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*Program
Study Guides*

**For
July 2014**

July 6, 2014

Do We Need God? 2 Chronicles 14:9-12

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

People who think they can do it on their own often _____ God. Do we need God? The Scriptures open up God's history for us so that we can _____ spiritual pitfalls and live prosperous lives that _____ God. We find blessing when we _____ God because we realize how much we need Him. We _____ God today in Scripture.

Asa was a _____ king in Judah. Early in his reign, King Asa saw God _____ the huge army of the Ethiopians and Libyans when he looked to God for _____. He put away the sinful idols and humbled his _____. But late in life, King Asa _____ on the king of Syria rather than turn to God for help. Hanani, the seer or prophet, told King Asa, "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose _____ is completely His. You have _____ foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have _____" (2 Chronicles 16:9). King Asa _____ to seek God's help and he found his later years filled with misery and frustration. Asa got angry at Hanani and put him in prison because he didn't want to hear the _____.

Don't make Asa's _____. The Lord is still looking for people who will _____ after Him and His ways. Many today never _____ on God; they never seek His _____; or feel a _____ for Him. They assume some other way is _____ than following God. Like Asa, they're only bringing _____ upon themselves. God would love to draw close to us and to bless us, but we must _____ Him. We must seek Him with all our _____. Will you?

Our reading today comes from 2 Chronicles 14:9-12.

Americans are famous for their _____ in "rugged individualism," not needing anything or anyone. They believe in pulling themselves up by their _____ bootstraps. Even Christians can fall into the _____ of feeling self-sufficient, and of not realizing how much they need God; they need His morals, His guidance, and His truth. On every American coin and dollar are the words, "In God we _____." If we trust in God, why has our nation begun thinking man's wisdom is _____, or man's morals are _____, or man's favor is more important than God's? The more we ignore and forget God, the more miserable our nation will _____.

King Asa of Judah had been spiritually _____ and a faithful king for many years, and God gave the land rest and prosperity; but later in his life he _____ God. He sought _____ from the idolatrous king of Syria rather than God. You'd think the great victory that God gave

him over Ethiopia would have made a greater impression, but Asa thought he _____ his need for God. When he did so, he only ruined _____. He got _____ at hearing the truth, and he imprisoned the prophet Hanani, and he oppressed some people. War never departed Judah as long as Asa _____. When people ignore God and follow their own path, they'll get angry at the _____. They _____ the good and begin to _____ their own ways. They think they're better off, but the truth is they only _____ themselves.

The lukewarm church in Laodicea in the book of Revelation became so _____ that somehow they didn't need God. **Read Revelation 3:17-18.** No wonder Jesus was _____ to spit them out of His mouth! This church was _____ wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. People often blind themselves to _____—not seeing how vulnerable and weak they truly are. Laodicea had banks and were rich, had clothing business and purple, and had an eye business that had a salve that they sold. But they were spiritually impoverished! One can have all the money, fame, and power of men and yet still be _____ and _____ with God. It's easy to feel _____ with life, that all is okay. Then something happens which opens our _____ to the reality that we don't have all the strings, that strings belong only to God.

Exodus, chapter one, tells the _____ of Israel's decline in Egypt from a wealthy and powerful position to one of slavery. It all happened when Egypt _____ politically. **Read Exodus 1:6-11.** Time has an amazing way of changing things in _____. No matter how secure we think we are, our whole lives can be _____ in a day. At that point, we know our lives will never be the _____. We can't turn back the clock and recover what we _____. It's presumptuous to think we'll never need the help of God, never need Him as our _____.

James talked about _____ too much in life. **Read what he said in James 4:13-15.** The fact is none of us knows the _____ or what our lives will be like. We act in _____ that the things will go as we had planned; but we don't know what will happen to us in coming days or weeks.

People who trust in their own wisdom and their own senses often become _____ by the wisdom and the assumptions of this world. **Read what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:20-25.**

Some people want a Savior, but they don't want a “_____”; they don't want someone to whom they are accountable and whose Word they must _____. What they may not realize is that _____ has a “lord.” They're _____ to someone or something. Unfortunately many people are enslaved to _____ or to the devil. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the _____ of sin” (John 8:34). A person who commits sin because he thinks it's pleasurable, thinks he's giving himself a boost; but after a

time that sin begins to _____ that person, and he's a slave. Instead of being "in control" of his _____ life, he is being "controlled" by the sin.

