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*Program
Study Guides*

**For
January 2015**

How God Sees Sin Psalm 32:1-5

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

For many the subject of sin is dead, but God doesn't see sin the _____ we do. Today we're going to think about _____ God sees sin. The topic for our study today is _____. Everyone who reaches the age of accountability eventually sins. Romans 3:23 simply says, "for _____ have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." First John 1:8 says, "If we say we have no sin, we _____ ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Verse ten says, "If we say that we haven't sinned, we make him (that is, Jesus) a liar, and His _____ is not in us." Every one of us must _____ the reality of our sins. If we ignore our sins, we'll only cause ourselves great _____ in this life and in the life to come.

Not everyone takes sin against God _____. Thirteen percent of Americans say there is _____ such thing as sin. Nearly forty percent of Americans think sin is an obsolete word. Many today simply don't know sinful behavior is _____ and could cause them to be lost eternally. The _____ of sin is still spiritual death. Though society thinks differently, _____ hasn't changed His mind.

Our reading today is a Psalm of David, Psalm 32:1-5. People have always thought the concept of sin should be _____. People today don't _____ about sin because they don't like making judgments. Some think the words "sin" and "sinner" are outdated and uncouth; but the _____ uses the word "sin" and its synonyms – "iniquity," "transgression," "wickedness," or "error" – hundreds of times. While we don't like to talk about it, sin still exists. So we ask, "how does God see sin?" God _____ us; He's our heavenly Father. We need to _____ what He thinks. The Lord often sees things _____ than we do. He will not excuse or dismiss the _____ of our lives so quickly. If God sent Jesus to die for "sin," He must take it very _____. Let's not be too quick to _____ the concept of sin because God hasn't.

You can only find someone saying, "I have sinned," a _____ times in the Bible; yet Romans 3:23 says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." People don't _____ being called or being considered "sinners." They _____ their sin a mistake, an error in judgment, a disappointment, an inappropriate act, a problem, a disease, or an addiction. They think of it as anything _____ sin. We would rather _____ sin or act like it never happened.

Others take a different approach. They _____ society, parents, or circumstances for their sins so they don't have to be responsible. Adam, after he ate of the fruit of the tree of the

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knowledge of good and evil, blamed _____. Adam said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12). Verse 13 says: "Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The _____ deceived me, and I ate.'" Both Adam and Eve _____ to someone else, but God didn't accept their excuses. That very day they were _____ out of the garden. Blaming others for our sins doesn't _____.

In 1 Samuel 15, Samuel told Saul to go strike the Amalekites, _____ every person and all they possess. Saul, however, saved King Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen for the people to _____. Saul knew that he had not kept the _____ of God, but he was weak to the pressure of the people. Samuel asked Saul, "Why then did you not _____ the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did _____ the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the _____ took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." Saul gave in to the pressure and he _____ the people.

What Samuel said to Saul ought to instruct us about _____ God sees things. Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the _____ of the LORD? Behold, to obey is _____ than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the _____ of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king" (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

God has never accepted the _____ of blaming other people. Romans 14:12 says, "So each one of us will give an account of himself to _____." Regardless of what others do, say, or think, we are responsible for ourselves. We must _____ responsibility for our words, attitudes, and behavior. We cannot _____ God and blame others.

When blaming doesn't _____, people tend to rationalize away their sin. We often hear phrases like, "Just once won't hurt"; or "Everyone's doing it"; or "I can quit when I want to"; or "Times have changed! People don't think that way now!" I have a book in my library subtitled, "37 Ways Not to Handle Guilt." It tells of all the ways people try to _____ their sins. The book says clearly not one of these 37 ways _____. Some try to _____ the morals and teaching of the Bible; they make rules for themselves and imagine God will _____.

Some think God is _____ to a vote or to opinion polls. God's will doesn't _____ with the times. Some react to the firmness of God by getting _____. It is easy to get angry at God; it is easier to do that than it is to _____. People get angry and charge God with being unfair or unloving to call their behaviors sin, but God is no _____. God knows how sin

_____. He opposes sin because it _____ lives and families. When God makes a law, it is always for the _____ of His people. When people violate that law they end up _____ themselves or others. It is arrogant to think that we know _____ about right and wrong than God does. God has witnessed the cruelties and heartaches of _____ for thousands of years.

