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*Program
Study Guides*

**For
February 2021**



God is at Work in Baptism

God is still at _____ in this uncertain world, and He's busier than you might think. Today, we're going to explore how God works in our _____. God isn't dead; He's not even _____. He's not like a man who must _____. God is at work all day, every day. The Lord Jesus said, "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is _____ before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more _____ than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). God cares for us enough to hear our _____, and God cared enough to enrich our lives with His inspired word, the Bible.

James 1:17-18 says, "Every good thing given and every perfect _____ is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting _____. In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of _____, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." God gives us the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. God supplies our needs, because He _____ for us.

We can thank God every day for the _____ that He gives us, giving us new life that will last eternally. First Peter 1:3-4 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great _____ has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in _____ for you." God prepares us in this life for the life to _____. God causes our _____ birth in Christ, so that we can be His children forever.

Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Colossians 2:12-13. This passage discusses God's working in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and God's working in our salvation, and shows how that they are put together.

Aren't you thankful that Jesus was willing to die, that how God raised Him from the dead, and how He forgives our sins.

I sometimes hear people say baptism is a _____. Some think of a ritual as a customary practice or religious formality that people go through in a prescribed way. They believe that rituals are works of _____ and mistakenly think of baptism as an act of "righteousness based on works." They think baptism has _____ to do with salvation. No one believed this until the 16th century. Prior to that time people understood that God grants forgiveness at the _____ of baptism. People often think of baptism as something _____ do. In reality, baptism is something that _____ does!

Colossians 2:12-13 explains, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through _____ in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were _____ in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you _____ together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." Who _____ us with Christ in baptism? Who _____ us up with Christ in baptism? Who _____ us? In baptism we're responding in faith to the working of God!

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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Baptism is indeed a _____ of faith in God's power, God's working. It's a response to God's _____, to Jesus's sacrifice, and to God's _____ in raising Christ from the dead. In baptism we _____ ourselves to God's work and to His will. If God could raise Jesus up from the dead, He can _____ our sins. We're showing our faith that He can work on us!

God causes us to be saved and to be _____ again. The apostle John wrote, "He came (Jesus) to His own, and those who were His own did not _____ Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the _____ to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). God gives a new birth to those who receive Him. To receive Him is to _____ what He says about being the Son of God is true. To believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God means you're willing to _____ Him.

When Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus and confessed that He was a teacher from God, Jesus told him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that unless one is born again he cannot see the _____ of God." Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is _____? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot _____ into the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3-5). Without a birth of water and the Spirit, we cannot enter the kingdom and be saved. All of the ancient writers said that this passage was speaking of _____, which unites water and the Spirit in the new birth.

From John 1, we learned that we have to have _____ to be a child of God; and from John 3 we learned that we must be _____ of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. How does the Spirit work in our new birth? First Peter 1:22-23 says, "Since you have in _____ to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring _____ of God." The Holy Spirit inspired the word and works through the word of God; the _____ is given to us to save us and to cause us to be born again. James 1:18 explains, "In the exercise of His will God brought us forth by the word of _____, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."

The Spirit works through the word to _____ our new birth. How then does the water _____ with the word? Ephesians 5:25-27 reveals how Jesus sacrificed Himself to cleanse those who enter the kingdom, which is the _____. He said, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her (that is, make her holy), having cleansed her by the washing of _____ with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." We're cleansed and sanctified by the washing of water _____ the word. The love and sacrifice of Christ works _____ the washing of water with the word. The washing of water is a reference to _____, and the word to the gospel which _____S us to be baptized.

In Titus 3:3-7 Paul explains, "For we also once were _____ ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the _____ of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of _____ which we've done in righteousness, no, but according to His _____, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His _____ we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

When we're born again the Lord _____ us to His church. In Acts 2:41, the Bible says about those who responded on the day of Pentecost, "So those who received his _____ were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." The baptized were _____ to the apostles. Acts 2:47 says, "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." This number is a clear reference to the number that's in the _____. The Lord adds you to His church when you are baptized. That's when you are forgiven and when God _____ you. Being born of water and the Spirit allows us to _____ the kingdom of God (John 3:5). We're not born of _____ will; we are born again by the will of _____, when we receive the Lord and are obedient to His will. When we are baptized, the Lord adds us to His church. Sometimes people talk about "joining" the church, but people by their own _____ do not join the church. If you're in the Lord's church at all, it's because the _____ Himself added you.

