



IN
SEARCH
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*Program
Study Guides*

**For
March 2022**

Six Searching Questions

Some questions are _____ important than others. Today we're going to look at six of the _____ important questions that we'll ever ask! We do _____ the Scriptures diligently, contextually, and humbly. We want to be sure that what we believe and what we teach are _____. We know God will hold us accountable for the things that we _____. God will also hold us accountable for what we _____. We want to make sure what we believe follows the Scriptures, because we can _____ on God's holy word to be true.

Questions are important; and that's how we _____. Asking good questions and finding the _____ answers are essential to life. Some people never ask or search for the answers, and they remain without the knowledge that they so desperately _____. Some ask and hear the _____ answers, and are deceived about many things. Some find the right answers but _____ them because they don't like what they hear. Some diligently search for the truth and find the _____ answers. Though the truth is sometimes _____ to hear, they rejoice in the truth of God! God's truth tells it like it is, and this gives us _____ for the present and for eternal life.

I hope and pray that you have a curious _____ that is willing to search out the truth. There's so many _____ saying so many things that it's easy to be deceived. The noble Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was _____ (Acts 17:11). God will count _____ as noble if you too search the Scriptures to determine what is true. Don't be content to _____ the passages you like or those that you agree with, or that you think they say what you want them to say. Rather search diligently _____ that God has to say on the subject. You might find that what you thought differs from what God says.

Our reading comes from Proverbs 2:1-6.

Today we're exploring the six most important questions of life. Thankfully, the Scriptures give us the answers, so that we may _____ what really matters. Each question gives us _____ into ourselves, our purpose, our accountability, and our destiny.

First, we ask, "What are we as humans?" We're certainly more than an advanced _____. Though we have physical characteristics similar to mammals, we have _____ differences. The Scriptures make clear that only man is made in the _____ of God (Genesis 1:26-28). Like God, we can reason, communicate, and make decisions. Like God we're endowed with an innate _____ of morality; we instinctively _____ there is right and wrong. We also realize we are responsible for our _____. Romans 14:12 says, "So then each one of us will give an _____ of himself to God."

This moral sense _____ all through life. The Bible is a marvelous moral _____. We can read, we can learn, and can evaluate ourselves and _____ that we are not like animals. Consciences are always at work but must be _____. Conscience by _____ doesn't give us all that we need to know about right or wrong. Our consciences can become dull or hardened if we _____ them or if we allow them to be affected by the world. Paul said, "I have lived my life with a perfectly _____

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

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conscience before God up to this day” (Acts 23:1); but he committed some of the terrible sins and called himself the “chief of sinners” in 1 Timothy 1:15. Paul sinned in ignorance, and God _____ him as an example for us all of His grace.

This leads to our second question: “Where did we come from?” Much has been said about the _____ of the species. There is just _____ satisfactory explanation. We came from _____. Genesis 2:7 says, “Then the LORD God _____ man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being,” that is a living soul. Paul said in Acts 17:28, “In him [God] we live and move and have our being.” We are _____ in His image and in His likeness.

Only an all knowing, all powerful God could create and _____ this marvelous world and us. We’re extremely complex, physical beings with trillions of cells, each of which possesses purpose and amazing abilities. The incredible design of our bodies _____ an intelligent, powerful Designer. He made us not only physically but _____ emotionally, spiritually, and morally.

This leads us to our third question, “Why are our lives on earth temporary?” Our bodies were not made to live forever, yet we’re _____ than a body. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:7, “then the dust will return to the _____ as it was, and the spirit will return to _____ who gave it.” God made our bodies from the _____ of the ground. The body goes _____ to the dust of the ground. God breathed into our bodies the breath of _____. At death the _____ returns to God who gave it. Death is the separation of the spirit from the body (James 2:26).

Death is the end of the body, but there’s more in our _____ than dying. We have an appointment at the judgment _____ of Christ. This is a serious, solemn thought: “it is appointed for men to die once and _____ this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27.) “For we shall all appear before the judgment seat of God” (Romans 14:10). Second Corinthians 5:10 tells why, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his _____ in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” God judges our earthly lives to see where we will _____ eternity.

So, we ask a fourth question, “What is our responsibility?” We must listen to God and live such lives that _____ and glorify Him. God declared from heaven on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; _____ to Him!” (Matthew 17:5). There was a time when folks were to hear Moses and the prophets, but now God _____ to us by his Son. Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has _____ to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.” To believe we must listen to Christ, if we’re going to believe the _____ things. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the _____ of Christ.”