Peter spoke of some false _____ of his day as people enslaved to sin. **Read 2 Peter 2:17-19.** Sin is _____ to those who are enslaved by it. It brings nothing but _____ and _____ and _____. Sin is a terrible _____.

Everyone has a Lord; wouldn't it be better to _____ a master who will love you and bless you rather than one that curses and enslaves you. If we reject Jesus as Lord, we also reject His _____ of blessing and the inheritance He has prepared for us. Some people _____ they don't need a Savior. They might say, "Well, I'm not really so bad as to _____ to be lost." It's the tendency of every person to _____ his own sins. To many people "sin" is an _____ word and "hell" is just a _____ designed to manipulate. But if sin and hell are _____ concepts, you and I need a Savior!

Paul said, "For the _____ of sin is death, but the free _____ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Those wages have _____ changed in all these years. In Psalm 14:2-3, David wrote, "The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who _____ after God. They have all turned _____, together they have all become corrupt; There's no one who does good, not even one." Paul said in Romans 3:23, "all have sinned and fall short of the _____ of God." Sin is a universal _____, you have it, I have it, we all have it!

Someone says, "Well, I can't be all that _____." But the apostle John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the _____ is not in us. If we confess our sins, then He is faithful and righteous to _____ us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a _____ and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10). We _____ need a Savior. We need Him to _____ us from sin, to give us _____, and to lead us to heaven. Without the _____ of Jesus, we'd all be lost and without any hope of forgiveness or heaven. Instead of getting proud, let's _____ ourselves.

Peter said of Jesus, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might _____ to sin and _____ to righteousness. And by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). That matters to me. What Jesus did is _____, very personal. The sins I committed and you committed meant that we were _____ and deserved death. God laid on Christ the _____ that you and I should have suffered. He _____ this penalty personally with his body and shedding his blood. Jesus died for us so that we could be _____ from the terrible stain and harm of sin. We should be all the more _____ for the great sacrifice that the Lord Jesus made for us.

Read what Paul said in Romans 5:6-8. It's hard to imagine that kind of _____. To die for people who were weak, ungodly, and sinners shows the surpassing love of _____. We can never _____ or _____ that kind of love. You and I can be saved by Him, but at a tremendous _____. Your soul and my _____ were not cheap.

Peter said, "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). God took you and me seriously enough to _____ His Son Jesus. Jesus loved us enough to sacrifice His _____. Let's never walk away from the _____, acting as if nothing went on there that day. What really happened? He took our _____ because He loved us and wanted to spend an eternity with us. Do we need the Lord? Oh, of course we do!

We need the Lord! We need Him every _____! We need Him in every _____ of our lives! We need _____ from sin. We need _____. We need his counsel and _____. We need His _____ and leadership. We need to know Him and the _____ of his resurrection. We need the Father's _____ to hear our prayers. We need the Father's _____ and protection every day of our lives. We need the Lord's _____ to overcome our sins. The God of heaven, the God of the Bible, is a _____ and _____ God—the _____ God. If we don't have Him in our lives, we have _____ at all. The apostle Paul revealed how _____ he needed the Lord. He said he'd _____ everything to have Jesus in his life. **Read what he said in Philippians 3:7-8.** When we have Christ, we have everything; but when we _____ to have Christ, we have nothing of lasting _____. The Lord Jesus said, "This is eternal life, that they may _____ You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Jesus is the _____ way to eternal life; come to Him and serve Him. "Take the world, but give me Jesus."

We need Jesus in our personal lives, our _____, our _____, and our _____. We need His _____, His love to fill every corner of our lives. The story of the cross and the resurrection is not simply good news; it's the _____ news and the _____ news that can save us from sin and lead us to heaven. Draw close to God; make Him a _____ of your life every day! Become a Christian by placing your _____ and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He'll never _____ to you and wants to save you. Out of love, _____ of your sins by forsaking them and by following the Lord. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and be _____ into Christ, united with Him. We're _____ with Christ in baptism so that our body of sin might be done away with according to Romans 6:3-7. It is God who _____ away our sins in baptism according to Acts 22:16. So become a Christian today, and be free from sin!

