



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

*Program
Study Guides*

**For
September 2014**

Called by the Gospel 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

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

After 34 years, we still proclaim the _____ of hope and salvation. Today we're exploring what it _____ to be called by the gospel. The Scriptures contain the words of _____ life. They teach us how to draw close to God and find the _____ that He offers. We need His grace, and the Bible teaches us _____ to receive His grace.

This television ministry began on the first Lord's Day of September, 1980, with Mack Lyon _____ the gospel; and today marks the beginning of our 35th year. For 34 years this program, which began on one station in Ada, Oklahoma, broadcasts the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Today we broadcast on WGN America throughout the United States; we're also on 206 broadcast television stations; we're on 150 cable systems; and we're on more than fifty radio stations across the country. We're grateful to churches of Christ and faithful Christians all over the country who have _____ this ministry and made it possible. We're also grateful for your prayers and encouragement. We hope to _____ the Lord and you for many years to come. Our task in this program is to _____ the gospel, the good news of Christ, and that's man's hope. We echo the words of the apostle Paul that you can **read in Romans 1:14-16**. Your greatest _____, your greatest _____, and your opportunity for eternal _____ comes in the gospel. So, _____ the gospel and _____ it.

Our reading comes from 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

The Lord Jesus came into this world to _____ souls. The angel Gabriel told Joseph, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their _____" (Matthew 1: 21). When John the Baptist introduced Jesus to his disciples, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who _____ the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). As we read through the gospels, Jesus willingly _____ on the cross for our sins (1 Peter 2:24). Jesus not only saved us from sin, He _____ us to a higher and nobler life. He wanted to _____ a sin-sick world.

Read what Mark 2:15-17 says. Jesus has always _____ for every soul, and especially those who have been scarred by sin. With love and compassion He helps us _____ an old life of moral slavery to sin and then to _____ free from its stain and guilt. In Christ, we can truly be _____ again! That's the gospel; that's good news!

The Lord Jesus sent forth His apostles with this _____, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). We must _____ to make disciples and preach the same gospel that the apostles preached from the beginning. Why? Because we still _____ His saving grace and the healing that His forgiveness brings. As long as sin _____ souls, we must preach the truth, the truth that brings eternal life. The gospel truth is God’s _____ for our families, our nation, and the world. Nothing is so needed or important.

People need the gospel today more than ever. We won’t find _____ from sin by ignoring it or by acting like it’s irrelevant. Sin isn’t irrelevant to God. Sin remains as God’s enemy and the enemy to our _____. Those who follow Christ realize that God gave the _____ to man’s sin problem in the preaching of the gospel. Today faithful Christians can speak like the apostle Paul – **read Romans 1:14-16**. God’s gospel message still has that same _____ to save and to free from sin. As Christians we’re obligated to _____ this salvation with you.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-3. Jesus died so that we might be _____ from sin and _____ to righteousness. God raised Him up to provide evidence to all that Jesus is truly _____ of all. There is indeed life after death and there is a _____. Jesus came to give us eternal life, and it’s eternal life with Jesus in _____.

Hebrews 3:1 reminds us that we have a “heavenly _____.” It’s a call from heaven to _____ with Christ forever. Second Timothy 1:9 says Jesus “saved us and called us with a _____ calling.” God calls us to live holy lives. We can’t _____ to the world’s lack of morality or empty values which only ruin lives and confuse children morally. Many want freedom to sin, but sin _____ brings enslavement and sorrow. The Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the _____ of sin” (John 8:34). Many think they have _____ of their lives, but their sin has made them slaves.

Christ makes us free from sin and _____ us to holiness. He promises us freedom and a place in His _____. **Read how 1 Peter 2:9-10 describes Christians.** Christianity is more than a mere _____; it’s a relationship with the God who called us out of darkness, the darkness of sin and into His marvelous _____. We were nobodies till God called to make us His people; we were _____ in sin until He forgave us.