People _____ to themselves about their sin! They don't realize _____ sin can deceive, enslave, and harden them. **Read Hebrews 3:12-13.**

Some criticize and condemn other people's sins but they _____ their own. They forget God _____ their sins too. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping _____ on the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

Other people deceive themselves by thinking they won't be _____ to sin. Many years ago a man who had quit drinking told my father he could walk into a bar and _____ take a drink. It didn't matter that others were drinking or that he would smell the liquor; he was sure that he could _____ sober. My dad told him, "You can't walk through the _____ and not get muddy." The Bible says, "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Associating with _____ will corrupt you even if you have the _____ of intentions.

Sin always _____. It damages us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. **Read Galatians 5:19-21.** Sometimes the _____ is physical as with assault, or rape, or murder. Drunkenness and drug abuse have killed and ruined more than a few _____. Many diseases come from _____ immorality. One who commits violent crimes _____ himself up to violence or imprisonment. Sometimes the pain is _____. Broken homes hurt everyone. The compulsive gambler may bankrupt his _____. The liar will find that no one _____ him or her. People will _____ the gossiper and the complainer; they don't want to be around him; they don't want to hear it. One cannot _____ the pain, the guilt, and the regret of sinful behavior.

God simply doesn't look on sin the _____ that we do. What seems insignificant to us isn't insignificant to God. Perhaps you remember Uzzah who tried to steady the Ark of the Covenant when it was in the oxcart, and the Ark nearly upset. God struck him dead. People wonder why? Didn't Uzzah have good intentions? The priests were to carry the Ark in a prescribed manner, not on the oxcart. Uzzah was never to touch it. This may seem insignificant to us, but it was irreverent and very offensive to God according to 2 Samuel 6:7.

Why is God offended? If we're the _____ of a crime, we see that crime differently than the one who committed the crime. How would you _____ if someone robbed you at gunpoint? He's pointing the _____ at you. He's stealing your _____ and threatening your _____. That _____ this matter incredibly dangerous and offensive!

We have to understand every sin that we commit is _____ a crime against God. If you sin against your _____, you also sin against _____. **Read 1 John 4:20-21.** How we treat _____ is how we treat God. This is _____ all sin is offensive to and a crime against God.

Read what God said in Exodus 20:3-6. Some think God has no feelings, but God _____ when we sin. It breaks His heart. God _____ us, and He won't give us up to an idol or to serve Satan. God is jealous in the sense that is positive, in the sense of being unwilling to _____ what is rightfully His. Sin _____ us from God. We shouldn't be surprised that God despises sin, because sin _____ Him of the people that He loves. God often calls sin an abomination. **Read Proverbs 6:16-19.** Yes, God hates sin!

Sin ultimately destroys us. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is _____, but the free _____ of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Death is a separation. In physical death our _____ are separated from our _____. Spiritual death takes place when we are separated from the _____ and the _____ of God. **Read Isaiah 59:1-2.** Our sin will separate God from us, is a barrier that blocks our prayers, and will cause us to be lost eternally. We may _____ what theologians, church leaders, opinion polls, or our society thinks is right and wrong; but the Lord Jesus has the _____ word and the _____ word that counts in eternity. Will you listen to Him?

We all commit sin that _____ God; but because God is rich in love, mercy and grace, He makes His forgiveness available to us. He _____ us by sacrificing His son Jesus for our sins. God knew how sin would _____ our lives here on earth and would keep us out of heaven, so Jesus bore the punishment for our sins so that we could _____ to sin and _____ for righteousness. God doesn't want us to continue in sin, but to _____ from wickedness and _____ Godly lives. Punishing people for their sins _____ the Lord (Ezekiel 33:11).

God has always _____ people to repentance. The opportunity to repent is a great _____ that blesses everyone. Repentance means that we can _____ our lives, that we don't have to be trapped in sin but can become people who live for righteousness. Don't ever let anybody tell you that you _____ change; of course, you can! God can and will _____ you change. God didn't create you for sin; He created you for righteousness. First Timothy 2:4 says God wants you "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Will you come to the Lord?