Seek Ye First

Matthew 6:31-34

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

With all the uncertainties and predictions of doom and gloom, it's easy to _____ that we have a Father in heaven. Today, we're exploring the _____ to anxiety. God's Word provides a foundation for _____. It reveals how our _____ in heaven created us and cares for us. God's Word provides instruction and training so that we may _____ Him. His teaching _____ our errors and leads us to the truth.

The _____ is a battleground. We have the ability to harbor both thoughts of _____ and _____. Perhaps the hardest thing we face is learning to _____ our minds. Proverbs 15:16 says, "Better is a little with the _____ of the Lord than great treasure and _____ with it." God's blessing is _____, while riches may not last. The Lord Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on _____, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in _____, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-24).

Many people think if they just had more _____, all their problems would be solved. **Read what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 5:10-12.** You and I _____ the Lord!

Our reading today comes from The Gospel According to Matthew 6:31-34.

When we start thinking about worrying, there are _____ that God gives to us. First, the Lord just simply says, "For this reason I say to you, do not be _____ about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Isn't life more than _____, and the body more than _____?" (Matthew 6:25). Jesus repeats this command in verses 31 to 32, and He says, "Do not _____ then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father _____ that you need all these things." People who know God should _____ to rely on God and not behave like the Gentiles who don't know God.

The reason Jesus speaks out against worry is because worry is filled with doubt and lacks _____. Jesus addresses them as, "O ye of _____ faith." Worry keeps us from putting our _____ in God. It _____ the mind! We can't put our whole _____ into serving God

because we don't know how we'll take care of ourselves. Worry brings uneasiness, fear, and doubt. It leads a person to become distracted with _____ things and miss what's important.

Scripture tells of two sisters who chose different _____, one of commitment and one of worry. **Read the story in Luke 10:38-42.** We too get so caught up in everyday life that we forget how much we need to draw _____ to the Lord Jesus.

Worry can cause us to take our _____ off of God and what He can do in our lives. We can easily forget God is the _____ of every blessing and good thing in life. God makes us a _____. **Read what Scripture says in Philippians 4:6-7.** God will _____ your fear and doubt and He'll replace it with a peace that surpasses understanding, if you'll let him. He'll set a _____ around your heart and your mind so that fear and doubt won't overwhelm you, if you let Him.

Just as He protected _____ in the lion's den, God will protect you. Just as He protected _____, the prophet, at Dothan when the King of Syria, surrounded the city with an army with horses and chariots, so God will protect you. Let your requests be made known to God with _____ and He will give you peace.

Second, consider what God is _____. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:26-30.** God will take _____ of you. Focus on what God is doing for the _____ and the _____. Think, reason! If God takes care of them, He'll take care of _____.

Third, _____! The Lord Jesus said, "But seek _____ His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). To seek means setting aside everything else until you _____ and possess what you seek! Get in God's kingdom and get right with God. That's what we _____ seek first and foremost. Nothing _____ is as important. Never put Christ in second place, third place, last place, or any place but first. Christ "is before all things, and in Him all things _____ together. He is also _____ of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have _____ in everything" (Colossians 1:17-18). He should be first in importance, first in our _____, and first in our _____. Don't speak about _____ following the Lord; put Him first!

We must seek first His kingdom. The Lord Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great _____, he went and he sold all that he had and he bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46). That one pearl was _____ more than everything else. To be in God's kingdom here on _____ means getting to be in God's kingdom in _____. To be in that kingdom Christ must reign in our _____. First Peter 3:15 teaches us to "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being _____ to

make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, and yet with gentleness and reverence.” We should be ready and willing to tell anyone why Jesus is our _____ and why He is _____ in our hearts. Is the Lord Jesus first in your heart?

The Lord Jesus urges us to seek first His kingdom and His _____. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who _____ and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). We _____ what it is to be hungry and thirsty. We want _____! We want _____ to drink! We want it so _____ we have to have it right now! Do you want a _____ relationship with God that badly? We cannot pursue righteousness if our hearts are _____ with worries and sins. The fear and the doubt of worry will _____ us of our faith. That’s why we need to _____ God.

