Jesus didn't die on the cross to proclaim a _____ and _____ gospel that puts you in the center of the universe. He didn't _____ on the cross to help you become a millionaire, lose weight or overcome your fears and anxieties. He sacrificed Himself to redeem your soul from _____ and to give you _____ life. His blood _____ away your sin and causes you to be _____ again, so you'll be created in His image and become like Him. The Lord is interested in your _____ man; and one day He will _____ your soul on whether you gave of yourself as a humble servant.

In times of great prosperity, people tend to take their minds off God and put them on their own personal _____. **Read what Moses warned Israel as they were about to cross the Jordan and enter the promised land in Deuteronomy 8:11-14.** Don't let your blessings _____ you from remembering the One who gave you those blessings (James 1:17). Apart from God we would have _____. God is the One who gives us the _____ to think, to work, and to make money. **Read what Moses said in Deuteronomy 8:17-18.** The world wants you to be _____ of all of your accomplishments. The Lord wants you to _____ that every blessing you have comes from what God provides in you and for you.

Some people turn away from God because they've _____ some trying experience or circumstance. Rather than pull away from God, we need to _____ to God when we face a struggle or a heartache. We should _____ to God for strength, for help, for encouragement, and for assurance.

We draw close to God by making Him a _____ in our lives every single day. We study the Bible because it _____ God's thinking and His will for our lives. To know God we have to _____ to His words. We pray because we want God to _____ our hearts. God doesn't want us to _____ praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:13). If you want to be zealous for God, then make being with God a _____ exercise. You build good relationships; they don't just _____.

To draw close to God, remember what He has _____ for you. **Read what David said in Psalm 103:1-5.** God is ever _____ to you. Consider how God has answered your _____, given you the Scriptures that give us hope and comfort, and strengthened you through the years.

If you want to draw close to God, keep your eyes on _____. **Read Colossians 3:1-4.**

To draw close to God, focus on the _____. **Read Philippians 4:8.** When we concentrate on the negative, we lose _____ of God; but when we concentrate on the positive, we _____ more thankful to God.

If you wish to be close to God, you've got to give Him _____ in your life. You must get the _____ out of your heart and soul. Just as weeds can take over a garden, so spiritual weeds can take over your _____. Weeds _____ plants of the space and the nourishment that they need to grow and produce. Likewise, distractions of life can rob us of our _____ and our _____ for God. The Lord Jesus said, "The seed that fell among the thorns, this stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are _____ by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature" (Luke 8:14). Many Christians _____ to grow in their faith and in their relationship with God because they _____ themselves to things that push God out of their lives. We must _____ not to let the things of this world come between God and us.

Sin destroys our _____ to serve God because it replaces God and enslaves us. Ephesians 4:27 says, “do not give the devil an _____.” If you let sin into your life it will _____ your heart. The Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the _____ of sin” (John 8:34). To overcome sin, you must put it to _____. Romans 6:11 says, “Even so consider yourselves to be _____ to sin, but _____ to God in Christ Jesus.” You can't cut down a weed and expect to kill it; you must _____ it. If you simply cut it down, you'll see it _____ back. Sin is like that. You can't just _____ on sin and expect that sin to go away. You must _____ it altogether. Unless it's completely stopped, it'll keep growing and crowding out what is good and productive.

You can't grow to be a productive and authentic Christian if you _____ God out by your whims and desires. You must give Him room in your life to _____. Many people let their jobs, and their hobbies, or their recreation come _____ God and themselves. None of these things is _____ in and of themselves; but if you let something, anything, take you away from your God, you can lose your _____. Jesus said, “But _____ the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

All this matters because it _____ our relationship and our zeal for God. When our relationship is _____, then our hearts want to serve God; but when our relationship is _____, we let other things dominate our lives. If you _____ to be zealous for God, then set your heart upon the Lord Jesus and upon all the blessings He has in store for you in eternity

Is there anything in your life that's _____ you from being close to God? Some people never pick up a _____, never utter a _____, and never go to _____. Is it any wonder that they feel _____ from God? They've _____ the Lord out of their lives; and people grieve God when they shut Him out. He hasn't _____ loving or caring for us, but it tears at God's heart to be abandoned by His people. If you're letting _____ have a place in your heart, then it's time to put an end to that sin. You can't love sin and love God at the same _____ (James 4:4).