Sadly, some will not _____ His call. **Read Luke 14:16-24.** God _____, but He doesn't make us eat. He wants us to follow Him and enjoy His grace, but we must _____ His call. He loves us and wants our love in _____. Some desire the blessing of Christ but they're unwilling to _____ to Him as Lord of their lives. They'd rather have the slavery of _____ than the freedom of Christ. **Read how the Lord Jesus describes the person who fails to take advantage of His grace and His love in Matthew 22:11-14.** Not everyone is willing to _____ to the gospel call. Some refuse to _____ God. God _____ you and gave you life. He provided every _____ thing you've ever enjoyed. You might think the king was _____ to punish the man who failed to wear the wedding clothes. Some scholars say that kings on special occasions _____ guests with garments; others say the man ignored the wedding custom. Either way, this man _____. God won't welcome you unless you're _____ in righteousness. We must be washed in the _____ of Christ.

My friend, Ron Thomas, who is a preacher in Illinois, recently reminded me of Proverbs 13:19, which says, "Desire realized is _____ to the soul, But it is an abomination to fools to turn away from evil." Fools _____ turning from evil and doing what's right. Jeremiah 36 tells how Jeremiah dictated to Baruch the _____ of God. Baruch read the words of Jeremiah to the people in the _____, and later he read them to the officials. The officials knew the king needed to hear the words, but they _____ for Jeremiah and Baruch, so they had Jeremiah and Baruch hide. When King Jehoiakim heard the words of Jeremiah warning the people to _____ of their idolatry and of the coming wrath of God, he refused to _____. After each three or four columns were read, he cut off those columns and threw them into the _____ until the whole scroll was burned (Jeremiah 36:23). Jehoiakim wouldn't _____ and Jehoiakim wouldn't _____. Some still despise the very words of eternal life because they don't want to _____ their sins. They don't think they need to repent or to be saved from their sins, so they become _____. They see no reason to _____ to God's call in the gospel.

You can say _____ to God, but what good will it do? The Lord Jesus said, "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My _____ will find it. For what will it _____ a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in _____ for his soul? 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 _____" (Matthew 16:25-27). You can burn a Bible, but you can't _____ the Word of God. You can scoff at God today, but you won't be scoffing when God _____ you by the very words that you despised.

Some scoff; others turn a deaf ear; still others try to _____ Scripture to suit themselves, but God's Word doesn't _____. What the Lord spoke in the first century stands _____ for all time. In the first century some Jews tried to _____ the gospel. The apostle Paul said, "I'm amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a _____ gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to _____ the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an _____ from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!" (Galatians 1:6-9). The true gospel calls us to _____ and to _____. Will you listen and _____ to His loving call? Will you love Him as He loved you?

God warns us, "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not _____ from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just _____, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:1-3). God is calling us to _____ through the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. We must never _____ the One who has created us and loved us. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and _____ from the dead, proving that He is truly Lord and the Son of God. We have been given a _____ salvation in Christ. Should we not _____ to Him?

Jesus Christ is also calling us to a transformed and holy _____. He has not rescued us from this present evil age for us to _____ living in sin. He wants something _____ for us. He offers forgiveness so that we might _____ to forgive; He offers love so that we might _____ to love; He offers truth so that we might spot the hurtful _____ of the devil. He gives _____ when we're weak, _____ when we hurt, and _____ when we're afraid. How can we _____ His call? How can we neglect so great a salvation?

To become a Christian you must _____ His call in the gospel. Believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son and make Him your _____. Turn away from sin; don't let sin take _____ of your life. Follow the Lord. Confess your _____ in Christ to everyone, and be _____ in the name of Jesus Christ. When you're baptized into Christ, you are _____ with Him and you become a member of His body, the church. When you're baptized into Christ, the Lord _____ away your sin according to Acts 22:16. The Lord is calling you to _____ and _____. Don't neglect this call of the gospel. Answer God's call by obeying Him. Don't let another day pass. Won't you say yes to Jesus Christ?

Thy Will Be Done Matthew 6:9-13

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

If the will of God was done on earth as it is in heaven, what would _____? Today we're going to explore the _____ of God's will being done on earth. When people do God's will, they _____ wisely and find blessing. **Read what Solomon proclaimed in Proverbs 2:2-5.** We must search out God's will and _____ it; only then can we be the people that God intended.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Your _____ be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). I encourage you to _____ that with me. Pray "Your will be done"; pray it every day. Pray it fervently, repeatedly, and confidently. Let's call upon God to _____ His will in our own lives, in our homes, in our communities, and in our nation. Should the Lord's will be done on earth, our lives would see the greatest _____. God's ways are always _____.