Read Luke 13:23-28. This passage reveals how some folks _____ at religion but never strive to enter through the narrow door. They want to do things _____ way rather than _____ way. They want to live like the _____ and still be close to God. That won’t work. You can’t live wickedly and _____ God to see you as righteous. Romans 8:12-13 says, “So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to _____ according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will _____, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will _____.” The heart has to make _____. Will we _____ God or the flesh? When we _____ our heart to give up on sin and worldliness and to seek first the kingdom, we’re repenting! God _____ that we repent. How badly do you want to be _____ with God?

Fourth, God will take _____ of you. Jesus challenged us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, “and all these things will be _____ to you.” God will _____ food, clothing, and the necessities of life if we seek Him first! Paul said, “And my God will supply _____ need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). We must trust Him as our God and _____ Him. When we put Him first in our lives we know He meets _____ need. God’s _____ house doesn’t run out. When we seek God first, God also seeks us out to strongly _____ us. Second Chronicles 16:9 says, “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose _____ is completely His.” God will not forget those who _____ Him.

When the church at Rome suffered persecution, Paul _____ them that God was on their side. He said, “He who did not _____ his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us _____ things?” (Romans 8:32). Do you imagine the God who would _____ you His own Son would withhold anything that you need? Trust God! Put your _____ in His hands. David said, “Cast your _____ on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22). In a similar

passage Peter says, “casting all your anxieties on him, because he _____ for you” (1 Peter 5:7). God loves you; He loves you enough to _____ your burdens. So...once you put your worries into His hands _____ them there.

Fifth, live one _____ at a time. The Lord Jesus said, “So do not _____ about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough _____ of its own” (Matthew 6:34). Yesterday is gone and tomorrow is uncertain, so make today _____! Ephesians 5:15-16 says, “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the _____ use of the time, because the days are evil.” Let the past be past, and don’t _____ trouble from the future. Don’t let the problems of life steal your _____ or cause you to doubt God’s love. Don’t let doubt and uncertainty steal your _____ and _____. God is _____. You can trust Him.

Can you say what Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:12? “I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to _____ until that Day what has been entrusted to me.” If you know God like Paul knew Him, you too can trust Him! Do you?

Will you _____ seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness? The Lord Jesus asked us to pray to the Father, “Your _____ be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Would you begin praying that every _____? Seeking God’s kingdom and righteousness means God’s _____ is to be done. We live in a morally and religiously confused world that has forgotten and forsaken the will of God found in _____, and they’ve forsaken it for worldly ways. This moral confusion will _____ to nothing but misery and brokenness. The world is confused and selfish in it’s ways, and these ways lead people to _____ one another. God’s ways are _____ with love and kindness. Sin doesn’t cause God’s heart to hate; it causes it to _____. It breaks because God knows the _____ that sin causes.

Let’s reason together: if you’re going to pray “God’s will be done,” will you _____ what you pray? Will you have Jesus Christ as _____ of your life? Will you _____ your will to His teaching? What _____ do you need to make in your life in order to do the will of God? Will you _____ yourself, take up your _____ daily, and _____ Him?

To become a Christian put your _____ wholeheartedly in Jesus Christ; turn your heart away from sin to the Lord; cease from sin and live for Jesus; _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be _____ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Acts 2:38 still _____ us to “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” When we’re baptized the Lord _____ away our sins (Acts 22:16). He makes us His _____ (Galatians 3:26-27). Won’t you become a Christian today?

July 20, 2014

Angry at God Habakkuk 3:17-19

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

When painful experiences come our way we wonder _____ God allowed it to happen. How can we stay faithful when we _____? God has the answer. God's Word provides a sacred _____ of the world. In its pages we see the holiness and the love of _____, but also the weakness and wickedness of _____. God reveals His great and supreme _____ for redeeming man from sin, how to help men live godly and positive lives, and how man might live in eternal joy in heaven. God has done everything possible to _____ us through the ages.

Some people get so focused on their _____ they become _____ with God or decide that God could not exist. Sometimes people think if God is good, if He cares for us like a loving father, if the Lord watches over us like a shepherd does His sheep, why doesn't God do everything within His power to _____ disease, war, natural calamities, and evil? God proved His love by sending His Son, Jesus, to _____ for our sins and to give us eternal life. We be assuming too much when we dictate to God how we _____ He should act. Rather than judge God, we should recognize that God is wiser than we are and knows what's _____.