Our responsibility is to believe the _____. We believe Jesus died for our _____, that He was buried, and that He arose from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus said, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be _____; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16). We must do _____ than hear or listen, we must believe what we’ve heard, believe the truth, and whenever we’ve heard it to embrace it, to take it into our hearts. Hearing is not only listening; it’s _____ responding to what we are told. Our duty is to _____ the gospel. Hebrews 5:8-9 says, “Although He [Jesus] 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.”

We cannot earn salvation through meritorious works, but the _____ of God does not save those who fail to obey. John 3:36 in the New American Standard says, “He who believes in the Son has eternal

life; but he who does not _____ the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Because of His grace we love the Lord. We show that love by keeping His commandments (John 14:15). Revelation 22:14 says, “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.” God washes us when we’re baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16). That’s when we’re _____ again and that’s when we have newness of life, according to Romans 6:4.

We then ask our fifth question, “What are our dangers?” There are _____ great dangers confronting us. One is that we will _____ our salvation. Hebrews 2:1-3 says, “For this reason we must pay much _____ attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we _____ if we neglect so great a salvation?” How shall we escape if we neglect? There is no escape if we continue to live _____ the will of God.

Thankfully, God is _____ with us. Second Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow about His _____, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for _____ to come to repentance.” If we perish eternally, it won’t be because God _____ it. He wants all people to be saved and to _____ to the knowledge of the truth. God, however, will not save us against our stubborn _____. Repentance is necessary for salvation. This is true for the person who is becoming a Christian by _____ the gospel, and it’s true for the Christian who walks, and maybe he decides to walk in sin, he needs to _____ of it. Romans 8:6-8 says to the Christian, “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it doesn’t subject itself to the law of God, for it’s not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot _____ God.”

Make no mistake: if we set our minds on serving sin, we’re in _____ of losing our souls. The devil would have us believe that we’re in no great danger, but the devil is a _____. The Lord Jesus said, “For whoever wishes to save his life [that is, his soul] will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My _____ will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his _____? Or what will a man give in _____ for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then _____ every man according to his deeds” (Matthew 16:25-27). Jesus wouldn’t talk about _____ our soul if we were not in very great danger of doing that very thing.

This leads us to our last question, “What is our destiny?” There are only _____ destinies before us. One is _____, where we will live eternally in love, and peace with God. We’ll enjoy His blessing and kindness forever. Those who are righteous and cleansed by the _____ of Jesus will enter heaven. 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 heaven for you.” Oh, I want heaven for my eternal home. I want to be with the Lord who loves me and has blessed me all my life.

The other destiny is _____, where there is punishment, weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Those who are unbelieving, unrighteous and rebellious will be taken there and eternally _____ from God. The Lord Jesus who _____ us mentioned hell more often than any other person in Scripture. He spoke of hell to _____ us and to keep us from going there. Those who love you will warn you of dangers.

Jesus Christ did everything He could to _____ anyone from going to hell. He suffered on the cross to keep us from having to _____ for our sins. But do not imagine that He extends His grace to those who _____ against Him or to those who will not believe what He says. The Lord Jesus said, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to _____ both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

Each of us is _____ one of these destinies, either one or the other. Which will it be? Will you spend eternity in all the _____ of heaven, or will you lose your opportunity by rejecting the Lord? Remember Hebrews 9:27 says, “It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” You must make your decision _____ in this life, while you have opportunity. Because after death, there will be no more opportunities.

We are indeed moral creatures made in the image of God and accountable for our _____ and our _____. We need to appreciate that God created us and gave us life. We must seriously and solemnly face the _____ that we have perishing bodies and we’ll go back to the earth, but our spirits will return to God. Let’s set our _____ on the Lord Jesus Christ who has loved us so greatly that He would die for us. Let’s rejoice that He arose from the dead, assuring us that we _____ would have life after this life is over. May we hear, believe, and obey the truth in response to His love and promise, so that we may be _____ from our old sins. Let’s keep on hearing, believing, and obeying. By continuing in our faith and hope, we won’t _____ the great salvation.

Our lives are _____ with warnings and predictions of disasters. Everyone seems to tell us the sky is falling, and we’re living in _____. We’re warned to _____ for all kinds of political, economic, and health devastations. We hear _____ about everything. Whether these things will happen, I don’t know; but I do know one thing! The Lord Jesus is _____ again. He promised, “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the _____ will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the _____ deeds to a resurrection of life, and those who committed the _____ deeds to a resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29).