When we are baptized, God _____ us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This is not merely a _____; it is the dynamic working of God! Baptism is _____ work on us. Romans 6:3-5 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His _____? Therefore we've been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in _____ of life. For if we've become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." We are baptized into Christ, into His death, buried with Him, and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

The word "united" in verse 4 is translated in the King James Version as "_____ together." It says, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Things that are planted together _____ together, produce fruit together, and live together. When we're baptized into Christ, God _____ us together with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. We are planted in Him, and He is planted in us. Through baptism God unites us with Christ; and we are branches on His _____. Baptism is no empty ritual, it's when God plants us together and unites us with Christ.

Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For you are all _____ of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have _____ yourselves with Christ." Until you're baptized, you're _____ of Christ; and once you're baptized into Christ, you're clothed with Christ. There's a great difference, an _____ difference, between being in Christ and out of Christ. God unites us with Christ and makes us His _____ when by faith we are baptized and clothed with Christ.

Through baptism God causes our old self of sin to be _____ from that sin by doing away with our sins. Romans 6:6-7, speaks about what happens in baptism, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our _____ self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be _____ to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." By being united with Christ in His death, you come into contact with His _____ which cleanses us from sin. In baptism our body of sin is done away with, and God does that, and we are free! We're no longer slaves to sin!

Later in chapter six, verses 17 and 18, Paul says, "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become _____ from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." By God's grace we can _____. We can _____ a life that's enslaved to sin and become slaves of righteousness. We change when we're obedient from the _____.

God frees us from sin and makes us His _____. You can't save yourself by yourself; God must save you! He saves us when we in faith and love submit to the standard of _____ that He gives us. The idea that we're set free by faith _____ without any obedience simply ignores this passage.

There can be no doubt that God causes a change in our lives at the time we _____ Him in baptism. That's when we're _____ with and clothed with Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 it says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a _____ creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." When God raised you and me up with Christ to walk in newness of life in baptism, everything _____. The old way of life is gone and now we are _____ to serve the Lord, to live in righteousness, and to enjoy all the blessings of Christianity. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with _____ spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." It matters whether you are in Christ or not! In Christ we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We have an abundant life.

Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "And now why do you _____? Rise and be baptized and _____ away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). When we're baptized, God washes away our sins. Paul had been _____ for three days according to Acts 9:11, but he still _____ to be washed from sin (Acts 22:16). Baptism is _____ we call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. First Peter 3:21 explains, "Corresponding to that, baptism now _____ you—not the removal of the dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." When we are baptized, God saves us and _____ our appeal for a good conscience. He cleanses our souls from sin and gives us that clean conscience. What a great God we have!

When God commands us to _____, we do the believing. When God commands all people to _____, we do the repenting. When God commands us to _____ Jesus Christ with our mouths, we do the confessing. When God commands us to _____ Him with all our hearts, we do the loving. When Christ commands us to _____ ourselves and take up our crosses daily to follow Him, we must act. But when God tells us to "be baptized," that's something that we _____ to by letting someone else act upon us. Physically someone else baptizes us, and we submit to it. Spiritually God _____ upon us; and we submit to it. God works on us in baptism.

God forgives us. God saves us. God sets us free from sin. God unites us with Christ. God causes us to be baptized into His death. God buries us with Christ. God raises us up with Christ to walk in newness of life. God causes us to be born again by His will. God makes us His children. God adds us to His kingdom, the church. All this takes place when we're baptized into Christ.

When someone says, "Well Phil, we don't have to be baptized to be saved," they reveal they have embraced a 16th century doctrine of faith only and missed the point. The New Testament never conceives of a child of God who has not been baptized into Christ. Why not confess your faith in Christ, repent of your sins, and from the heart obey the Lord by putting Him on in baptism. When you do, God will wash away your sins, and make you His child, and add you to His church, and give you newness of life. Won't you consider being baptized today?



What Love Will Do

To love and be loved is the greatest _____ of life. God loves us, but He wants us to love _____ and to love _____. Love matters. The Scriptures reveal the best and the right way to _____ other people. The golden rule found in Matthew 7:12 says, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do _____ to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Treat _____ the way that you want to be treated. Whether it's in marriage, in parenting, or in friend to friend, this is the kind and good _____. Everything in the Bible is written for our best interests!