Our reading from the Holy Scriptures comes through the prophet Habakkuk 3:17-19.

When life becomes _____, we're all tempted to get angry. Some get so angry they want to _____ God. Such anger arises from seeing only the _____. **Read James 1:19-20.** Anger usually _____ our thinking. When people say God isn't treating them _____, they're saying God is in the _____. Often they concentrate on some wrong and _____ all the good things God has done for them (James 1:17).

Some people assume if God loves us, He'll _____ every evil and hurtful thing from happening to us. They think all suffering is _____, but some pain is for the _____. Sometimes the hurts of life _____ us for better things. I've known more than a few people that didn't come to _____ the Lord until they went to prison or faced death. Their tragedies helped them to _____ their need for God. In the end they were actually _____ that they had the heartache.

Because man is a free moral agent, he can _____ to serve or to forsake God and His teaching. In Jeremiah's day the people _____ to follow the nations around them, and they went into pagan idolatry. They _____ their own gods and worshiped them as they pleased. They _____ in sexual immorality and even sacrificed their own children in a fire. Did God intervene? Yes, He did. When? When the people so hardened their _____

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that they refused to repent. Jeremiah describes the people, “They have made their faces _____ than rock; They have refused to _____” (Jeremiah 5:3). So, God promised calamity on the people, because “they have stiffened their necks so as not to _____ My words” (Jeremiah 19:15). Because they didn’t want to hear what God said through the prophet, they began to _____ Jeremiah. Preaching the truth of God’s Word resulted in the people _____ him with “reproach and derision all day long.” Paul too once asked, “have I become your _____ by telling you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16). Paul had spoken out against hurtful _____, and the guilty people opposed him for it. Sin deceives people and _____ them to strike out against others for exposing them. Like the people in Jeremiah’s day they can stiffen their necks and make their _____ harder than rock. Many today think they should have the _____ to commit any sin they want. They get angry and they slander anybody who speaks the _____ about their sins. They even get angry at God.

King David wanted to bring the ark of the covenant from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem, but he made the _____ of putting the ark into a new oxcart. **Read 2 Samuel 6:6-8.** David got angry at the Lord, but David was at _____, not the Lord. When David sought the reason why the Lord struck Uzzah, he found the _____. They did not _____ the Lord. Only the Levites were to _____ the ark. David told Abiathar, the priest, and the Levites, “Because you did not carry it at the first, the Lord our God made an outburst on us, for we did not _____ Him according to the ordinance” (1 Chronicles 15:13). David got angry at God, but he should have gotten angry at himself for his _____.

Second Kings 5 tells of Naaman, the captain of the army of the King of Syria, who became a _____. Naaman sought out Elisha, the prophet of God, to be _____ of his leprosy. Naaman brought many riches and came with horses and chariots to Elisha’s _____. “And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, ‘Go and _____ in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.’” (2 Kings 5:10-11). But Naaman became angry and he went away, saying, “Behold, I _____ he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.” Naaman got angry because Elisha didn’t _____ like he expected. Rather than listen to God’s prophet, Naaman listened to his own _____. He wanted a big production, but Elisha _____ told him to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River. Thankfully, Naaman’s servants showed wisdom and urged him to _____ the simple instruction. Verse 14 says Naaman “dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the _____ of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was _____.”

Rather than get angry and prideful when God calls something sinful, we too should _____ submit to God’s will. Many think they know what God will do in certain circumstances and when God does something _____ they may get angry or write God off. Rather than

trust our own thinking about what we think God is like, perhaps we should _____ the Scriptures to find what God is really like! Many take their eyes off Scripture and turn to _____, but false notions. Then they judge God harshly for what they _____ He is, not for what He _____ is.

What some call “_____ speech” from Christians is really “heart-break” speech. The sin and moral confusion of our day _____ the heart of God and those who love God. God grieves over every _____ that forsakes Him. Yes, there are things that God _____. God hates _____. Have you ever asked _____ God hates sin? Is it because He’s _____ and judgmental? No! God hates sin, because He knows how sin _____ the people that He loves. If God didn’t love people, He wouldn’t _____ what they did; but because He does love them, He wants what is _____ for them. The Scriptures _____ what’s good and what’s evil, what helps and what hurts, what brings joy and what leads to sorrow.

