



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

*Program  
Study Guides*

**For  
February 2019**

## Responding to Jesus 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

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

Jesus Christ sacrificed His life for our \_\_\_\_\_. Have you considered how we should \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ for all that He's done? The Scriptures are God's great \_\_\_\_\_ to our learning. Through God's Word, we come to believe; we have hope; we learn what love is; and we \_\_\_\_\_ as people. Although the Bible is simple enough for children to learn some truths, one can \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible for a lifetime and will continue to find treasures of wisdom. Romans 11:33 exclaims, "Oh, the depth of the \_\_\_\_\_ both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"

I became a Christian because I \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus. His love, His power, His teaching, His wisdom, His honesty, and His compassion \_\_\_\_\_ my heart. I became a Christian because of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God found in the sacrifice of Christ. The cross \_\_\_\_\_ us to Christ. John 15:13 says, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his \_\_\_\_\_." No one ever loved me so that He gave Himself for my sins, but Jesus. I wanted to be \_\_\_\_\_ Christ. I wanted to go to \_\_\_\_\_ and live with God forever.

When I became a Christian, I knew God would \_\_\_\_\_ me to be like Christ. Christianity isn't a religion of grace that expects \_\_\_\_\_ of us. Christ bore a cross to not only save us and deliver us from the evil in this world, but also to give us a cross to \_\_\_\_\_. That cross means that we \_\_\_\_\_ to ourselves so that we can \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ. That cross means that we cease from \_\_\_\_\_ and start doing what is right and good. That cross means "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14).

### **Our reading today comes from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians 5:6-10.**

Some believe in what you might call "designer Christianity." They think they can make up their \_\_\_\_\_ blend of religion, and God is content with that. Some think God ought to be happy with anything they \_\_\_\_\_ to Him in the way of service or worship. It's almost as if God was in our \_\_\_\_\_ and was happy with any scraps we serve Him. Many people seem to \_\_\_\_\_ that God created us and sustains us; we didn't create Him. They forget that we're dependent upon God, but He isn't dependent upon us.

Some forget that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins to rescue us from its consequences. He saved us when we didn't \_\_\_\_\_ it. Christianity isn't something that we make up as we go; it's something that has been \_\_\_\_\_ to us. It's a revealed faith from God that we should \_\_\_\_\_. People forget that we're accountable to God, that we \_\_\_\_\_ our soul's salvation to God. Our soul is \_\_\_\_\_ more than the whole world. Let's get serious about our faith.

Considering the death of Jesus on the cross for us, how should I \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus? First,

I respond to Jesus with my \_\_\_\_\_. After Peter denied Jesus three times on that night He was betrayed, Jesus confronted Peter. **Read their conversation in John 21:15-17.** Loving is so important, but we have to \_\_\_\_\_ how to love.

The Bible teaches us \_\_\_\_\_ we're supposed to show love for Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments" (John 14:15). Later, in verses 23 to 24 Jesus said to Judas (that is, not Iscariot), "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words." We can't \_\_\_\_\_ to love the Lord and not even know what His commandments are, not know Him at all. We can't claim to love the Lord and then \_\_\_\_\_ against the things that Jesus teaches. We can't claim to love the Lord and make \_\_\_\_\_ of the will of God or act like the Lord doesn't know what He's talking about. How we love the Lord is by listening to His Word and \_\_\_\_\_ it.

If we love the Lord, we'll draw close to Him and \_\_\_\_\_ Him. We can't claim to love the Lord if we never take the \_\_\_\_\_ to worship Him. God said, "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25). How will you convince the Lord of your love for Him if you willfully abandon the \_\_\_\_\_? You might be \_\_\_\_\_ with yourself, but is God? You cannot love God on your \_\_\_\_\_ terms and never consider what God wants or desires.

Christ wants to know that we love Him, and one of the ways that we show that love is by our \_\_\_\_\_. Our worship must be \_\_\_\_\_ and come from our hearts. God knows our \_\_\_\_\_. Some people go to religious \_\_\_\_\_ and think they have worshiped because they heard someone else sing. No matter how uplifting that is to you, God is seeking something \_\_\_\_\_ from you. He wants your heart, your lips, and your life, not as a spectator but as a participant. The Lord Jesus said, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24). Loving worship comes from my \_\_\_\_\_, genuinely from my heart, and given to the God of heaven.

There's one more thing. If I love Jesus, I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ about Jesus. I can't imagine living my life without talking about the person who \_\_\_\_\_ me from my sins, and has given me help every day, and a home in heaven. The apostle Paul said, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:14-16). As Christians, we have an obligation to \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel to the whole world, to tell everyone of the love and grace of God and how it is available freely to them. That's why we have this television program, to tell people about Jesus and His love.