To become a Christian, _____ in the Lord Jesus, _____ of every sin and turn to the Lord, _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be _____ in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water. Philip baptized the Eunuch in water (Acts 8:38); and Saul of Tarsus was told in Acts 22:16 to be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Won't you respond today to be saved from sin?

God Understands

Psalm 139:1-6

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

Do you ever feel _____ and as if no one in the whole world understands how you feel? Today we're going to _____ the One who understands and loves us. Of all our blessings nothing is more _____ than having a close, loving, personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing that He loves us makes us _____ to love Him all the more. Knowing that His teaching and His commandments are for our _____ makes us want to keep His commandments. The Bible provides the wisdom to give us the _____ kind of life on earth and to give us the _____ of heaven. Don't let a day go by without _____ the Bible.

Perhaps you _____ the famous atheist, Madeline Murray O'Hare. When her diaries were _____, it was found emphasized three times the words: "Will somebody, somewhere, please _____ me?" Many _____ this kind of loneliness and longing to be understood and loved. Without God in our lives we often _____ alienated and alone. With God we can _____ that we're loved, wanted, and never alone. The last words of the Lord Jesus were, "and lo, I am with you _____, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). God promises us, "I will _____ leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

With God we have a _____ in life, a peace that passes understanding, a joy inexpressible, and a living hope. With God we have found a love that never _____ and never _____. Because Jesus came to this earth, He understands us with _____ our weaknesses and imperfections. Jesus came to save us from the things that will _____ us. We _____ Him in our lives. Do you have the Lord Jesus in your life?

Our reading today is a Psalm of David, Psalm 139:1-6. That's a tremendous relationship between David and the Father. I hope you have one like that.

Read the story of the farmer, the boy, and the puppy in the transcript.

Perhaps at times you wished someone, just anyone would understand and _____ you with all your faults and troubles. There's someone who does! He understands you and will _____ love you. You may be _____ inside or outside, but He understands. You may be _____, but He understands. You may have it _____ and feel like giving up, but He understands. You may have been _____ and have reason to be _____. He understands. He knows _____ about you. He knows what you've been through. He knows how you

_____. He knows what you've _____. He knows all your _____ and all your _____. He understands and loves you in _____ of it all. Who? Jesus, of course!

Read what the Bible says in Hebrews 4:14-16. Jesus experienced, in his short life, all the struggles and temptations that we _____. He knows what it is to be _____, and he also knows what it is to be Divine. He knows what it is to _____ and to be _____, and He knows what it is to do what is right even when things are utterly _____.

The Bible says that Jesus, “knew all people and He needed no one to bear witness about man, for He Himself knew what was in man” (John 2:24-25). As a human, Jesus knew what it was like to be _____ and _____. Matthew 4:2 says, “And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was _____.” While hanging on the cross, Jesus said, “I _____.” We also know that Jesus grew _____ at times (John 4:5-6). Jesus never had a _____, never had any _____. His father likely died before his ministry began, leaving him with a mother and several siblings to _____. He had a _____ life as an itinerant preacher. He was _____ to some and _____ by others. He never owned a _____; He walked everywhere he went; and He knew what it was like to be _____.

Can you imagine, from the time of your _____ people thinking you were illegitimate? Can you imagine the soldiers of King Herod the Great hunting for you to _____ your life? The Bible says, “Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and _____ all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men” (Matthew 2:16).

Can you imagine your family thinking that you were _____? The Bible says, “And when his _____ heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, ‘He is out of his _____’” (Mark 3:21). Can you imagine your own family and friends refusing to _____ you? John 1:11 says, “He came to his own, and his own people did not _____ him.” The people of his hometown, Nazareth, _____ him and even tried to _____ him. **Read Mark 6:2-6.**

Can you imagine your disciple and friend _____ you out? The Bible says, “Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What will you give me if I _____ him over to you?’ And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to _____ him” (Matthew 26:14-16). Can you imagine being betrayed with a _____?

Can you imagine your close friend and disciple _____ about knowing you? The Bible describes the boast of Peter: “and Peter answered him, ‘Though they all fall away because of

you, I will never fall away.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.’ Peter said to him, ‘Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!’ And all the disciples said the same” (Matthew 26:33-35). But when the _____ came upon them, they did fall away. Peter denied him not once, not twice, but three times; and the last time in the very _____ of Jesus.