People today face all kinds of troubles and heartaches because they stopped _____ to God. They thought they had a _____ morality and could tolerate evil with no problems. When Christians quoted the _____, they got angry and started calling names. They wanted everyone to think God caused all their _____. They did this to take the _____ off of their choices and their sin.

I freely admit that I don’t understand all the _____ why God permits suffering and evil in this world, why it goes on. But I do know God is wise and good; and since He permits these things, He has a _____. Though some feel they are quite capable of _____ God, I know I’m not wise enough. Job is described as “blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from _____” (Job 1:1). When Job suffered the _____ of his ten children, his health, and most of his possessions, he blessed God and did not blame God (Job 1:21-22). Job suffered so badly that he wished he had never been _____, and then he had three friends who proved to be miserable comforters. They said Job brought this suffering on himself by all his _____. Job, however, maintained his _____. But Job wanted to find God and present his _____ before Him. Job maintained that he was innocent and didn’t _____ punishment. Job wanted an _____ from God for what He allowed to happen. God doesn’t _____ answer Job’s questions and his faultfinding. God instead _____ His wisdom and power to Job by asking Job questions, questions that Job couldn’t answer (Job 38:3). Job comes to understand that he isn’t God’s _____. God asks, “Will you really _____ my judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?” (Job 40:8). Job ultimately said, “I’ve heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, And I _____ in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6). In the end, God _____ Job twofold for all that he lost.

Some ask why doesn't God intervene in every _____ and punish every evildoer immediately? What if God did? Are you ready for God to _____ you eternally when you commit evil? If God intervened with punishment for every sin immediately, the whole world would come to a _____. As soon as a person became old enough to be responsible for his sins God would condemn him _____. Instead, God patiently _____ us to mature morally and spiritually. He grants us a lifetime of opportunity to _____ of our sins.

People are _____ moral agents. We are imperfect people living in an imperfect _____. God doesn't force us to _____ Him; He doesn't force us to _____ Him. God sent prophets and preachers to _____ us to love Him and to serve Him, but He's allowed us to make the _____ whether to do so. He wants us to choose to love Him on our own rather than make us _____ or _____.

When you go through a tough time, think about the _____ of Jesus. While He suffered greatly through His trial and on the _____ Jesus never got angry, never threatened anyone, and never even spoke evil about anyone. Though violent, hateful, and angry men sentenced Him to death, Jesus _____ endured it. Though He was shamed and humiliated on the cross, Jesus _____ once shamed His captors or humiliated the soldiers that crucified Him and gambled over His clothes. Nor did Jesus get angry at His _____ for having to bear His cross. **Read John 10:17-18.** Concerning that cross, Jesus said, "so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do _____ as the Father commanded Me" (John 14:31).

Through the ages people like Job, David, Jeremiah, and Paul _____ to trust God. They didn't always understand _____ God permitted evil and suffering, but they never stopped holding fast to God. They knew God could see things that they couldn't see and knew things that they couldn't know. They knew God would make things right in the end and would keep His _____. They suffered greatly for their faith but they never lost sight of God. Like Habakkuk, we too need to "rejoice in the Lord" and to "take joy in the God of our salvation."

Why stay with our faith? Because these men of God knew that whatever happens on this earth is not the _____ story. They knew the last _____ of their lives had not yet been written. They knew a _____ in heaven awaits them. Stay right with God. Keep living a holy life. **Read the promise of 2 Peter 1:10-11.**

Are you _____ about your salvation? Are you a Christian? To become a Christian, _____ with all your heart Jesus is the Christ, _____ by turning away from evil and following what is good, _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be _____ in water for the forgiveness of your sins. When you're baptized God makes you His _____ according to Galatians 3:26-27. When you're baptized, God _____ away your sins (Acts 22:16) and He raises you up to newness of life (Romans 6:4). When you're baptized you're _____ again (John 3:5). Won't you become a Christian today?