Second, I respond to Jesus with my \_\_\_\_\_. Since I belong to Him, I ought to \_\_\_\_\_

His name and never be ashamed that He is my Lord. The Bible tells us, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17). As members of the church, we’re the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ, and we ought to wear His name. I don’t understand people who \_\_\_\_\_ the name of Christ from the church. I’m blessed to wear the name of “Christian” and to be a member of the church that \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ. Jesus built the church, purchased it with his own blood, serves as the head of the church, and is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church. Why wouldn’t the church want to wear his name? Why wouldn’t a Christian want to be known as a Christian in every respect, in every aspect of his life?

The Lord Jesus said, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26). Some folks are ashamed to \_\_\_\_\_ that they’re Christians or that they go to church. They would rather stay \_\_\_\_\_ than to be ridiculed for their faith. What kind of loyalty is that? The apostle Paul, who \_\_\_\_\_ for his faith, said, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by \_\_\_\_\_ in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20). That is loyalty to Jesus Christ! We need that kind of loyalty! Jesus needs to \_\_\_\_\_ in our hearts and our lives. Yes, we need loyalty like that!

People can’t live like the \_\_\_\_\_ lives and claim that they’re loyal to Jesus. Our lives must \_\_\_\_\_ our faith. The Bible says, “Therefore be careful how you walk (that is, live), not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your \_\_\_\_\_, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15-17). Unfortunately, some Christians live like they \_\_\_\_\_ heard of Jesus or ever read a Bible. Their mouths are so full of unwholesome words, and their \_\_\_\_\_ show that they don’t know Jesus Christ. First John 2:6 says, “the one who says he abides in Him (that is, in Christ) ought himself to walk in the \_\_\_\_\_ manner as He walked.” If we’re to be loyal to Christ, then let’s live worthy of the name “Christian.”

The Lord Jesus said, “No one can serve two \_\_\_\_\_, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matthew 6:24). Some people live for the almighty \_\_\_\_\_, and nothing else matters. If the dollar is your \_\_\_\_\_, then Jesus won’t be. What’s true of money is true of anything. You cannot \_\_\_\_\_ two masters faithfully. You will make a decision to follow one and reject the other. If you wear the name of Christ, then \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Don’t let anything come \_\_\_\_\_ you and the Lord. The apostle Paul said, “So whether we are at home or away, we make it our \_\_\_\_\_ to please him (that is, the Lord). For we must \_\_\_\_\_ appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). Do you please the Lord Jesus Christ?

Third, we respond to Jesus with our \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus is LORD, and we are His servants.

Hebrews 5:8-9 explains, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He \_\_\_\_\_. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him the source of eternal salvation." Obedience means that I will \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ and \_\_\_\_\_ what He says. I'll obey even when it's difficult and even when others don't obey. Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your \_\_\_\_\_ salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). God gives us the desire and the ability to \_\_\_\_\_.

Fourth, we respond to Jesus by \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus didn't \_\_\_\_\_ His life. He \_\_\_\_\_ it purposefully. First Peter 2:24 says, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might \_\_\_\_\_ to sin and \_\_\_\_\_ to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." Jesus sacrificed His life to open the door for you to \_\_\_\_\_. Second Corinthians 8:9 says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your \_\_\_\_\_ he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."

The Lord Jesus said, "Whoever does not \_\_\_\_\_ his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27). Romans 12:1 urges us, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which *is* your reasonable service." I belong to the Lord Jesus and I \_\_\_\_\_ Him my heart, my worship, my gifts, and my service in His cause. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, "Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Do you love the Lord?

I heard a true story about a man who operated a drawbridge. At a certain time every afternoon, he raised the bridge for a ferryboat to go by, and then lowered it in time for a passenger train to cross over. He performed this task according to the clock. One day, he brought his son to work so he could watch the trains. As his father raised the bridge, the boy got excited and wanted to take a closer look. His father realized his son, to his horror, had come dangerously close to the bridge's gears. Frantic, he wanted to rescue the boy, but if he left the controls, he would not be back in time to lower the bridge for the approaching passenger train. If he lowered the bridge, his son would be killed. If he left it raised, hundreds of people would die. He knew what he had to do. With tears streaming down his face, he watched the passenger train roll by. On board, people chatted and read their newspapers. They were totally unaware of what had just happened. The man cried out, "Don't you realize I just gave my son for you?"

This story is a picture of what also happened at the Cross. God gave up His beloved Son so that we might live. Many people fail to give it a second thought. How about you? Are you conscious of the sacrifice that God made on your behalf? Will you thank Him? Will you commit your life to Him to serve Him? Put your faith in Jesus Christ and confess Him as the Son of God, repent of your sins, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Do it today!

February 10, 2019

## Read the Bible Psalm 119:97-104

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

Have you read your Bible \_\_\_\_\_? Many people think they \_\_\_\_\_ God's ways but haven't read the Bible closely. Today, we're looking at \_\_\_\_\_ to read the Bible. We seek the truth, and we know where to find it. It's where it's always been. God revealed the \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ through the Scriptures. We can know God and know Christ by a close \_\_\_\_\_ of what God reveals about Himself in Scripture. God has \_\_\_\_\_ to us. He's not silent or hidden from us. Because of Scripture, we know how and why we exist; what God wills for our lives; and what the future holds after this life is over. We're blessed!