Can you imagine being _____ by your father to be crucified? The Father sent His Son into this world to _____ Himself as an act of love and to _____ us from our sins. It was most difficult for Jesus to face the _____. In Matthew 26:38 Jesus said, “My soul is very _____, even to the point of death.” The Bible describes His prayer in the garden this way: “And being in _____ he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:42).

Can you imagine _____ on the cross, bruised and bleeding, while the people around you are _____ you? Matthew 27:41-43 says: “So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, _____ him, saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will _____ in him. He trusts in God; let God _____ him now, if he desires him. For he said’, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Can you imagine remaining _____ during all their ugly mockery? Can you imagine being in excruciating pain at the hands of very wicked men and _____ striking back? First Peter 2:23 says, “When he was reviled, he did not revile in _____; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to Him who judges justly.”

Jesus _____ the good and the bad, the easy and the hard, the fair and the unfair. He knows _____ and He knows _____. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus said to each of the seven churches of Asia, “I _____ your _____.” He knew the positive and the negative. He praised them for the _____ and rebuked them for the _____. He _____ them for their toil, their perseverance, their sound doctrine, their faithfulness in tribulation, their willingness to suffer poverty and even blasphemy for the name of Christ, and for how they lived, and how they showed their love, their faith, and their service to the Lord. But He also _____ them when they left their first love, when they compromised, when they claimed to be alive but had died, and when they were distastefully lukewarm. Jesus knows about your _____ life, whether you are growing or dying or lukewarm.

Jesus knows when you’re _____ and when life has caved in on you. I love God’s faithful promise: “No _____ has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is _____, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your _____, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of _____, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). God understands your _____ and he will not let temptation and trials

so overwhelm you that you cannot endure them. When you cannot stand the temptation, the Lord will make a way of escape so that you don't fall into _____. He'll bless you and help you. He promises, "I will never _____ you nor _____ you" (Hebrews 13:5). The God who understands also stands by us to _____ us through all our struggles.

He knows your _____ and your _____. He also knows your _____. If you love Jesus, He knows it. If you have _____ Him, He also knows it. If you've let _____ come into your life and overcome you, He knows it. In spite of all He loves us _____. He loves us _____ in our sins and weaknesses. He still wants us to _____ close to Him. To the lukewarm church at Laodicea, the Lord and Savior Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the _____ and knock. And if anyone _____ my voice and _____ the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Jesus _____ a relationship with you. He wants to be your _____. He took the _____ in building that relationship by offering to you and me his love and grace. No _____ who you are or what you have done in the past, the Lord's heart is big enough and open enough to _____ you and welcome you into his family, if you are willing to come to him. Won't you come to Jesus today?

Some think, "God couldn't possibly want me to _____ Him." The Lord God _____ you and _____ you. God wants "all men to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4); and He wants to save you. God sent Jesus into the world to _____ us from our sins. Yes, sin will cause us to be _____; but God gives us an _____ to our problem with sin in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Saul of Tarsus was the _____ of sinners, but Christ could still save him. The apostle Paul, that is Saul of Tarsus, said, "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to _____ sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received _____ for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect _____ as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life" (1 Timothy 1:15-16). I tell you, if God could forgive Saul of Tarsus, He can forgive you, too!

Won't you come to him? Why not let God into your life? Demonstrate your faith and love by _____ of your sins, _____ Him to be the Christ, the Son of God, and by being _____ in water for the forgiveness of your sins. The Lord wants you to be _____ of water and the Spirit (John 3:5); and this means being baptized. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through _____. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have _____ Christ." Why not become a child of God today? Don't let another day go by without God in your life. No one understands you and loves you more. You'll never make a better decision than to follow Jesus Christ.

Did God Make Me Sinful?

Ezekiel 18:1-4

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

Some think that God made us the way we are and we can't _____. Did God make us _____? Can we change? The Bible answers these questions and gives us _____. Occasionally people who are struggling with a _____ problem ask, "Did God make me this way?" Many people are convinced that our DNA makes us the way we are and we can't change our _____. Others believe that man is incapable of change on his _____. Flip Wilson used to say, "The Devil made me do it"; but some people, instead of blaming the devil, blame _____ for making them do the things they do. They believe we're all _____ sinners, totally depraved, and completely unable to _____ what is good. They say our sinful _____ is utterly incapable of choosing or even desiring God. They go even farther by saying some people are predestined to be _____, while others are predestined to be _____. They believe God arbitrarily makes the choice for us, and we have no _____. They say we can't change our ways or our eternal _____.