People often think God's _____ is naïve or backward or mistaken. They don't like what He teaches because what He teaches _____ with today's culture or teaches against what they want to do. Some have _____ that God is unkind or unwise because He teaches against sin. But, from ages past, God has _____ everything and He _____ all. He knows what will _____ and what will _____. With wisdom and love He teaches us what is _____. We deceive ourselves if we imagine that we can _____ on God's will. God has true wisdom that leads to _____. So we pray, "Your will be done on _____ as it is in heaven."

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus found in Matthew 6:9-13.

When Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane, He knew what would _____ to Him in the coming hours. He _____ of Judas' betrayal, of Peter's denial, and of His false condemnation. He knew He would be mocked, scourged, and crucified. He chose to _____ the suffering and to bear the sins of mankind. In the garden He _____ fervently with His face to the ground and with loud crying that this cup might pass from Him. He knew how difficult His _____ would be. But this was not _____ that He prayed. In His agony He prayed, "not my _____, but yours, be done." The Father's will was more important to Jesus than His _____ will.

And so, Jesus _____ to sacrifice His own will because He loved the Father and He loved you and me. He set His wants and His desires aside for a larger _____. He chose to suffer for a time, so that we could be blessed _____. He chose to _____, so that we might _____. He put our _____ before His safety and comfort. He died the way that He

lived, utterly _____. His sacrifice calls us to _____ Him and to _____ righteous lives. It calls us to _____ above petty selfishness and to _____ the will of God.

What if we all had the _____ and _____ of Jesus? What if we too set aside our wants and desires to _____ a larger purpose? What if we pledged our lives and hearts to something _____ than ourselves? What if we genuinely gave God _____ in our choices, rather than ourselves? The biggest hindrance to God's will being done on earth is our own selfish _____. We live as selfish people in a selfish world, and selfishness has caused _____ heartache and conflict since the beginning of time.

Selfishness is the _____ of every sin and every conflict. People sin because they love pleasures more than they love _____ or more than they love other _____. Sin promises pleasure and it appeals to our pride, but it always ends up _____ those who practice it. Sin, pride, and immoral pleasures are our _____. Don't be deceived, thinking that you can _____ your will in defiance of God and still enjoy His blessing.

Read what 1 John 2:15-17 says. We must _____ to love and to serve the Lord. God _____ His grace and blessing to everyone who loves and does His will. Because selfishness fills the world, people scoff and make fun of the _____ of God. Some think they have a _____ way to find happiness, but their ways _____ in bitterness and destruction. The _____ has always rebelled and opposed God. He _____ God's will with lies and with schemes. **Read how the Lord Jesus described the devil in John 8:44.**

The will of God _____ us from Satan's deceit and falsehoods. That's why we _____ the will of God on earth as it is in heaven. We must _____ the lies and _____ the truth. Only then can we find peace and freedom from the enslavement of _____. **Read Romans 6:16.** We need the will of God to be done on earth so that we don't _____ into enslaving ourselves into something that will _____ us.

If the Lord's will were done on earth, it would affect our _____. God teaches us to be _____ because it is best for us, best for our families, and best for everyone. When people live outside the will of God, they _____ themselves and others. They set the wrong _____ for the young and bring problems upon themselves. More than forty percent of the births in America are to _____ parents. How will these parents ever be able to _____ their children to live righteously unless they themselves repent? **Read what 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 says.** Paul explains, "For God has not called us for the _____ of impurity, but in sanctification, (that is, in holiness)" (verses 7 and 8). Then he says, "he who rejects this is not rejecting _____ but the _____ who gives His Holy Spirit to you." If the Lord's will were done on earth, it would affect our _____. People would follow the golden _____ found in Matthew 7:12. Can you imagine how _____ our world would be if everyone practiced the

Golden Rule? We'd stop gossiping about others, stop ignoring the needs of others, stop thinking that we're better than others, and stop mistreating others as if they didn't matter. We'd respect others just as we'd _____ their respect. We wouldn't _____ favoritism. First Corinthians 13:5 _____ us that love "does not act unbecomingly" (discourteously); love is courteous. Love _____ to say "thank you" and "please."