First John 4:7-11 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is _____ God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who doesn't love does not _____ God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might _____ through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our _____. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

The great love that God shows us provides an _____ to follow. God didn't withhold His Son Jesus from becoming a _____ for our sins. Every blessing that we _____ comes from His hand. That ought to lead us to love! First John 4:19 simply says, "We love because he (that is, God) _____ loved us." Our faith and our love for Christ arises from the _____ where Jesus showed His great love for us. We love Christ because He loved us. We love others, because we love Christ and Christ loves us. That's the Lord's way!

Our reading today comes from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians 13:1-3.

Without love we are an _____ shell. After Paul spoke of several miraculous gifts, he spoke of a more _____ way. He then described the superior way of _____, which gives us the greatest meaning to our lives. Each of us were made to love and be loved. Love is more valuable than any spiritual _____, more than speaking in tongues, more than prophecy, more than miraculous knowledge, more than faith to work miracles, and more than giving all your possessions to feed the poor, and even more than giving your body to be burned. Without love, I'm just a noisy gong that gives nothing more than making a _____. Without love I am _____. Without love, what I do profits nothing. Love makes the _____ between existing and living. Many people long to be loved, but the love we are describing is not the love that you _____ but the love you _____. God treasures the person who knows how and generously gives love. God treasures the one who sacrifices himself for Him and for the blessing of others. Love shows the difference between _____ and Christianity. The pagan religions of ancient times _____ their gods and were afraid to offend their gods, so that they could avoid a disaster. They kept their gods at a _____. They never considered their god as a god who could _____ them, only a god whom they must appease. Thankfully, we know that our God loves us and watches over us, even in the harshest _____. Micah 7:18 asks, "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his _____ forever, because he delights in steadfast love." God's love is loyal love that never stops.

Because God loves us, He wants us to love Him. God's love for us is a greater thing than we can _____. First John 4:16 says, "So we have come to know and to _____ the love that God has

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for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” The Lord Jesus described the Father’s love, “For God so loved the world, that He _____ His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be _____ through Him” (John 3:16-17).

We can say with David, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his _____, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with _____ so that your youth is renewed like the eagles” (Psalm 103:1-5). David observed in verse 11, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so _____ is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.” Again, David says, “But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who _____ his covenant and remember to do his commandments” (verses 17 and 18).

The love of God, however, is never a one-way _____. God wants us to love Him too. Mark 12:28-31 says: “And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he (that is, Jesus) answered them well, asked him, ‘Which commandment is the _____ important of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall _____ the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your _____ as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

God grieves when those whom He loves wonder _____ from Him and turn to idols and sin. James 4:4,5 says, “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the _____ is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a _____ of the world makes himself an _____ of God. Or do you suppose it’s of no purpose that the Scripture says that ‘He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us’”? God wants our love and our _____. He wants a close loving relation with each of us.

Part of loving God comes in the form of loving _____ people. The Lord Jesus said, “A _____ commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. And by this all men will _____ that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). One of the marks of _____ Christianity is love for others. When we possess love for God and for others, we find the _____ that love brings. Loving others yields the greatest of blessings! Here’s what love will do for you!

First, love will warm a cold _____. It’s discouraging to hear about people whose hearts have grown cold toward God and cold toward their fellow man. The opposite of love is not _____ but apathy, unfeeling. When people grow self-centered and don’t _____ how they treat others, that’s not love. Love isn’t part of their life. When people come into close contact with Christ and the cross their heart can _____.

Hard hearts can _____! Love can _____ your heart, make you alive and able to feel again. People can change! God told Israel, “Repent and _____ from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no _____ in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live” (Ezekiel 18:30-32). We can awaken and get our hearts right with God.

First John 3:16-18 says, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we _____ to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s _____ and he sees his brother in _____, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us

not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” The love of God awakens our _____ for those in need. It moves us to make a difference, even with our _____.

The Lord Jesus said, “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, _____ those who curse you, _____ for those who abuse you. To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from the one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so for them” (Luke 6:27-31). You’ll find that you are most _____ when you love God and love other people.