Without a doubt all people _____ with temptation and sin throughout their lives. What tempts you may differ from what tempts me, but we both face the struggle to live righteously. The apostle Peter urged Christians to "abstain from the passions of the _____, which wage _____ against your soul" (1 Peter 2:11). Did God _____ us sinful and unable to resist temptation? Are we _____ in sin with no hope of salvation? What can we do? We'll look into the Scriptures because they contain the _____ of eternal life. They have the _____ to our problems.

Our reading today comes from the inspired prophet Ezekiel 18:1-4.

The Scriptures teach that man is _____ of choosing between good and evil, and he is _____ to choose between God and Satan. Romans 6:17-18 says, "Though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." This passage clearly teaches that lost people _____ from the heart the gospel teaching and _____ from being a slave to sin to being a slave of righteousness.

After preaching to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost about their sin of crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ and their need to _____ and be _____ for the forgiveness of their sins, the apostle Peter, speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit, said, "Save yourselves from this perverse generation" (Acts 2:40). What does that mean, "Save yourselves"? Are we suggesting that a person can _____ his way to heaven? No! We're not saying that. We're saying a person must _____ to God's gracious gift. God does the saving, but He puts qualifications on _____ can be saved. We must

respond to His _____. One must repent and be baptized out of faith and love to meet God's _____.

Read what the Bible says in 1 Peter 1:22-23. People purify their souls when they _____ and _____ the gospel truth. They're born again, not through some miraculous movement of God but by _____ to the preaching of the Word of God. It's the _____ that saves (Romans 1:16). Paul said, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the _____ preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). This was God's choice of _____ to save people, giving them a gospel and saving them through that message.

That man has freewill either to _____ the gospel or to _____ it is also clear in the Scriptures. Have you thought about that golden passage that you _____ as a child? The Lord Jesus said, "For God so _____ the world, that He _____ His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "Whoever" means "anyone." God will save people who believe, but those who refuse to believe shall _____. Our choices matter; we can freely choose. "Whoever believes in the Son has _____ life, but whoever does not obey the Son will not see life, for God's _____ remains on him" (John 3:36). Faith and obedience matter to our _____. God expects us to _____ to believe and obey in order to have eternal life.

Throughout history, people have chosen whether they will _____ God or not. **Read Joshua 24:14-15.** Joshua knew that people had to choose which god they would serve, whether the God of Heaven or some other god. They had _____. Many years later the prophet Elijah _____ 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah on Mount Carmel. The God of Heaven completely overcame the prophets of Baal when the fire came down and consumed Elijah's _____. Before the challenge, Elijah asked the people, "How long will you _____ between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). Of course, Baal was just an _____ and was never anything but a figment of the people's imagination. The God of Heaven was _____ and sent fire down from heaven, which convinced the people to kill the prophets of Baal. When the people _____ the evidence, they chose God and rejected Baal.

They had _____. So do you! Revelation 22:17 says, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." God _____ us to believe and to obey!

Let's reason together. Jesus said, "unless you _____, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:5). Why would Jesus Christ condemn people for a _____ to repent if they're incapable of repenting or doing any good toward their own salvation? Wouldn't that make God into a _____?

Hebrews 11:6 says, "without faith it's impossible to _____ Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he _____ and that he _____ those who seek him." Why would God _____ faith from us if He knows that people are incapable of believing? God won't _____ of us something that we're not capable of doing.

The apostle Paul encouraged people to “be _____ to God” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Why would God _____ men to be reconciled if they weren’t capable of _____ anything by which they could be reconciled? Let’s think together. The word “reconcile” implies that there is a separation and a reunion; reconciliation means “to bring back into _____.” A reconciled husband and wife were once in harmony, then they separated, and then later that harmony was restored. If an infant is _____ in sin, he cannot be reconciled because he was _____ in harmony with the Lord at the beginning. Infants aren’t born in sin but born pure; they _____ from God when they’re old enough and responsible enough to sin on their own. They are reconciled to God by _____ and _____ to the gospel. In obedience to the gospel one is _____ from sin and _____ again into the family of God.