We read the Scriptures so that we may know God and Jesus Christ. From beginning to end, the Bible opens our \_\_\_\_\_ so that we might know Who created us, how He is holy and true, and how we are accountable to Him. When we do not know God, we suffer enslavement to \_\_\_\_\_ and hopelessness. Paul reminded the Galatians, "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods" (Galatians 4:8).

**Read Psalm 19:7-11.** No other book can \_\_\_\_\_ you more than the Bible, God's Words!

**Our reading today comes from Psalm 119:97-104.** In this psalm, it's what the Word of God can do for you and your life that is emphasized.

From the time when God first proposed to Moses to \_\_\_\_\_ down His Words, God has always emphasized the need to read and to practice what He taught. When people have read, studied, and practiced God's written word, they were at their \_\_\_\_\_ and were considered blessed by God. If you read \_\_\_\_\_ chapters per day, you can read the New Testament in a month. If you read \_\_\_\_\_ chapters of the Old Testament per day, you can read it through in a little over three months.

The Lord Jesus read Scripture and \_\_\_\_\_ in the synagogue. He took for granted the leaders and scribes \_\_\_\_\_ what God had said in the Old Testament. More than once Jesus said to the Jews, "Have you never read in the Scriptures?" or "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" (Luke 10:26). Jesus himself referred to or quoted over \_\_\_\_\_ Scriptures in his messages found in the Gospels. He knew the Scriptures and expected everyone to know them.

God also expects \_\_\_\_\_ to read what stands written in the New Testament. Paul wrote, "I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter \_\_\_\_\_ to all the brothers" (1 Thessalonians 5:27). He urged, "And when this letter has been read among you, have it \_\_\_\_\_ read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16). He instructed the young preacher Timothy, "Until I come, devote yourself to the \_\_\_\_\_ reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13).

Paul recognized that what he wrote had the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord behind it. He said, "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which

May be reproduced in its entirety for purposes of classroom material or personal study.

PO Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 1-800-321-8633

This study sheet is prepared by Jerry Campbell – [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org); [jerry@searchtv.org](mailto:jerry@searchtv.org)

also performs its \_\_\_\_\_ in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). After speaking about the role of women in the church, Paul made it clear that, “If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). If the Word of God \_\_\_\_\_ by the Lord’s authority, we should listen to it, study it, memorize it, love it, and practice it.

There are \_\_\_\_\_ reasons to read Scripture, and here are just a few. First, we read Scripture because we \_\_\_\_\_ to know right from wrong. What we truly \_\_\_\_\_ influences how we live and what our morals are. Sadly, because many don’t know God or His Word, they live \_\_\_\_\_ lives and cause much suffering. There’s a profound difference between right and wrong, good and evil, and light and darkness. To know what is right, read your Bible!

Second, we read Scripture because \_\_\_\_\_ comes from God’s Word. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” John 20:30-31 says, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Third, we read the Bible because the Scriptures give us \_\_\_\_\_. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Where would we be were it not for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God? Where would we be without the \_\_\_\_\_, the message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? If you want hope, read the Bible.

Fourth, we read the Scriptures because the Bible teaches us to \_\_\_\_\_. First John 4:19 says, “We love because he \_\_\_\_\_ loved us.” There is no better \_\_\_\_\_ of love than that of Jesus Christ. John 15:13 says, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his \_\_\_\_\_.” Jesus loved us by laying down His life. He suffered for us when we didn’t know Him or \_\_\_\_\_ to be forgiven. Yet, He loved us with a great love.

Because of Jesus, the Scriptures teach us \_\_\_\_\_ to love others. First Corinthians 13:4-8 says, “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.” That’s how God loves, and how we should love.

Fifth, we read Scripture because the Bible gives \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 119:130 says, “The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” Again, Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a \_\_\_\_\_ to my feet and a \_\_\_\_\_ to my path.” The Bible teaches where we came from, why we’re here, and what will happen after we die. It’s the only book that can teach us that.

Sixth, we read Scripture because the Bible contains the \_\_\_\_\_, the truly good news. First Corinthians 15:1 says, “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I

also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.” No news could be more reassuring than this!

Seventh, we read Scripture because the Bible contains the \_\_\_\_\_. In a world filled with fake news, and lies it’s \_\_\_\_\_ to have the truth. **Read what Luke wrote in Luke 1:1-4.**

We need the truth, because \_\_\_\_\_ ideas exist. **Read what Paul told the elders of the church in Ephesus in Acts 20:29-32.**

Eighth, we read and study Scripture because we want to \_\_\_\_\_ God. Paul urged Timothy, “Do your \_\_\_\_\_ to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul wanted Timothy to be approved of God as a workman who handled God’s Word correctly. When people are ignorant or \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures to suit themselves, they’re not handling the Word of God faithfully or accurately. God will not approve of them. No matter who you are, don’t assume that you aren’t accountable to know God’s Word.