Second, love sacrifices its will for another’s _____ interest. First Corinthians 13:5 says love “does not _____ its own.” Love puts itself _____ and others _____. Love seeks to _____ others more than it seeks to “win.” Philippians 2:3-4 says, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in _____ count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Love shows sympathy and empathy. I’ve always appreciated the prayer of Francis of Assisi, who said: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your _____. Where there is hatred, let me _____ love; where there is injury, pardon; and where there is doubt, _____; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, _____. O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.”

We must _____ the words of Ephesians 4:31-32: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be _____ to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Again, Paul said, “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must _____. And above all these put on love, which _____ everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:12-14).

Third, love always seeks reconciliation. The Lord doesn’t want anyone to be _____ but to be close to every person. The Father in heaven sent Jesus His Son to _____ for sinners, so that they could be reconciled. First Timothy 2:3-4 says, “This is good, and it’s pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the _____.” God wants a close relationship with us, as our _____ in heaven. Jesus wants a close relationship as our _____. Like the father of the prodigal son, God is keeping His eye out for us to _____ to Him. Let’s stop fighting and make _____ with God. Let’s also be at peace with _____. The Word of God says, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with _____ men” (Romans 12:18). That’s not always easy, but love reaches out to overcome the _____ of life. That may mean talking to others to _____ conflicts and, if needed, forgiving them. Love finds out the _____ truth before it accuses or complains. It doesn’t _____ with slander. The Lord Jesus said, “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in _____; and if he listens to you, you’ve won your brother” (Matthew 18:15).

You may realize that you are the offender and _____ for forgiveness. The Lord Jesus said, “If therefore you’re presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be _____ to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matthew 5:23-24). Love values talking “to” someone over telling everyone else “about” someone who hurt you. Gossip is gossip no matter who is

doing it. Proverbs 16:28 says, “A perverse man _____ strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends.”

Love says what needs to be said. Proverbs 27:6 says, “Faithful are the wounds of a _____, but deceitful are the kisses of an _____.” Honesty from a true friend, even when it _____, is more loving than deceitful flattery to your face and slander behind your back. God doesn’t treat us that way. The devil will tell you what you want to _____, whether it’s true or not, but the Lord will tell you what you _____ to hear to bless your life, even if it hurts for a lifetime. God wants to bless you with His love and grace, and He wants you to love Him. Will you?

“Tell me whom you _____,” someone wrote, “And I will tell you who you _____.” Whom we love or what we love does _____ us and tells the world what our priorities are. If we love the Lord, people can _____ it in our words and our lives. When we love our families, our families know it; but if we fail to love our families, our families know it too! Love can _____ your life, if you let it. When love is in your heart, you’ll do the right thing toward God and toward others. You’ll bless the lives of everyone around you! And if you want to love, look to Jesus.

Come to Jesus, see His _____ of love on the cross, and follow His teachings! You’ll find out what loving and being loved really is. Love is not so much a _____ as it is a _____! Love is more than a _____; it’s how we _____ ourselves to others in order to bless them. Any response to God must be _____ in love. The most important response we have is love with all of our hearts, our souls, our minds, and our strength (Mark 12:30).

This great love should lead us to faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the gospel, the kind of faith willing to confess it publicly. This great love should lead us to turn from our sinful ways and to follow the teaching of our Lord. But we’ve not fully obeyed the gospel message until we’re baptized into Christ, united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. When we’re baptized in water, God washes away our sins, makes us His children, and gives us newness of life. In baptism we’re born again. Oh, let your love bring you to Christ.

Let Us Pray

We have the _____ and the privilege to pray to our Father in heaven. Today, we explore the _____ of prayer. God always _____ what He says. He speaks what is _____ for us because He loves us. For this reason we can _____ God to tell us the truth and to keep His promises. Believing God's _____ also challenges us to take His commandments seriously, His ethics and His teaching and His morals, all of these, seriously. The blessings of God come to those who _____ in His ways.