The Bible teaches that God is no _____ of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11-12; and 1 Peter 1:17). God hasn’t arbitrarily _____ some folks to be saved and others to be lost, as some people teach. Rather the blood of Jesus was shed for _____ people and the gospel is offered to _____. The apostle Paul said that God “desires all people to be _____ and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). God didn’t make people just to _____ them. That is a _____ and _____ doctrine. The apostle Peter said, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is _____ toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3: 9). That is what God wants, for you to repent and to be right with Him and live with Him forever.

If we have no choice as to our eternal destiny, why would we need to beware of the _____? The apostle Peter warned, “Be of sober spirit, be on the _____, because your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring _____, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Such language is _____ if we have no freewill. Temptation _____ whether we will choose to do right or give in to what’s wrong. That’s freewill. We are not puppets or robots; we’re made in God’s _____ and God made us a free moral agent.

The Bible says, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God _____ be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But _____ is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own _____. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth _____” (James 1:13-15). God is not the _____ of our sinful behavior. He tests our faith, but doesn’t _____ us into moral failure and sin. How could a holy God lead anyone into behavior that totally contradicts His own _____?

We do admit that man is often _____ to sin, but being weak to sin isn’t the same thing as being incapable of resisting sin. Many Bible characters resisted the _____ to sin. Joseph said “no” to the continual _____ of Potiphar’s wife. Joshua said “no” to serving _____ gods. Daniel as a young man said “no” to _____ the unlawful foods at the Babylonian king’s table. As an old man, Daniel said “no” to the law that forbade him to _____ to the God of heaven. When the Sanhedrin told Peter and John not to preach the name of Jesus, they chose the moral high ground rather than give into the Council (Acts 4:19-20).

The Lord Jesus describes the _____ of man in Matthew 26:41. Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane with Peter, James, and John. He was praying in agony, and they kept falling _____. Jesus said, “Watch and pray that you may not _____ into temptation. The spirit indeed is _____, but the flesh is _____.” This shows that man does have some _____ inclinations within. He is not all _____. We all _____ weakness to sin. This is why we must be _____ and _____, so that we can overcome the temptation. Jesus didn’t accept the notion that men must give in to the _____. We can resist temptation, and we can repent of our past sins.

Some people think there’s something in their physical makeup that makes their character inherently _____. Some speak of people being born alcoholics or born drug addicts. Others think that our sexual orientation is determined and cannot be _____. But millions of alcoholics have given up _____ altogether. Millions have _____ of sexual misdeeds in order to live a godly life. Sin is a _____ behavior, not a foregone conclusion. The hope of the gospel is that men _____ and will repent. Jesus died on the cross to give us that opportunity. The Bible always assumes that people can change their lives.

So don’t let anyone deceive you. Refuse to _____ any doctrine that says that you have no hope of changing your ways or of overcoming sin. God can and will _____ you overcome the sins of your life. Free will is yours, and you must make your choice _____. You have to decide what you love most. You have to give your _____ to the Lord. Please choose to follow the Lord whatever the _____. I hope today that you have that desire in your heart. Follow Jesus and do it today

Someone asks, “Well Phil, what about Psalm 51:5?” Psalm 51:5 is a penitential Psalm after David had committed _____ with Bathsheba. In agony and guilt he says, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in _____ did my mother conceive me.” Some say this passage teaches that we’re _____ in sin. David said he was born into an evil and sinful _____ which is different from saying that he was born sinful. Sin is an _____, a transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4). Sin isn’t inherited; it’s a _____ behavior. A person _____ English because he was born where they _____ English. The apostles spoke miraculously in tongues to people from _____ nations. The people said, “How is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were _____?” (Acts 2:7-8). How is one born into a language? One _____ a language by being born in a place that speaks it. One learns _____ by being born into a world that practices it. **Read what David said in Psalm 22:9-10.** This isn’t a baby born in sin but a baby born into a sinful world, yet still able to _____ God.