July 27, 2014

Come Home 1 John 2:15-17

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

Are you one of millions who've _____ attending worship at church? Our message today is to _____ you to come home to God. God's ways are _____. Righteousness is better than wickedness. Love is better than _____. Kindness is better than apathy. Faith is better than _____. A clear conscience is better than _____ and regret. Truth is better than falsehood, and _____ is better than despair. God gives us all these blessings in His _____. We shouldn't let a day pass without _____ of God's Word.

Many Americans used to take their _____ seriously, worshiping at church, but no longer attend. For some reason they've stopped following Jesus Christ and started pursuing life on their _____ terms. One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – say that they're religiously unaffiliated today. This number has been _____ steadily for the last twenty years. While some were never affiliated with any religion, many have _____ organized religion altogether. They've come to believe in _____ but themselves. Others who still _____ to be church members haven't worshiped at church in years.

The world claims it has something _____ than God's way. It offers you temporary _____, but at the cost of your soul. **Read 1 John 2:15-17.**

Our scripture reading today comes from the words of Jesus found in Luke 15:17-24.

From the start, the Lord Jesus knew some who became Christians would _____ to remain faithful. Jesus said "Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no _____ root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). Many of today's churches have little spiritual _____. Some focus on entertainment and "feel good" religion that speaks much about grace but never asks people to _____ themselves or to take up a _____. Such religions never have a firm root in _____ or in commitment to Christ. When temptation comes to follow the _____ of the flesh or to follow the crowd they have little ability to remain faithful to Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus also spoke of "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no _____ to maturity" (Luke 8:14). People certainly have many distractions in riches and pleasures that _____ out time and desire for God. Others get so concerned with their _____ in life they lose sight of God. They forget all the _____

God has done for them. They forget the high _____ standards God expects of His people. These standards _____ everyone, and people settle for something far less than _____.

When we forsake the way of the Lord and settle for a way without God, we're _____ misery and chaos into our lives, into our homes, and into our society. We're courting _____ and calamity. Our society believes freedom _____ sin is more valuable than freedom _____ sin and, of course, sin _____ everyone. Some say, "You can't legislate morality," meaning that you can't _____ people to be moral. No, we can't make people _____ God. But if we _____ the morality that God has given and we _____ more and more sin, we open up the floodgates to a wicked and miserable world. We can't _____ sin and expect a moral society. We can't _____ God's teaching and expect a more righteous world. We can't _____ of sin and not expect the sin to increase!

Legalizing something that is _____ doesn't make it good or beneficial. Just because our governments stop calling some behavior a _____ doesn't mean God approves of it. God said, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!" (Isaiah 5:20-21). People who think they can redefine evil as good are _____ themselves. Evil will ultimately _____ itself as evil; and when we tolerate evil behavior the innocent suffer from it.

People regularly _____ to Christians, "Who are you to judge?" Christians don't _____ that they're judges; they understand that Jesus is the Judge. Jesus Christ will one day judge _____ people for their thoughts, their words and their behavior (2 Corinthians 5:10). We cannot _____ the judgment seat of Christ. Christ will judge all people everywhere with the same standards of morality and truth found in _____. Changes in _____ and popular thinking will have no influence. What some _____ as judging really isn't judging at all! If someone _____ what God says in Scripture about a behavior or an attitude, he isn't judging. He's simply proclaiming what God has _____ on the matter. Unfortunately, some ignore Scripture and would rather hear a _____ than hear the _____. They would rather be comforted today with a deception than to _____ the hard truth. They think if they can _____ the truth deep enough it won't matter. The truth, however, about right and wrong will not _____ buried. God doesn't _____.

We can't sin against God and not be affected. **Read what Proverbs 6:27-29 asks.** What is true of this sin, adultery, is really true of _____ sin. When we play with any kind of sin, we're going to get _____. **Read Galatians 6:7-8.** When ancient Israel forsook God and turned to idols, God said, "For they _____ the wind and they _____ the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

What they got for their disobedience was far _____ than they figured. Don't be _____. One can't _____ to sin and it not bring misery.