We enjoy the great _____ of prayer to our God and Father in heaven who created us and sustains the universe. We can pray to our Father in heaven _____ time with our praise, our thanksgiving, petitions and requests. Prayer allows us to draw close to God and to speak from our _____. Daniel _____ to spend the night in the lion's den rather than go one day without prayer.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples, in Luke 18:1, "that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose _____"; and so should we. When the church began at Pentecost, the disciples "were continually _____ themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). Colossians 4:2 says, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping _____ in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." First Thessalonians 5:17 simply says, "Pray without ceasing." This simply means to just keep on praying, and don't give up.

Faithful Christians pray fervently because they see the _____ in prayer. Prayer opens the door to the greatest _____ in the world, the power of God. They realize that God will _____ to their prayers. David said, "I sought the Lord, and He _____ me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4). Do you pray? Do you seek the Lord?

The scripture reading today is from Matthew 7:7-11.

The Lord Jesus was the Son of God; but while He _____ on this earth, He devoted Himself to prayer. He needed to be _____ to His Father, and so do we. Jesus saw the value in prayer to keep His heart focused on His _____ and to keep free from sin. Mark 1:35 says, "And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and He went out and departed to a _____ place, and was praying there." Luke 5:16 says, "He Himself would often _____ away to the wilderness and pray." Before selecting the twelve people to be apostles, Luke 6:12 says, "And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole _____ in prayer to God."

The Lord Jesus prayed over the bread and the fruit of the vine when He was instituting the Lord's Supper. Later that night, Jesus prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane for _____ hours with great sorrow and loud crying. He prayed, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My _____, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). This must have been a very _____ prayer to pray, but Jesus was more devoted to obeying His Father and saving us than He was to avoiding suffering and death.

The Lord endured much _____ and suffering at the hands of the chief priests and the Romans. They beat Him, mocked Him, spit on Him, lied about Him, scourged Him, and falsely condemned

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Him. They forced Him to _____ His own cross to Golgotha. Even while they were nailing His hands and feet to the cross, He prayed, “Father, _____ them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:32). Such love and mercy _____ His grace. Though He felt forsaken at one point, He never _____ relying on the Father. His last words were “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). If Jesus needed to pray in every circumstance of life and in facing death, how much more do we?

Prayer can indeed make a _____. Let’s take a look at what prayer can do for you. First, prayer can help you in times of _____. The Lord Jesus warned Peter, James, and John, “Keep watching and praying, that you may not _____ into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). We’re all _____ at times, and we may not suspect the temptations coming our way. It can catch us off guard and lead to _____. The devil doesn’t play around; he wants to deceive and _____ you. He seeks for opportunities to make you sin.

James 4:7-8 says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will _____ from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” Prayer is when we draw near to God, and know that we’re not _____! The Lord will draw near you to _____ you resist the devil. You can _____ sin. Someone has rightly said, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”

The Lord makes Himself accessible to us, even though He is God and we’re humans. Hebrews 4:14-16 says, “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold _____ our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been _____ in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence (boldness) to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find _____ to help in time of need.” The Lord understands our weaknesses and can help us when we most _____ Him.

Second, prayer can help you in times of _____. In every difficult situation, prayer and faith in God helps us endure. We all face circumstances that _____ our character and our patience. James 5:16-18 says, “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish _____. Elijah was a man with a _____ like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it didn’t rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.”

Circumstances can _____ us to grow anxious and fearful, but prayer can make a difference. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made _____ to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall _____ your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” God can give us peace and guard our hearts and minds. We can worry or we can pray. Let’s pray, and let God deal with our concerns.

First Peter 5:6-10 says, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he _____ for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring _____, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your _____, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood (your brethren) throughout the world. And after you’ve suffered for a little while, the God of all _____, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

Third, prayer can help you _____ spiritually. Like Jesus we need to pray _____ day and night. We need to pray before making a hard _____. We need to pray when we know _____ times lie ahead. We need to thank God for our _____. We need to _____ God for His power, wisdom, glory, and grace. We need to draw _____ to Him and pour out our hearts to Him. Prayer can make a difference in our spiritual lives, and the absence of prayer can leave us _____.

The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be _____” (Matthew 5:6). Prayer is the greatest precautionary measure that you can take against falling away from the living God. Neglecting private prayers and reading Scripture is generally the first _____ people have become indifferent to God; it’s not long until they forsake their faith and worship.