Sin is serious business. Unforgiven sin will cost you your _____. We need the _____ of Jesus to be saved. How do we come into _____ with that blood? We contact that blood by choosing to _____ in Christ, choosing to _____ of our sins, and by choosing to be _____. When we’re baptized into the _____ of Christ, we come into contact with His shed blood according to Romans 6:3. In baptism God, _____ the blood of Jesus to our souls. That’s the time that our sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). Be saved from this corrupt generation!

Forgiving Yourself Psalm 51:10-17

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

Many Christians feel the _____ of shame and guilt. They _____ over sins long forgiven by God and cannot forgive themselves. In this study we're going to _____ how to forgive ourselves. A troubled person once came to me with a serious _____. His problem wasn't God's ability to forgive the _____ believer, but in his ability to forgive himself. While God is very willing to forgive, some people fail to _____ forgiven. People believe what they _____ themselves, even if what they say is mistaken. A person who has never forgiven himself feels _____ in his heart every day. When David sinned he _____ it, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3). David felt the hand of God upon him because of his _____. He felt that his sins were "a heavy burden" (Psalm 38:3-4). Your sins may be too heavy for you too, but there is a God-given _____ to a guilty conscience! There is an answer.

Our scripture reading today is a Psalm of David, Psalm 51:10-17.

Galatians 6:7-8 reveals an undeniable truth: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man _____, this he will also _____. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." Sin causes the _____ heartaches of mankind. A person can't selfishly live to please his flesh and expect to find the _____ of God. Every sin is a terrible _____ against God, but sin also _____ the one who commits it. Sin is both an offense against God and against one's self. Proverbs 8:36 says, "But he who sins against me _____ himself; all those who hate me love death." When people transgress God's will they _____ with the sting of guilt and the reality that they could do such a thing.

The conscience is a God-given function of the _____. The conscience works as a _____ monitor that praises us or condemns us. The Bible describes this function in Romans 2:14-15. God's Word says, "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them." When a person sins, his conscience _____ his heart, causing him a lot of _____. This pricked conscience causes a person to be grieved at himself, and he can lose all _____ for himself by his sins. The prodigal son no longer felt _____ to be called the son of his father. You might think the conscience is a bad thing, but the prodigal son's conscience and the terrible effects of his sin were what brought him to his _____. God didn't give us a conscience to _____ us, but to keep us from doing what is wrong and to encourage us to do what is right. When we _____ to listen to our conscience, we end up hurting ourselves.

Everyone has a conscience, but not every conscience uses the Word of God as a _____ for what is right and wrong. Many people sin against God and don't even know that what they did was _____. They rely on their own experience or their own judgment rather than take the time to _____ the Scriptures and _____ what God says about the matter.

Over time, sin begins to _____ the conscience. The Bible warns, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to _____ from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it's called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:12-13). I worry far more about the person whose conscience is past _____ than the person who feels great _____ for sin. When a person gets past feeling, it's not likely that he will want to _____. If a person sees no need to repent or won't repent, he won't get right with God.

Of all of God's blessings, nothing is more _____ than forgiveness. Forgiveness isn't the _____ as forgetting. Forgiveness is "forgetting against." When God forgives, He no longer _____ our sins or our transgressions against us (2 Corinthians 5:19). Yes, those sins happened; but they don't _____. God promised, "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will _____ their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12).

David, by inspiration, wrote, "He does not _____ with us according to our sins, nor _____ us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:10-12). When God forgives, He no longer thinks of us in terms of our _____ iniquities. He removed them from His _____, but He keeps us close to His heart. Forgiveness _____ the shame and guilt by blotting out the offenses once and for all by the _____ of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:24). Forgiveness puts to death the _____ man of sin (Romans 6:4-7) and it makes all things _____ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Let's _____ from God about _____ to forgive. Forgiving yourself means that you will no longer hold your past sins against yourself, so you can find _____. If God can forgive you, and has forgiven you, then can't you forgive yourself.

Repentance always comes _____ forgiveness. You can't find healing from God until you _____ your broken ways. If you haven't made a _____ in your heart and life, you'll find it hard to forgive yourself. You must repent. Many people seek forgiveness, but they don't change. You'll not find peace if you're _____ to repent. If you commit the same old sins over and over, you'll keep on enduring the same old _____ and shame over and over. The Bible says, "Put to _____ therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the _____ of God is coming. And in these you too once _____, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you've put off the _____ self with its practices and have put on the _____ self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Colossians 3:5-10).