The apostle Paul knew people would \_\_\_\_\_ the truth, so he charged Timothy to stay true to God’s Word. He said, “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the \_\_\_\_\_; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not \_\_\_\_\_ sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their \_\_\_\_\_ passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2 Timothy 4:1-4). We see people \_\_\_\_\_ fulfilling Paul’s prophecy, turning away from the truth and wandering off into myths. The way to truth is to \_\_\_\_\_ to the voice of God found in Scripture, not adding or taking away.

Ninth, we read Scripture because the Word causes us to be \_\_\_\_\_ again and purifies our souls. Peter wrote, “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the \_\_\_\_\_ and abiding word of God; for ‘All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains \_\_\_\_\_.’ And this word is the good news that was \_\_\_\_\_ to you” (1 Peter 1:22-25).

The Scriptures are unalterably \_\_\_\_\_ to our being born again and saved. James 1:18 says, “Of his own \_\_\_\_\_ he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” Verse 21 explains, “Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to \_\_\_\_\_ your souls.”

The angel of the Lord told Cornelius to send for Peter because, “he will declare to you a \_\_\_\_\_ by which you will be saved, you and all your household” (Acts 11:14). Paul said, “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am \_\_\_\_\_ to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel, for it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:14-16). The gospel causes us to be saved and to be born again to live



for the Lord.

Tenth, we know the gospel \_\_\_\_\_ today because we can read it in the New Testament. The gospel is the \_\_\_\_\_ Word of God for salvation because the book of Romans says so. In fact, because the teaching and acts of Jesus and the apostles are recorded, we can know God's redemptive \_\_\_\_\_ about the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. We would not know God's new covenant commandments, His morals, or promises if Jesus had not sent out scribes to \_\_\_\_\_ them.

Eleventh, we read Scripture, because His Words \_\_\_\_\_ in us. "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at \_\_\_\_\_ in you believers" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). God works on us in and through His \_\_\_\_\_.

Twelfth, we read Scripture because the words of God keep us \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 1:1-3 says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his \_\_\_\_\_ is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its \_\_\_\_\_ in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he \_\_\_\_\_." Will you read God's Word?

We should take God's Word to heart because they are the Words of God. They are God's message of love and truth; they will \_\_\_\_\_ us if we listen to them. These Words will stand as long as heaven and earth stands (Matthew 24:35); they're not going away. These Words will also \_\_\_\_\_ us one day. The Lord Jesus said, "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have \_\_\_\_\_ will judge him on the last day" (John 12:48). The saddest thing I can imagine is to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord on Judgment Day unprepared because you had never taken God's Word seriously or learned to love Him.

Hebrews 2:1-3 says, "Therefore we must pay much \_\_\_\_\_ attention to what we have heard, lest we \_\_\_\_\_ away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we \_\_\_\_\_ if we neglect such a great salvation?" We don't want you to neglect your salvation, but to hear and \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God. We say this because we love you.

God's grace will save you when you hear and obey. Hebrews 5:8-9 says, "Although He was a Son, He \_\_\_\_\_ obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him the source of eternal salvation." How do we obey? Believe and \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, \_\_\_\_\_ of your sins, and be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. That's what the Bible teaches. Listen and take it to heart, today.

We hope today's study about reading the Bible has encouraged you to study God's Word. There's no better day than today to get your life back on track by going to church. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. Why not worship with them, today? If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one.

## The Lord's Supper Matthew 26:26-29

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

Each Lord's Day, God's family \_\_\_\_\_ to remember and proclaim the death of our Lord Jesus by partaking of the Lord's Supper. What is the Lord's Supper and \_\_\_\_\_ do we partake of it each week? We believe the way to \_\_\_\_\_ God is to go back to His Word and find out what's written there, and it comes from God. We know the Bible is always \_\_\_\_\_, and it alone reveals what God's will is for our lives.

The night before Jesus' death was filled with great \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples and \_\_\_\_\_ their feet. Before the night was over, Judas left their gathering to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. When Jesus predicted someone would betray Him, all His disciples claimed they would \_\_\_\_\_ deny Him. That night in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus' heart became troubled with great \_\_\_\_\_ even to the point of death. That night Jesus determined that He would do the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Father and endure the pain of the cross as a sin offering for us. Before morning, Judas gave Him the \_\_\_\_\_ of a traitor and Peter denied Him three times. The next day, Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ tried, scourged, and crucified.

Jesus knew all things and that all these things would happen. In the midst of all this turmoil, Jesus instituted a simple memorial feast to draw attention to the \_\_\_\_\_ of His body and blood for the forgiveness of sin. Remembering the death of the Lord Jesus by eating unleavened bread and drinking some fruit of the vine each Lord's Day moves our hearts to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and remain faithful to Him. In churches of Christ, the Lord's Supper is a part of our \_\_\_\_\_ every Sunday, because we want always to remember what He has done.