We need to pray not only for ourselves but also for _____ who serve the Lord. Even though Paul was an apostle, an evangelist, he knew how much he _____ the prayers of others. Paul said, “pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the _____” (Ephesians 6:19). We could all ask for the prayers to help us _____ the Lord. We all need the Lord. The Lord Jesus said, “apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Fourth, prayer can help you in your _____ for Him. We are all dependent upon the strength of God to _____ us do what we cannot do for ourselves. We want to serve and _____ others. We know that we need God’s help to do that. Second Corinthians 3:5 reminds us, “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from _____.” Later Paul declared, “And God is _____ to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good _____” (2 Corinthians 9:8). Every great work for God begins with prayer! Without God’s help, we can do nothing (John 15:5).

Nehemiah wept and mourned for days over the city of Jerusalem, which was in ruins and caused great _____ for the remnant of the Jews. He fasted and prayed night and day before the God of heaven, confessing the _____ of the people and asked for God to bring the people back to the place where His name dwelled (Nehemiah 1:3-11). God heard Nehemiah’s prayer and gave him the opportunity to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to _____ their safety.

We’re facing struggles and weaknesses in our own time. There are good _____ for us too, to weep and mourn over the sins of our day. People are lost, people are hurting, people have forgotten God, and we need to see a _____ in our time, our time, we need commitment, commitment to the Lord. Sidlow Baxter, who wrote a book called Exploring the Bible, said, “Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons – but they are helpless against our prayers.”

Fifth, prayer can reassure you of God’s _____. Sometimes we just need to be _____ to the One that we love. We need to tell Him we love Him, to thank Him, to praise Him, to take our _____ to Him. We need reminding that He’s there—available and willing to _____. Speaking of prayer, Jesus said, “for your Father _____ what you need, before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). When we pray, we’re not praying to a _____ in Heaven who doesn’t care, or doesn’t know us, and doesn’t care what happens. God knows _____ about you and me. He sees everything. God knows even before we _____. The Lord Jesus said, “Therefore do not be anxious (that is, don’t worry), saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the

Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all” (Matthew 6:31-32).

Prayer is a great _____ that I have a “Father” in heaven. I lost my father in 1985, and I loved my father and mourned his absence. I needed and wanted my father! But at some point in my grief, I recalled that I had a Father in heaven, who would _____ leave me or forsake me. The Lord Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:7-11). We have a _____ Father!

Prayer is man’s _____ to God’s willingness. I don’t believe in the power of my praying; I believe in God’s power to _____ my prayers. I pray realizing my Father is _____ than I am. Sometimes He says _____; sometimes He says _____; sometimes He says wait till later; and sometimes He answers in ways better than I asked. God sees what I can’t see and knows what I don’t know. He can see what lies ahead and knows what He has planned. I am convinced that God answers _____ prayer, and it may be in ways beyond my comprehension. In spite of this, I _____ God. He has blessed me for almost 70 years, and I know that He will be with me through every challenge and will supply my needs.

Nothing is more reassuring than seeing prayer _____. God wants to hear from us; and we don’t have to _____ Him to listen. Prayer is how we _____ with our Father in heaven. We can connect anytime anyplace. He waits to _____ from us. We need God every day and every hour. I hope you haven’t _____ praying to the Father in heaven. I hope that you make it a _____ to pray often every day. God can work wonders, when we pray. Have you prayed today?

As I mentioned, God wants to hear from you. He wants to be close to you, so _____ close to Him. You may have a heartache; you may be facing a difficult problem; or you may not know what lies ahead. You probably have hurting people on your _____, people that you love, people who may not know God and need to know Him. Pray for them. Ask God’s help in reaching them. God wants everyone to be saved and to know the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

I like to begin every project with prayer from my heart and soul, reaching up to the One who cares and can help me. Without Christ in our lives, we can truly do nothing. Without the grace and help of God, we have no hope of salvation or of heaven. I want to thank my Father for every good thing. I want my Father to know that I love Him and thank Him for the forgiveness of my sins.

Without God’s grace and forgiveness, we have no hope of eternal life. Prayer is a great gift, but it takes more than prayer for one to become a Christian. After being struck blind on the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus prayed and fasted for three days, according to Acts 9:9 and 11; but he was not yet freed from sin. Ananias came to Saul, who became the apostle Paul, and told him, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name” (Acts 22:16). Saul needed his sins washed away in baptism, even though he fasted and prayed. We all need to be baptized to wash away our sins as well. Won’t you be baptized today?