If we did the Lord's will we'd love the _____ He loves. **Read what the Lord Jesus said in John 13:34-35.** Loving the way Jesus loves calls us to _____ ourselves for the best interests of others. If we follow the Lord's will, we will even love our _____. **Read what Jesus said Matthew 5:43-45.** The Lord Jesus taught us to be _____. **Read what Romans 12:14-18 says.**

When we do God's will, we _____. This world would have much more _____ if people forgave one another. Instead, many pursue the _____ of anger and vengeance. **Read what Romans 12:19-21 says.** Remember the prayer of Jesus as He was crucified, "Father, _____ them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

If the Lord's will were done on earth, it would also affect the _____ world. The Lord Jesus warned of _____ prophets who come as wolves in sheep's clothing in Matthew 7:15-20. They exploit others in the name of God to _____ their own appetites. The Lord said, "You will know them by their _____." How sad that much of what calls itself Christianity today is much more of an enterprise rather than a _____; it's more commercial than it is _____. It's heartbreaking that some think _____ Christianity is like the _____ Christianity that's so prevalent in today's world. It's no wonder worldly people _____ such false Christians and miss what is true and genuine. If people really decided to _____ God's revealed will, they wouldn't _____ their own churches, but would follow the Scriptures. They wouldn't build their own denominations or organizations and vote on what they _____ they believe as if they could overrule Jesus Christ. Rather they would acknowledge Psalm 119:89, which says, "Forever, O Lord, Your _____ is settled in heaven." They wouldn't give themselves exalted religious _____ but would focus on Jesus Christ.

If people really decided to obey God's revealed will, they'd follow the one and only _____. Galatians 1:6-9 says there's only one gospel. They'd understand that the grace of God works through the _____ gospel so they wouldn't invent _____ ways to be saved or ignore what God requires for salvation. They'd _____ the necessity of faith, the necessity of repentance, and baptism for people to be saved. They'd teach that the grace of God _____ through baptism instead of telling people they don't have to be baptized to be saved. They'd realize that the _____ of Christ washes away our sins when we are baptized, and we're baptized into His death according to Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:3-7.

If the Lord's will were done on earth, it would affect our _____. Instead of trying to _____ ourselves, we'd focus on praising God according to His teaching and His will. Instead of inventing new ways to worship, we'd look to _____ to find what God's will is. God wills that we _____ and _____ the Lord's death in the Lord's Supper until He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Christians are to partake of the Lord's Supper _____ Lord's day, which is the first day of the week.

The Lord teaches Christians to _____ from their hearts. In their singing they are to _____, and to admonish, to _____, and to give _____ to the Father through Jesus. **Read Hebrews 13:15.** The music of the early church that's found in the New Testament was entirely _____, emphasizing the _____ that were sung. There simply is _____ command or example of any church using instruments in the New Testament. The idea of using an instrument of music didn't enter into their _____. In fact, Christians in the second and third centuries vehemently _____ the use of instruments as worldly, pagan, or Jewish. The will of God for the church is that people sing from their _____ using their lips. The use of instruments of music in Christian worship was an _____ that actually came many centuries later.

We _____ the will of God on earth today. Our _____ for a better life isn't in Hollywood, Wall Street, sports, alcohol, casinos or government; it's in Jesus Christ. Let's _____ and _____ God's will.

Adelaide Pollard wrote in a hymn: "Have Thine own way, Lord! Thou art the Potter, I am the _____! Mold me and make me, After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still." Will you let God mold and make you like _____? Will you _____ like Jesus, _____ like Jesus, _____ like Jesus, and be obedient to the Father's will like Jesus? Surrender _____ to the Lord. Are you playing religion, sometimes obeying God and sometimes following your desires?

The Lord Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will _____ the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Many think they can negotiate their way to _____, but you can't call Jesus "Lord" if you follow your _____ will. You can't expect to enter heaven, if you're not willing to _____ the Lord's teaching and make Him first in your life. You'll never want to do the Lord's will _____ you believe in Him and love Him. We love because He _____ loved us. We believe because of the _____ that was revealed that He did arise from the dead. Because we love Him, we'll _____ in Him and in His teaching. Out of faith and love we'll _____ by turning from sin to live righteously. Out of love we'll _____ Jesus as the Christ to all and we'll be _____ into Him. Baptism is an immersion in water for the _____ of sins (Acts 2:38). Instead of arguing about whether to be baptized, let's simply do the will of God.