There are four things that you can do to forgive yourself. First, be sure you've genuinely _____. Repentance is not only a turning _____ from sin; it's also a turning to and _____ God. The Thessalonians turned from _____ to serve the living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). You'll have a hard time forgiving yourself if you fail to _____ your life up with God. The Lord Jesus taught, "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. And then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house _____, swept, and put in order. And then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and they _____ there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation" (Matthew 12:43-45). If we fail to fill our lives with _____, we'll fall victim once again to sinful ways.

Second, if you wish to forgive yourself, focus your attention on what you have _____, not on what you were! The apostle Paul was _____ of a number of terrible sins before he became a Christian. He was guilty of violence, murder, slander, and blasphemy. He persecuted the church beyond measure and cast people into prison for their faith. In 1 Timothy 1:12-16 Paul said, "I thank him who has given me _____, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy, Paul says, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the _____ and _____ that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to _____ sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life."

Paul couldn't change his past, but that was not his _____. Paul said he was "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the _____ for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). He focused on what God was _____ in his life. Knowing God's forgiveness, he could put his _____ behind and focus on the will of God. He could say, "For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:9-10).

My favorite saying is this: "I'm not all I'm _____ to be; I'm not all I _____ to be; but, thank God by His mercy and grace, I'm not what I _____ to be." God is more interested in what you are _____ in Christ than in what you used to be. You can't change the past, and it's not necessary for you to do so to forgive yourself. What you can do is change yourself and your _____ toward the past by becoming the person God wishes you to be.

Third, trust _____ rather than your feelings. Feelings accurately reflect how we perceive things to be, but not always do they reflect _____. The brothers of Joseph _____ him to some slave traders, and Joseph went to Egypt. The brothers, however, _____ a wild animal killed Joseph and they dipped his coat of many colors in blood. The brothers _____ to their father, Jacob. Jacob

refused to be comforted (Genesis 37:35). Jacob thought Joseph was _____, but Joseph hadn't died; he was very much alive. Jacob believed the brothers' report but he didn't know the _____.

People often feel unforgiven, even when God _____ to forgive, and that's in black and white in the Bible. So _____ God, not your feelings. Trust the Bible to tell you the _____. God never _____. God can and will do what He has _____. The Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the _____ of sin." But he also said, "So if the Son makes you _____, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Fourth, draw _____ to God. If you wish to be at peace with God, don't _____ with the sins of the world. The Bible says, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he'll flee from you. Draw _____ to God and He'll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded" (James 4:7-8). When God _____ in your heart and your life, when you choose to draw _____ to God and you say no to the devil, you'll find your life growing better and better.

The Bible says, "Therefore whoever wishes to be a _____ of the world makes himself an _____ of God" (James 4:4). It's the double-minded fellow who wants to be a friend to God on one side and a friend of the world on the other, but who _____ finds peace or assurance. If you want a _____ conscience, "submit to God." When you draw close to God and you start resisting the devil, you'll find the _____ to live a righteous and holy life. You'll find the things that tempted you aren't as _____ as they used to be. You can forgive yourself, and God can _____ you.

People think they can get away with their sins, but there always are two who know we have sinned no matter how _____. God knows and we know. David thought he had hidden his sin with Bathsheba, but it wasn't hidden from his own _____. David said, "When I kept _____ about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night, Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I didn't hide; I said, 'I will _____ my transgressions to the LORD'; and You _____ the guilt of my sin" (Psalm 32:3-5).

God does indeed forgive us so that we might be _____ to forgive ourselves. Forgiveness takes place in the heart of God, and it is an act of mercy and grace—it's a _____; you can't earn it. Mercy takes place when God does something for us that we're not _____ of doing for ourselves. So your salvation, your forgiveness, is the gift of God.

But you have to _____ that gift from Him. That means being honest with yourself and honest with God in _____ the sin. To become a Christian, we must trust God and _____ in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must turn from sin and turn to God; that's _____. We must be willing to _____ Jesus as Christ and Lord before others; and we must be _____ in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins. Christian baptism is an immersion in water of a penitent believer. And if you need to do these things, why not contact a nearby church of Christ and get your heart right with God.