To be rid of sin, you must _____. Repentance is an act of the heart that says, “I will no longer do what _____ God, but what will _____ Him.” In repentance, we put a _____ to sin, but we must also be forgiven. The Lord forgives us when by faith and repentance we're willing to _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be _____. In baptism, we're _____ with Christ, “in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:6). Baptism is that time that God _____ us from sin. Don't let your love for Christ grow _____. Don't grow _____ of your faith and lose heart. Renew your faith. Restore your heart. Revive your spirit. Demonstrate your faith and love. Listen to God, love God, pray to God, grow a desire for God, and tell everyone about His goodness and kindness in Christ Jesus. Get involved!

Glorifying God

Revelation 4:8-11

(A brief study note: several times you will be asked to read longer passages. The quotations are not included in this study sheet to conserve space, but the passages are contained in the text that accompanies this sheet and you can read the passages there.)

Isaiah 43:7 tells us that we were created for the _____ of God. Today, we will explore how God _____ for us to glorify His name. We search the Scriptures for the Lord's Way because the Scriptures _____ the glory and majesty of God. Our Father in heaven is so much _____ than we are. He sees things that we can't see, knows things that we'll _____ know. We must _____ in His wisdom. The Lord God said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). God will _____ us and provide for us if we trust in Him and stay close to Him. He's prepared a _____ in heaven for us, and that's why we continue to search the Scriptures to find the Lord's way.

We _____ a glorious God! Ephesians 1:17 calls "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the _____ of glory"; and 1 Corinthians 2:8 calls Jesus "the _____ of glory." The Lord Jesus prayed, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may _____ My glory which You have given Me, for You _____ Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). I can only imagine how marvelous and how awesome was the Father and the Son _____ the foundation of the world. Today, we know something of that glory _____ Jesus came into the world. Hebrews 1:3 says Jesus, "is the radiance of His (or God's) glory and the exact representation of His _____, and He upholds all things by the word of His power."

Our reading today comes from the book of Revelation 4:8-11.

Solomon said, "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow (or grief) to his mother" (Proverbs 10:1). We all would like to _____ our parents and make them proud of our accomplishments. Being wise is not the _____ as being smart. In God's eyes, the person who is wise pays attention and follows the _____ of the Lord. The fool has his

mind on _____ and his own _____. Because the wise and the foolish have different mindsets and desires, they go in different _____.

It's the same with Christianity. Wise Christians pay _____ and follow God, while foolish Christians pursue their own pleasures. The Lord Jesus contrasted two very different _____ of life in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is _____ that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is _____ that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13-14). Don't you want to be wise and _____ the path that leads to life? You might have only a _____ who go with you, but it will glorify your Father in heaven and bless you eternally.

The apostle Paul said, "For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to _____ in a manner worthy of God, God who _____ you into his own kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Paul both encouraged and challenged the Thessalonians to live lives _____ of God. The Lord called us through the _____ into His kingdom and His glory. God has _____ us, made us His children, made us citizens of His kingdom, and promised us a home in heaven. We must _____ who we are and live as children of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

First Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do _____ to the glory of God." Everything we do ought to say _____ to God; it ought to reflect God's love and holiness. It ought to say to the _____, "I belong to God and I live to serve Him." How do we do this? The most obvious way in the beginning is to glorify God through our _____. Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the _____ of lips that acknowledge his name." Our songs and prayers, the words of our lips, _____ God. We worship to glorify God, and to _____ to the world His greatness!

We also glorify God by bearing _____. The Lord Jesus said, "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so _____ to be My disciples" (John 15:8). How do we bear fruit? We do it by being as much _____ the Lord Jesus as we can. We too seek to save _____, like He did, by pointing them to Him, to the Lord Jesus and to His gospel. We preach and we teach to everyone who will _____. We bear fruit by _____ for the needy.
Read in Matthew 25:34-36 what the Lord Jesus will say on the day of judgment to those

who served Him. When we serve _____, we serve Christ and we glorify God as the lover of all people.