**Our reading today comes from The Gospel According to Matthew 26:26-29.** This is when Jesus is with His disciples and He institutes the Lord's Supper.

We don't know the day when Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_; we know little about his youth; but we know much about His death on the cross. Through the centuries, people devised some yearly holidays, but there is \_\_\_\_\_ from God in the Bible about celebrating those things. Jesus Himself, however, asks us to remember His \_\_\_\_\_. He asked us to eat unleavened bread and drink fruit of the vine in \_\_\_\_\_ of His body and blood, a simple meal full of meaning. This is how He wanted to be remembered and appreciated.

Christians should live their lives with the \_\_\_\_\_ in their hearts. The apostle Paul said, "For I determined to know \_\_\_\_\_ among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). He admitted, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by \_\_\_\_\_ in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20). Later he said, "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14). We must never forget the blood of Jesus cleanses us from \_\_\_\_\_.

The Lord's Supper is a \_\_\_\_\_ memorial meal focusing on the death of Jesus Christ. The

Lord's Supper isn't, as some say, a \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice of Jesus in the sense of the bread being His actual body or the fruit of the vine His actual blood. This mistaken belief \_\_\_\_\_ to a number of unscriptural practices, including the beginning of a special class of priests. The Bible, in 1 Peter 2, clearly teaches that \_\_\_\_\_ Christians are priests. Making a class of priests \_\_\_\_\_ from the other people is not Biblical.

The Lord's Supper isn't a \_\_\_\_\_ by which we receive the forgiveness of sins. Our communion with Christ in the Supper causes us to remember the cross and the love of God, but it doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness. Remembering the sacrifice of Jesus prompts us to \_\_\_\_\_, but simply eating does not loose us from our sins.

God transforms us from sinners to Christians by His \_\_\_\_\_ when we confess our faith, and God \_\_\_\_\_ us with Christ when we're baptized into Christ according to Romans 6 and Titus 3. The Lord's Supper is a memorial feast for Christians. They observe it after becoming \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ at baptism. The purpose for this meal is to remember the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus on the cross. While His blood was shed for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28), the Bible does not say God's forgiving grace is applied to our \_\_\_\_\_ when we eat the bread or drink the cup.

Christians find their forgiveness in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ when they confess their sins, repent of them, and ask God's forgiveness according to James 5:16 and 1 John 1:9. Christians partaking of the Lord's Supper look \_\_\_\_\_ at the cross of Christ. This remembering of His sacrifice will no doubt \_\_\_\_\_ them and lead them to confess their sins and ask God's forgiveness. The bread and the cup \_\_\_\_\_ us to look at the body and the blood of Jesus. One who loves Christ can hardly think of His painful but loving sacrifice for our sins and not be filled with \_\_\_\_\_ for past sins. This sorrow leads to the desire to \_\_\_\_\_; that's repentance.

The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remember Jesus. Paul explains the significance of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine – **read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.**

The Lord's Supper is also called \_\_\_\_\_ because we commune with Jesus Christ when we partake of the Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16). The Bible explains this communion in Matthew 26:27-29: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's \_\_\_\_\_.'" To commune is to share a deep spiritual relationship with someone. The Lord's Supper is a means by which Christ draws \_\_\_\_\_ to His church or kingdom family.

The Bible says, "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a \_\_\_\_\_ in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine unites the \_\_\_\_\_ together with Christ as we focus on what the Lord Jesus has done for us.

In the Lord's Supper, we look \_\_\_\_\_ to the cross. We think of what His body went through on the cross for our sakes. We remember how He \_\_\_\_\_ His body to be scourged, whipped until His flesh was raw and bleeding. We remember His crown of thorns on His brow, the nails that pierced His hands and feet. We remember the agonizing pain that filled His body from head to toe.

We remember His \_\_\_\_\_ poured out as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. We know

that we are loosed from our \_\_\_\_\_ by His blood (Revelation 1:5). We know that we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses (Ephesians 1:7). His blood \_\_\_\_\_ away our sins and reconciles us to God. We remember the spear that pierced His side, and out came blood and water (John 19:34). The Lord's Supper reminds us of the blood poured out for us so that we might enter into a \_\_\_\_\_ with God.

In the Lord's Supper, we look \_\_\_\_\_ to the second coming. First Corinthians 11:26 says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord's death until He comes." Each Lord's Day when we partake of the bread and the cup, we reaffirm our \_\_\_\_\_ in the second coming of the Lord Jesus. We know He will come again for those who are \_\_\_\_\_ in His blood to bless and glorify them, and He will \_\_\_\_\_ those who turn away from Him.