The Narrow Way

What direction is your _____ traveling? The Lord speaks of a narrow and a broad way with _____ destinies. The world is _____ of ideas, teaching, beliefs, and opinions. We hear every view imaginable today, and much of it has been spinned to make it sound _____. But the Lord Jesus and the Scriptures give us a _____ to distinguish truth from error and right from wrong. The Lord Jesus promised, “If you continue in My _____, then you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32). Yes, the words of Jesus are always the Lord’s way to _____ what is true and what is false.

The apostle Peter wrote, “And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable _____ to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15-16). Sadly, some twist what God says to suit themselves and they leave the _____ for a falsehood that cannot take them to eternal life.

The inspired apostle Paul wrote, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, that you are slaves of the one whom you _____, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? (Romans 6:16). Who is your master? Are you following _____ or are you following the Lord? The road you _____ will take you somewhere, and I pray that it will be where you want to go. The Lord leads to _____, so follow the Lord!

Our reading today comes from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 7:13-14. This passage is one of the most surprising passages of the Bible. This passage _____ us up, recognizing the direction that we’re going, to choose the narrow path.

The Lord Jesus speaks of two _____: one is narrow, and the other is wide. He speaks of two distinct _____: the broad easy way and the narrow, or straight way. He speaks of two different _____: one is made up of a few people and the other contains many. He also speaks of two _____: one leads to life and the other leads to destruction. The narrow way _____ the Lord Jesus and leads to righteousness and life; few find that way. The pathway to _____ contains many difficulties and troubles. It must be walked with _____, watching out for the evil that can lead us astray. The way of life is a plain and simple way. Its simplicity often challenges man’s desire to go his own way.

The road that leads _____ from God and downward to ruin is broad and easy, and many are led to choose it. One narrow gate with a _____ way leads to life; and all other ways, all other paths, all other directions lead to death and ruin; the narrow way is difficult; the others are _____ to follow.

Some people think that all _____ are the same, but are they? Paul wrote, “For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but _____ God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him” (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). Whether we believe in that one true God or not _____ to our souls. The confused, ancient world believed in

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many gods; but Jesus _____ to the one and only God. The Bible prophecies, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the truths of Scripture point to the Lord God as the one and only _____ God. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it’s impossible to _____ Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

Some people think of Jesus as just another religious _____, but Jesus is unique. Jesus fulfilled prophecy, He worked miracles in the presence of multitudes, He arose from the dead, and He lived an exemplary life. He expects people to _____ in Him. The Lord Jesus said, “He who believes in Him is not judged; but he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). He made it more clear in John 8:24, “I told you that you would _____ in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he (that is, the Christ, the Son of God) you will die in your sins.” Jesus was clear about those who will _____ believe in Him. Jesus has set a _____ on who is free from sin and makes His way narrow. Faith in Christ distinguishes those on the narrow road from those on the road to destruction.

Some people think they can please God and yet live in _____, but repentance from sin and changing one’s life is necessary. Luke 13:1-3 says: “Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were _____ sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you _____, you will all likewise perish.’” Repentance is not merely a suggestion that’s good for us; it’s necessary to be _____ with God. Acts 17:30-31 says, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he _____ all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Those who refuse to repent have no _____ from God. Romans 2:6-11 says, “He will render to each one according to his _____: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give _____ life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not _____ the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does _____, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does _____, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.” We must take God’s moral law seriously.

Some say faith and repentance are all that’s necessary for salvation, but the Lord Jesus made it clear that being _____ of water and the Spirit are also necessary to enter the kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus told a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the _____ of God” (John 3:5). This is a clear reference to being _____ into Christ, and all the ancient writers knew this. Sadly, some have pointed to other things never suggested by this Scripture. If we want to walk the narrow road, we won’t _____ this requirement.

The Lord wants people to be obedient to the _____, and our baptism into Christ unites us with Him in his burial and resurrection, according to Romans 6:3-7. This obedience is necessary to _____ the narrow way. Someone says, is it really necessary? Yes! Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 says, “and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not _____ God and to those who do not _____ the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the _____ of eternal

destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” Those who fail to obey the gospel will not have eternal life.