We are to be the _____ of the earth and the _____ of the world to those who surround us. We are people who make _____ brighter, purer, more loving and more peaceful. **Read what the Lord urges us in Matthew 5:14-16.** When we bless other people around us by _____ the Lord, they see the good that we do and they thank God for us. Serving the Lord as Christians opens the _____ for people of the world to see God's love and goodness.

Even when people don't understand us or appreciate us, they _____ love and kindness when they see it. The early Christians faced great _____ from the pagan nations surrounding them. They had to _____ the respect of their neighbors, because people believed that they were evil. **Read how Peter encouraged Christians in 1 Peter 4:12-16.** He said we may suffer for our _____, but we never have to be ashamed to wear the name of Jesus Christ. By holding _____ to our faith and our values, we glorify the name of Jesus Christ. The best thing you can do as a Christian to win the respect of your neighbors is to show the _____ of Christ and to do what is _____. Those who don't _____ our faith may insult, curse, or slander you publicly. Do what is right anyway! Glorify God because you _____ to Him and love Him. **Read what Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).**

The devil will tempt you, he'll make every effort to _____ you away from your faith, but you stand _____ with the Lord. **Read 1 Peter 5:8-10.** Since you have been called to _____ glory, don't lose your blessing over a momentary, sinful _____. It's simply not worth it.

The Lord Jesus purchased the church with His own _____ and He looks at the church as His _____. **Read Ephesians 5:25-27.** Jesus cleansed and made the church _____. He wants to _____ His people in splendor on the last day. The Lord Jesus didn't cleanse and make you holy so that you could _____ to a worldly life of sin. Because the church is holy, each Christian, each person who is a member of the church, should himself be _____. **Read 1 Peter 2:11-12.** If we allow _____ to dominate us, the world will slander us as evildoers and look down upon our God; but if we _____ morally excellent lives, people will praise and glorify God because of it. **Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.** Corinth was a city _____ for its sexual immorality of all kinds. They degraded their _____ and spread disease through their lustful acts. A Christian's body is a _____ of the Holy Spirit. Christians stay away from sexual sin, because they know their bodies _____ to God. They pursue a virtuous life, because sexual purity _____ God. They save themselves for _____ as a gift to God and a gift to their spouse.

Sadly, some Christians don't _____ to what they believe. They speak out against sin but practice it _____. **Read Romans 2:21-24.** When people's lives _____ with their message, they cause the Lord to be shamed rather than praised. Whether we honor God with our lives will _____ how God looks at us. **Read 2 Timothy 2:19-22.**

Why is this important? It's important because we'll spend _____ somewhere, either in glory or in regret. We're just a _____ that appears for a little while in this life. We've got to keep our _____ on the Lord and living eternally with Him in glory. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.** Where will you spend eternity?

One day, the Lord Jesus will _____. He'll come in great _____. The Lord said in Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds." The second coming of the Lord Jesus will be unmistakable; Revelation 1:7 says that _____ eye will see Him. But it's the _____ of His coming that is so remarkable. Second Thessalonians 1:10 reminds us that Jesus is coming "on that day to be _____ in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed." The Lord Jesus will be "glorified in his saints." Their lives demonstrated their faith, and that faith will praise Him. Do you believe? And does your life glorify God?

Peter described himself as "a _____ of the glory that is going to be revealed" (1 Peter 5:1). When Jesus is revealed in glory, we as Christians will get to _____ in that glory. The Lord Jesus said, "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26). If you live so as to glorify God in this life, God will _____ you in the life to come.

To honor the Lord Jesus, place your _____ in Him. Trusting Him means listening to and following His _____. Trusting the Lord involves loving Him, _____ of sin, turning to what is right, _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and being _____ into Jesus Christ. Just as we must believe and repent, so we must be baptized in order to be _____. The Lord Jesus said, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Won't you obey Him today?