In the Lord's Supper, we look \_\_\_\_\_ at how we partake of the bread and fruit of the vine. First Corinthians 11:27-30 says because some did not partake of it in a \_\_\_\_\_ worthy of the Lord they became "weak and sick, and a number sleep." The Bible reveals the \_\_\_\_\_ for their weakness, "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man \_\_\_\_\_ himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

Christians who take the Lord's Supper must discipline their \_\_\_\_\_ and not become distracted by other things. They must examine themselves to see if they're \_\_\_\_\_ as they should. Christians need to \_\_\_\_\_ on what Christ has done for them at the cross and not allow the mundane things of life to interfere with their thoughts. Remembering Christ each Lord's Day keeps us strong and faithful. Ignoring the cross \_\_\_\_\_ the door to temptation that leaves us weak and sick.

In the Lord's Supper, we look \_\_\_\_\_ with joy and thanksgiving for the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus asked the Father to \_\_\_\_\_ the bread and the cup. We also ask God's blessing. We're sorry that we've sinned against God, which made the death of Jesus necessary; but we're \_\_\_\_\_ that He willingly paid the price for our sins. When the Lord has sacrificed so greatly, isn't it fitting that we do everything in our power to please and \_\_\_\_\_ Him?

In the New Testament, the early \_\_\_\_\_ took the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. Acts 20:6-7 says, "And we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days. And on the first day of the week, when we were \_\_\_\_\_ together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight." They waited until the last day to break bread; now that's not a \_\_\_\_\_ meal, but the Lord's Supper, because it was the first day of the week. They could have eaten an ordinary meal anytime, but the Lord's Supper was not just any meal.

They took the Lord's Supper "when" they gathered for this \_\_\_\_\_, which suggests that they did not meet at other times for that purpose. The word "Lord's" in the phrases Lord's Supper and Lord's Day is a peculiar term only used \_\_\_\_\_ in Scripture. The Lord's Supper is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:20 and it was regularly eaten on the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10). "Breaking bread" in Acts 20:7 refers to the eating of the Lord's Supper which occurred on the Lord's Day, which was known as the first day of the week. It's no coincidence that early Christians observed the Lord's

Supper on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, since the term "Lord's" refers only to these two things in Scripture. Everett Ferguson, an early church historian, said, "Both are peculiarly the Lord's, and both \_\_\_\_\_ together, united to each other by the resurrection. The day, as the day of the resurrection, is the day for taking the supper; and the supper, in remembrance of the event of salvation, gives significance to the day." Early church history \_\_\_\_\_ that the Lord's Day, the day of the Supper, was the first day of the week. We have no sure \_\_\_\_\_ in the Scriptures of the Lord's Supper being observed in the church on any other day. Ferguson notes, "That the Lord's Supper was a constant feature of the Sunday service. There is no second-century \_\_\_\_\_ for the celebration of a daily 'eucharist' or communion."

Some have questioned the \_\_\_\_\_ of cups used in the Lord's Supper. Since the Scriptures refer to "the cup," they assume, by using the word cup, that only \_\_\_\_\_ container was used in communion. The word cup here is a figure of speech, it's metonymy, where the container is used to refer to the \_\_\_\_\_. We cannot physically drink a cup or container, but we can drink the contents of the cup. We drink the fruit of the vine in remembrance of His blood, not the container. A \_\_\_\_\_ congregation like the one at Edmond could not possibly drink out of only one container cup, but they all can drink the \_\_\_\_\_ contents, the fruit of the vine. We \_\_\_\_\_ the cup of blessing by drinking the same fruit of the vine, remembering the blood sacrificed for our sins. We eat of the same bread, though it may be in many different loaves or many different sections, we still eat of the same bread. We remember the body of Jesus Christ. It's for those reasons that we eat of the bread and drink of the cup \_\_\_\_\_, remembering Him. How \_\_\_\_\_ cups is irrelevant. Remembering by drinking the content and eating the bread is what matters.

Why do we partake of the Lord's Supper? It reminds us of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and the \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus paid for us on the cross. Frankly, I need reminding, and I suspect you do, too. I can't look at the cross and desire sin at the same time. Taking a look at the cross humbles me and humbles you as we consider the sins that we've committed. This will cause us to \_\_\_\_\_ our sins and to \_\_\_\_\_ of them. Perhaps the reason some were weak and dying at Corinth was because they didn't \_\_\_\_\_ about the cross during this time. The Lord's Supper will strengthen our \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ. It will tell the world that we \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ and proclaim His death until He comes.

Each time we partake of the bread and the cup, we should examine ourselves and focus on Jesus Christ. While eating the bread, we focus on the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_ given for us; and while drinking the cup, we concentrate on the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_ that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. The Lord's Supper is an act of \_\_\_\_\_ involving the heart, the mind, and the soul. It's a memorial of love and thanksgiving.

We also realize that we're communing with our Lord (Matthew 26:29). He's \_\_\_\_\_ with us at the Supper. We're remembering His body and blood. The whole church eating one loaf and drinking one cup show the \_\_\_\_\_ and unity of brothers and sisters in their devotion to the Lord who sacrificed himself for them.