The prodigal son thought if he could take his inheritance to a far country he could live out his days the way he _____ and not worry about anything. He squandered his _____ in reckless living. Reckless living means to live without _____, without being concerned about anything. He probably squandered his estate with immoral _____ like drunkenness, women, and gambling. His money didn't last; he _____ it all. He didn't _____ on a severe famine. He was in _____, and nobody was willing to _____ him. The only work he could _____ was feeding pigs, a disgraceful life for a Jewish boy. He was so _____ he wished he could eat the pig's food. The prodigal son, in desperation, finally came to his _____. **Read what he said in Luke 15:17-19.** The prodigal son arose and he came _____. He left home so he could live like he _____, but he found living in sin doesn't _____; it ends in heartache and misery. So he _____ to come home. He didn't feel _____ to be his father's son, and he hoped his father would make him a hired _____. Sin causes a man to feel _____ in his own eyes. Luke 15:20 says, "But while he was still a long way off, his _____ saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him." The father heard him _____ his sins, but he stopped him before he finished. **Read Luke 15:22-24.** The prodigal son came home to his father, and you too can come home to your Father in _____.

Perhaps you've seen how forsaking God has _____ up your life. You've learned living in sin doesn't _____ and false ways will deceive you. You've learned that selfishness brings nothing but _____. You've learned that lust and sin fail to satisfy the _____. You've seen how _____ is better than _____, and compassion is better than apathy. You've found holding an angry grudge will corrupt the _____ and condemn the soul, that the way of the Lord is right and good. The way of the _____ only leads to suffering.

Read Psalm 19:7-11. The God who made us gave us His teaching so that we might have the _____ life possible on earth and _____ life in heaven. Nothing can compare or improve on what the Bible _____. God provides the _____, so take hold of it! God's teaching blesses us with a _____ and _____ way of life. Jesus promised to give us an abundant life in John 10:10 and those who have _____ with Him realize that God keeps His Word. God's wisdom is ours if we're willing to _____ and _____ it. The Bible has the most _____ message in the world. Psalm 119:2 says, "How blessed are those who _____ His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart."

God's Word strengthens the _____, comforts the hurting, encourages the fainthearted, _____ the sinner, corrects the misinformed, and _____ us in every good work. It

keeps the _____ from slipping, the _____ from coveting, and the _____ from hardening. God's Word speaks to every person, whatever their _____, whatever their _____, whatever their _____. What it says stands and does not _____ with the times (Psalm 119:89). You can _____ with God, but it won't change His mind. You can _____ what God says, but you can't change what He says.

God's Word is still the _____ by which everyone will be judged (John 12:48). You may feel you can judge _____, you might even decide you can _____ the church, but on that day the Lord Jesus will judge how you have treated Him, how you've treated His words, and how you've treated the church. The Bible depicts Judgment Day in Revelation 20:12. We'll be judged by what is _____ in the books, not by our _____, not by what our friends say, not by popular beliefs. For this reason, _____ the Bible.

Read the Lord's invitation in Matthew 11:28-30. Christianity is livable. The Lord's _____ is easy, not rough, and His _____ is light, not heavy. You can _____ the Christian life, you can go to _____. It's easy and light, because it _____ us up above the misery and the enslavement of sin to a life of peace and joy. Come home! Come home to Jesus Christ!

When the prodigal son returned home, his older brother wasn't _____ to him. It's _____, but _____, that some church members aren't as kind as they should be. The son came home anyway and the _____ embraced and kissed him. When the Father in heaven forgives, _____ should forgive. When the Father in heaven welcomes a penitent sinner home, we too should _____ him. The father of the prodigal son told the older brother, "this brother of yours was _____ and has begun to _____, and was _____ and has been _____." God rejoices over every sinner who _____, and so should we!

Have you _____ worshiping at church? Have you pulled _____ from God? Have you let _____ into your life? Come home! Come back to God. He still loves you and is _____ for you to leave that far country that only wants to exploit you. Sin doesn't give life; it only brings _____. Come back to God! At church you'll find a family that _____ you and wants to _____ you stay on the strait and narrow road. Jesus shed His blood to _____ the church. If it means that much to Jesus, shouldn't it be that important to you?

To become a Christian, _____ in Jesus Christ with all your heart, turn away from anything sinful, _____ Him before others, and be _____ just as the Scriptures teach in Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:3-7. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you _____ the gospel of Christ, God forgives your sins and adds you to his family, the church. Stay faithful to the Lord. Don't let anything come between you and God. Come home to God, and do it today!