God's Ways John 14:1-6

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

You can travel in many directions, but what is the way to _____ God. Today we're going to look at the ways of _____ and the way of _____. We must never _____ that our ways are God's way. Humans are limited and don't _____ or _____ all things the way God does. Many people think like the old song, "I did it _____ way," thinking this will bring them success and happiness. We mustn't deceive ourselves; we aren't as _____ as God. God speaks out of wisdom and love to _____ us what's best for us and what will _____ us and our families. If we reject God and put our _____ in our own wisdom or in our own desires, we'll bring chaos and ruin upon ourselves. Bible history _____ this again and again. Some doubt, but God's way is still _____ itself true and best.

In Acts 9, Saul of Tarsus went to Damascus so that if he found anyone belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them _____ to Jerusalem. Paul admitted, "I _____ this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons" (Acts 22:4). However, Paul proclaimed to his Jewish persecutors, "This I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do _____ the God of our fathers" (Acts 24:14). Paul was deceived early in life, but when he learned the _____ about Jesus He gladly followed the Way. I hope you too will follow the Way. God cares for your _____ and wants you to know the truth. God's message comes from His heart to yours because He doesn't want you to _____ for Satan's lies.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John 14:1-6.

Jesus is indeed "the way, the truth, and the life; and no one comes to the Father _____ through Him." The Father sent Jesus into this world to save mankind from _____. During His ministry, Jesus worked genuine miracles, showed utter love, taught amazing truths, and was truly "_____." He predicted His own scourging and _____, and it proved true. He predicted the _____ of Jerusalem, and it proved true. The Father _____ Him from the dead on the third day according to the prophecies in Scripture and according to His own prophecy. Jesus was indeed the Son of God and He alone is the _____ to the Father.

The God that people think they know and the God of the _____ are not always the same. Some read about God and assume that this is the _____ picture of God. They want so badly for God to be how they picture Him they _____ other scriptures. To know the

true God, we must _____ to everything that He says about Himself. We can't invent our own _____ of God and believe that that's going to reflect what God is truly like. We must take time to _____ the word of God to know His way. **Read Isaiah 55:8-9.**

When I hear some folks talk the way they do, it's clear they haven't studied the _____ of God as it's revealed in Scripture. They assume from movies and popular _____ that they know God. They think God will _____ them to believe or to do anything that they _____ and God will never judge them or hold them accountable for it. Some have a view that God is like a benevolent but isolated and benign old grandfather who _____ what they do but gives them his love and blessing no matter what. The devil steps in with _____ and counterfeits to _____ people and lead them into error and ultimately into condemnation. Here are some lies that _____ the devil's ways.

Some think God is too _____ to punish anyone for sin. They think because God is gracious to _____ that He'll forgive even the evildoers. They forget the Lord God has a track record of _____ evil. **Read 2 Peter 2:4-10.** If God punished the angels, the ancient world, and the ungodly cities, He'll punish _____ on the last day.

If we take God lightly or ignore His warnings, we only bring _____ on ourselves. God _____ the truth clearly and with finality. He doesn't _____ His commandments or His warnings. What God said in the Scriptures in the first century is just as _____ today as it was when the Holy Spirit moved men to write. Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not man, that he should _____, or a son of man, that he should _____ his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" What Jesus called sin in the first century is _____ sin today. Nothing has _____. Do not be deceived!

We must all _____ our morals and what we believe and practice. Let's cease to do evil and start _____ what is right and good. If the Lord teaches something different from what we believe or do, then let's give them up and _____ the way of the Lord. The apostle Paul said, "I am conscious of _____ against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the _____" (1 Corinthians 4:4). Paul knew by experience that one could _____, thinking all along he was doing _____. Rather than admit to our sins, many _____ themselves with excuses for their wrongdoing. It's easy to deceive ourselves about our sins.

Some think God doesn't _____ the past; but again, God is not like humanity, He is not like you or me. Second Peter 3:8 says, "But do not let this one fact _____ your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day." God isn't _____ like we are. Time doesn't _____ His memory. When God forgives, our sins are _____. God doesn't forgive sin when people _____ to

repent and remain in those sins. They'll have to pay the _____ for their sins. Do not be deceived!