Christians take the Lord's Supper to declare their love for Him. Do you love the Lord Jesus? Have you become a Christian? To become one, believe Jesus is the Son of God, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ is God's Son, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Today, is the best day for you to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

## Fasting Matthew 4:1-4

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

While the New Testament doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ us to fast, there are times when it's right to do so. Today, we're going to \_\_\_\_\_ what the Bible says about fasting. God is the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, and He \_\_\_\_\_ that wisdom and knowledge with us in the Scriptures. God's ways are righteous and pure. The one who follows Him can live the righteous and pure life that \_\_\_\_\_ God. The more we \_\_\_\_\_ about God, the more we want to love Him and love other people. The knowledge of God lived out in our lives \_\_\_\_\_ everyone. Nothing is more valuable than knowing God and living for Him.

Matthew 9:14-15 says, "Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?' And Jesus said to them, 'The attendants of the bridegroom cannot \_\_\_\_\_ as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken \_\_\_\_\_ from them, and then they will fast.'"

While the New Testament speaks of fasting, it doesn't command it. The early church fasted \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus spoke of the day when He would no longer be with them, and they would fast. Jesus himself fasted forty days before the devil \_\_\_\_\_ Him. He knew the \_\_\_\_\_ of setting aside the physical to enhance the spiritual.

Fasting means abstaining from food, and possibly drink, for a \_\_\_\_\_ period of time as a mark of religious commitment and devotion or as an expression of repentance for sins. Fasting may seem like a physical thing, but it's really a spiritual \_\_\_\_\_, designed to draw us closer to God and to help us grow spiritually. While there are some physical benefits to fasting regularly, the spiritual benefits can be more valuable to our \_\_\_\_\_.

**Our reading today comes from The Gospel According to Matthew 4:1-4.** Jesus has been baptized by John the Baptist; He has gone into the wilderness; and He's fasting for forty days.

Yes, we need bread, but we also need the Word of God for our \_\_\_\_\_. Though the Bible speaks of fasting, we shouldn't assume that \_\_\_\_\_ fasting was alike or for the same amount of time. The Bible describes three main forms of fasting: First, there is the normal fast, involving the \_\_\_\_\_ abstinence of food. Luke 4:2 reveals that Jesus was tempted for forty days. "And He ate \_\_\_\_\_ during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry." Usually, a fast only lasts \_\_\_\_\_ day. The Law of Moses prescribed that the Israelites would "afflict themselves," that is, fast, during the Day of Atonement.

Second, there are some \_\_\_\_\_ fasts like Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:9, where for three days He "neither did eat nor drink." Esther, seeing how the lives of all the Jews were at stake, said, "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for

three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16).

Third, there is a \_\_\_\_\_ fast, that is; eating some foods but abstaining from others. Daniel 1:8 says, “But Daniel made up his mind that he would not \_\_\_\_\_ himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.” For whatever reason, Daniel regarded the food and the wine of the king as unclean; he belonged to the \_\_\_\_\_ God and did not want to displease Him. Daniel and his three friends \_\_\_\_\_ their diet rather than complete abstinence. The context implies that there were physical benefits resulting from this partial fast. However, this verse indicates that God was with Daniel in this time of fasting. On another occasion, Daniel abstained from "pleasant bread," flesh, wine, and anointing for three weeks (Daniel 10:3).

God instructed the children of Israel not to eat anything with \_\_\_\_\_ during the week of the Passover. God said, “Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. You shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt’” (Exodus 13:7-8). God gives commands like this for a \_\_\_\_\_ purpose, to remind us of His kindness and His power.

The spiritual discipline of fasting is not simply a denial of food; it has an important spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ that turns from the physical circumstances to focus on God. Sometimes people fasted as a means of confessing \_\_\_\_\_ and repentance. After Nehemiah finished building the wall around the city of Jerusalem, they worshiped and \_\_\_\_\_ from the book of the law of God, explaining it so the people understood. Once they heard this law, they knew they had \_\_\_\_\_. Nehemiah 9:1-3 says, “Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth and with dirt upon them. The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and \_\_\_\_\_ their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. While they stood in their place, they read from the book of the law of the Lord their God for a fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God.” While many consider sin as \_\_\_\_\_, God does not. These Jews, who heard the law of the Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ they had sinned against God. They rejoiced over God, but knew sin was in their lives. Sin is serious business with God; when we learn that we’ve sinned, we should \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts and our lives in repentance.

Sometimes people fasted at a time of \_\_\_\_\_. When David learned King Saul and his son, Jonathan, had died, “David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him. They mourned and \_\_\_\_\_ and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword” (2 Samuel 1:11-12).