The way of Jesus is truly narrow; in fact, He doesn't present alternatives. Christianity is not a smorgasbord where we can _____ what we like and _____ the rest. Often there is but one _____. Ephesians 4:4-6 says, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father who is over all and through all and in all.” There is but one body, and that body, according to Ephesians 1:22-23, is the _____. Does it surprise you that the Lord has but _____ church? The way is narrow; there was only one _____ in Noah's day and only one _____ in Judaism. The Lord _____ for His church and no other. There is but one Holy Spirit, and He doesn't say one thing in Scripture and then say another thing to modern day _____ prophets. There is but one hope of your calling, and that hope is in the gospel.

There is only one Lord, and we cannot serve _____ masters. The Lord Jesus said, “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; and no one _____ to the Father, but through Me” (John 14:6). You can't go to the Father in heaven through some later prophet or some other religious person. We have no Lord but Jesus. There is one faith, and that faith was given by the Lord Jesus _____ His apostles and prophets in the first century. He promised the apostles that He would _____ them into “all the truth” (John 16:13). We're to “contend for the _____ that was once for all (that is, all time) delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Once that faith was delivered in the first century, we must not _____ from it into other faiths or the teaching of men.

There is one baptism, and that baptism into Christ frees us from _____. The book of Acts declares how people were _____ to be baptized (that is, immersed) in water to wash away their sins (according to Acts 2:38 and 22:16). If baptism is a _____ with Christ, it's not a sprinkling with Christ. If baptism is when God washes away your sins, we're not saved _____ baptism. If God requires faith and repentance before baptism, then the one baptism is not a baptism of _____ or small children. The Scriptures are clear on these matters: that there is but one baptism.

There is “one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” He describes Himself in the Bible as our _____ and the true and living God. He is the giver of every _____ thing and has sacrificed His Son Jesus for our sins. He hears our prayers and forgives our sins. We have a Father who is near us and _____ for us.

This is why we must take His _____ seriously. Just as there is one God, there's also one _____ that can save your soul. The apostle Paul addressed some Jewish Christians who were corrupting the _____ in Galatians 1:6-9, “I'm amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a _____ gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to _____ the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!” We must stay with the true gospel found in _____. A distorted gospel will not _____ anyone and will curse those who teach it.

People who walk the broad or easy way try to make God's Word say what _____ them rather than what the Lord actually says. God has never allowed men to edit or to _____ what He teaches. God said, “You shall not _____ to the word which I am commanding you, nor _____ away from it, that you may _____ the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you”

(Deuteronomy 4:2). Again, He said, “So you shall _____ to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left” (Deuteronomy 5:32). God’s way indeed is narrow!

The Lord Jesus understood this. He had to _____ His Father; by doing so, He set an example for us. The Lord Jesus said, “For I have not spoken on my _____ authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has _____ me” (John 12:49-50). Jesus never _____ from God’s message. In fact, He said, “But so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do _____ as the Father commanded Me” (John 14:31).

Let’s follow the Lord’s _____. We must not add to His word or take away from it but do exactly as He commands us. Let’s follow Paul’s advice to Timothy and be diligent to be a “workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of _____” (2 Timothy 2:15). True disciples stay within the _____ words of Jesus given in the first century. The Lord Jesus said, “If you abide in my word, you are truly disciples of mine, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you _____” (John 8:31-32). Let’s abide in the words of Jesus so that we may be free!

The Lord Jesus tells what the _____ important commandments are, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall _____ the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall _____ your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31). God demands that you be _____ devoted to Him: heart, soul, mind, and strength! We show our love for God by _____ His commandments (John 14:15). We must also love others as we love ourselves. These commandments are profound and require giving everything we are to God and to others.

The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him _____ himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would _____ his life will lose it, but whoever _____ his life for my sake will save it. For what does it _____ a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” (Luke 9:23-25). You can have your broad way in this life and lose your soul in the life to come; or you can lose your life here and gain eternal life. Which way are you going?

Place your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus and turn from evil to the Lord. Confess Him before others and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. With the blood of Jesus and the grace of God cleansing you from sin, you can have salvation in this life and an inheritance in the life to come. Choose the narrow way; it’s worth it! What will it profit, if you ignore the grace of God?