Some think God _____ requires faith for a person to be saved. This is not God's _____. God also _____ love, repentance, and obedience. First Corinthians 16:22 says, "If anyone has _____ love for the Lord, let him be accursed." We often assume God's love for us, but we _____ also love the Lord ourselves. The Lord Jesus said, "unless you _____, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). No one can continue in sin; we must _____ our hearts to follow God's way. The Lord Jesus _____ us to be obedient just as He was obedient. **Read Hebrews 5:8-9.** It takes _____ than faith, do not be deceived!

Some think God wants us to repent and believe, but He doesn't _____ baptism for salvation. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is _____ of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). For more than a thousand years, Christians never _____ that this referred to baptism and baptism was necessary to salvation. When Ananias came to Saul in Acts 22:16, he gave Saul the message of the Lord Jesus, "And now why do you _____? Rise and be baptized and _____ your sins, calling on his name." Baptism is the time when God washes away sins through the _____ of Jesus. Romans 6:3-7 and Colossians 2:12-13 explain that baptism is an act of faith in the _____ of God. By grace God saves us in and through baptism.

In the sixteenth century men began teaching the sovereignty of God, and what that meant was that people could not choose whether to _____ the Lord. They thought they were _____ in sin and couldn't change, that God had to change them miraculously. They also taught salvation by grace meant that one couldn't be saved by _____ and they believed that _____ was a work and so it didn't save. Unfortunately, they misunderstood many things.

First, man does indeed have _____ and can change. This is why God, in every age, has called men to _____. Repentance is a change of _____ leading to a change of ways. Why would God _____ us to repent, knowing that we didn't have that ability, and then condemn us for not repenting? Do not be deceived!

Second, baptism is _____ God works on us. **Read Colossians 2:12-13.** This passage clearly states that God _____ us in baptism, raises us up in baptism, and forgives our _____ in baptism. God is the _____ one and we receive His action by being baptized. To say baptism is unnecessary for salvation is to refuse to let God _____ in our lives.

The notion that we are saved by faith is _____, but it's not the _____ truth. According to the Scriptures, there are _____ factors that are essential to our salvation. We can't segregate one _____ to the exclusion of all the others. Understanding the whole truth

means that we understand _____ that the Bible says on a subject rather than separating out only one factor. This is why salvation by faith is true, but salvation by faith _____ is false.

The Scripture _____ many things are involved in our salvation. Titus 3:5 says we are saved “by the _____ of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.” That’s a reference to _____. Romans 1:16 says the gospel is “the _____ of God unto salvation.” Acts 2:38 says “_____ and be _____ in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.” First Peter 3:21 says “baptism now _____ you.” Acts 22:16 says “be baptized, and _____ your sins, calling on His name.” Hebrews 5:9 says Jesus is “the source of eternal salvation to all who _____ him.” Romans 6:3-7 says that when we’re baptized into Christ we are baptized into His death, buried with Him, and raised with Him to walk in _____ of life. That’s when we’re _____ again. In baptism we’re crucified with Christ so that our body of _____ might be done away with. It’s clear from these verses and many other Scriptures that faith is not the _____ necessary factor in being saved by the Lord Jesus. Do not be deceived!

Some think that because God is _____, He will allow us to believe whatever we wish whether it follows His teaching in Scripture or not. Love in their minds means unconditional _____ of whatever we want. They imagine Christ will allow His ways to change with the _____. They assume that we may change Christ’s commands on morals, on salvation, on the church, on heaven and hell, or on the Judgment, and if it doesn’t fit with our _____ beliefs then we can just change them. God’s love is _____ and _____. We ought to _____ and _____ that love in every way possible.

One thing is certain: we must _____ take Christ’s amazing love for granted or presume on the grace of God. The Lord loves us enough to _____ us what’s true and right and good. When we reject what He says or when we suppose that we can improve on what God teaches, we aren’t _____ His love. We’re belittling it! Do not be deceived!

Read Isaiah 55:6-9. Seek the Lord while He may be _____. The first beatitude in Matthew 5:3 says, “Blessed are the _____ in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Being “poor in spirit” is to be utterly _____. When a person seeks his own ways or thinks God’s way isn’t as good as his own he cannot expect God to _____ him.

Humility means being obedient to the _____. Believe with all your heart Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Repent of your sins and turn to what is _____. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be _____ in water for the forgiveness of your sins. When the Jews at Pentecost wanted to get right with God, Peter said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). That’s what we urge you to do 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!