Sometimes people fasted to \_\_\_\_\_ God’s favor at a critical time. When the child born to

David and Bathsheba was on his deathbed, David lay on the ground for seven days and fasted; but after the child died, David arose, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes. David first went to the house of the Lord and worshiped and then came home. **Read what David's servants said to him in 2 Samuel 12:21-23.**

When King Jehoshaphat was facing \_\_\_\_\_ with Moab, Ammon, and others, he began to seek the Lord. Second Chronicles 20:3-4 says, "Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to seek \_\_\_\_\_ from the LORD; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD." Fasting and praying is one way that we seek the Lord and turn to Him in times of \_\_\_\_\_. Since fasting became a recognized way of seeking Divine favor and protection, it was natural that it should be associated with confession of sin, as evidence of penitence or sorrow for sin.

Sometimes people fasted before an important \_\_\_\_\_ in the service of God. When Ezra asked King Artaxerxes to provide the money for supplies and utensils for the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, the king granted him all that he requested because he knew God was with him. Ezra gathered the leading men of Israel to go with him to Jerusalem. **Read what Ezra said in Ezra 8:21-23.** Ezra's prayer and fasting mattered to God, and God \_\_\_\_\_ them.

When Paul and Barnabas were on their first missionary journey, they appointed \_\_\_\_\_ to watch after the congregations. Acts 14:23 says, "When they had appointed elders for them in \_\_\_\_\_ church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed." The work of an elder, who is also a shepherd, is very \_\_\_\_\_ to the church. That's why they fasted and prayed. You'll notice they appointed a \_\_\_\_\_ of elders in every congregation. First Timothy 3 and Titus 1 give the qualifications of elders. While a minister sometimes serves as an elder, biblically speaking, it is a \_\_\_\_\_ to call a minister like me a "pastor," unless he also serves as an elder or shepherd, which I am not.

Unlike the Old Testament, which commanded fasting on the Day of Atonement, the New Testament \_\_\_\_\_ commands Christians to fast. We have \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord and of the disciples fasting, but we have no commandment. According to the Jewish Christian historian, Alfred Edersheim, some of the stricter sects among the Jews would fast from sunset to sunset. They not only abstained from food, they also made \_\_\_\_\_ against washing, anointing, of every kind of agreeable activity, and even salutations. Such fasting was generally practiced in the most austere and pretentious manner, among the Pharisees, becoming \_\_\_\_\_ displays. Sadly, some Christian denominations have made their own laws requiring fasting; but they have done this outside the teaching of Scripture. They have bound man-made traditions.

The Lord Jesus taught, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be \_\_\_\_\_ by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 6:1). **Read how Christ illustrates this principle in Matthew 6:16-18.** Showy religion leads people to concentrate on \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose of our \_\_\_\_\_ is to focus upon God. If we wish to draw close to God, then let's focus on Him. There's a difference between worship in



spirit and truth, and showmanship.

Isaiah spoke of people who fasted, but their voices weren't being heard because they sought their \_\_\_\_\_ pleasures and oppressed others. They went through the motions of fasting but they really didn't \_\_\_\_\_ their lives. **Read what God said through Isaiah in Isaiah 58:6-9.**

Abstinence in fasting is a \_\_\_\_\_ of self-discipline. What it does is it renounces for a time the enjoyments and the needs of the flesh so that it can focus on God and on the \_\_\_\_\_. When we abstain from food or other pleasures, keeping our physical wants in check, we can focus our interests on a \_\_\_\_\_ purpose and a nobler cause. Colossians 3:1-4 urges us, "Therefore if you have been \_\_\_\_\_ up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your \_\_\_\_\_ on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have \_\_\_\_\_ and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Abstinence deals with our distractions in this \_\_\_\_\_ and points us to what really matters. Do you recall the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 16:24-26, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must \_\_\_\_\_ himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake 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 exchange for his soul?" Just as we must feed our bodies to live physically, we must also feed our \_\_\_\_\_ if we wish to live with Christ.

You may want to fast at some point to \_\_\_\_\_ you get your focus back upon God. You may need to \_\_\_\_\_ your sins and repent of them as you fast. You may be facing a critical \_\_\_\_\_ in life. You may be suffering with \_\_\_\_\_ over a loved one who's gone. Fasting will help you build self-discipline, something that we all need from time to time. Let this be voluntary and \_\_\_\_\_ between you and God. Pray and study the Scriptures, determine to live a righteous life before God. Use that time and fasting to \_\_\_\_\_ in your faith, and in your knowledge of God's Word, and in your love for God.

Drawing close to God ought to \_\_\_\_\_ you of your need to worship regularly, to study the Bible diligently, to serve others joyfully, and to share your faith openly. If you're a Christian, you belong to God; you are not your own. While Jesus didn't command us to observe a certain fast, He does set an example for us. We also read about voluntary fasting in the early church.

More important than fasting, however, is your soul being \_\_\_\_\_ with God! Nothing is more valuable to you than your soul. It's better to cut off your right hand and pluck out your eye than to lose your soul. Draw near to God by placing your \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ and confessing Him as the Son of God. Repent of your sins and be baptized into Christ, at which point God will wash away your sins and forgive you. When you're baptized, God will make you His child, add you to His church, and cause you to be born again. Be baptized! Draw close to God today!