If you aren’t prepared for His coming, then you can’t _____ His promises. If you aren’t under the _____ of God in this life, you can’t expect to have God’s blessing in the life to come. God created you so that you could _____ eternally with Him. He gave you a conscience so that you would _____ evil and learn to do what is right. He gave us His _____ so that we might know the truth and be saved. The Father sent His Son into the world to _____ us, to die on the cross for our sins, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

To be prepared, love the Lord Jesus, believe in Him, obey His commandments, and trust in His promises. Turn from sin and live for the Lord in righteousness. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and make Him your Lord. Be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, immersed in water in His name. When you’re baptized into Christ, God washes away your sins (Acts 22:16) and He counts you as His child (Galatians 3:26-27). There’s no better day than today to prepare your soul for eternal life!

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. There’s probably a church of Christ near you. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one.



Pleasing God

When you truly love someone, you want to _____ them. Today, we're going to _____ the joy and the value of pleasing our Father in heaven. We're here to _____ the Scriptures for God's will. God has delivered to us in Scripture His _____ and steadfast love. Our gracious God promises us _____ life if we'll come to Him in faith and love. When you believe God, you take Him at His _____. When you love God, you do everything in your power to please Him and meet His expectations. If you wish to please God, you must know Him and _____ Him. God expects us to do His _____.

I hope and pray you make it your _____ each day to live pleasing to the Lord. It's amazing how many take the grace of God for granted and never think about improving their _____ lives. The apostle Paul said, "So whether we're at home or away, we make it our _____ to please him. For we must all _____ 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).

When you love the Lord, you want to please Him. You don't act out of _____ or because you feel compelled; you act out of love and respect. David said, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your _____, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14). His loving and grateful relationship with God led him to take God's desires and His will seriously rather than to suggest that God ought to be happy with whatever we do. God is God, and we're His creatures and His servants. The Lord Jesus said we should _____ first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

Our reading today comes from Paul's words in 1 Corinthians, chapter 9:24-27.

I hope none of you are disqualified either, so that we can please the Lord and live with Him forever.

"For the ways of a man are before the _____ of the LORD, He watches all his paths" (Proverbs 5:21). God knows _____ about each of us. He knows how we _____ and how we think. He can look into our _____ and know our intentions. The seer Hanani told Asa the king of Judah, "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (2 Chronicles 16:9). It matters to God whether we're devoted to Him and willing to _____ Him.

The Lord Jesus told two parables about the _____ of heaven. The wise were _____ for the coming of the bridegroom, while the foolish were unprepared. The wise virgins entered into the wedding feast, while the five foolish virgins were not allowed. In fact the Lord said to them, "Truly I say to you, I do not _____ you." (Matthew 25:12). We must be on the _____ then, because we don't know the day nor the hour when the Lord will come a second time.

In the second parable, the Lord Jesus tells of a man about to go on a journey, who called his own _____ and entrusted his possessions to them. He gave five talents to one, two talents to another, and one talent to a third servant. A talent was _____ and worth fifteen years of a laborer's wages. The man with five talents gained five more, and the man with two talents gained two more; but the man with one talent dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

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When the master returned from his journey, he _____ the five-talent and the two-talent men. He said, "Well done, good and _____ slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the _____ of your master." Wouldn't it be wonderful on the Day of Judgment to _____ these words from the lips of the Lord Jesus?

The one-talent man said, 'Master, I knew you to be a _____ man, reaping where you didn't sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and I went away and _____ your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, _____ slave, you knew that I reap where I didn't sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money _____ with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who doesn't have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 25:24-31).

At this point, the Lord tells us a little more specifically about what will _____ on Judgment Day at the second coming. All the nations will be gathered before Him as He sits on His glorious _____. He will _____ the sheep from the goats. The King will say to the sheep on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom _____ for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." Because they _____ their fellow man, they were honoring the Lord Jesus and serving Him.

To the goats on His left who failed to serve their fellow man, the King will say, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal _____ which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you didn't invite Me in; naked, and you didn't clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit Me." The goats "will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:31-46).

Our culture has this notion that everyone will be _____ no matter how we've acted or treated our fellow man; but not everyone will enter heaven. The Lord Jesus said, "Enter through the _____ gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are _____ who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are _____ who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). The Lord has no _____ for anyone to be lost, but people who choose to live in sin and choose to forsake the ways of God also choose to separate themselves from Him.

Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, and these people _____ Jesus as the Christ. In Acts 13:46, the Bible says "It was necessary that the _____ of God be spoken to you [that is, to the Jews] first; since you repudiate it and you judge yourselves unworthy of _____ life, behold we're turning to the Gentiles." Yes, people have freewill and make up their own _____ about whether they will believe. People also choose whether they would rather keep sin in their lives or _____. People choose whether they will _____ others with kindness or live in anger and hatred. God has shown us the way to eternal life in Jesus Christ, but many choose their _____ ways. By doing so, they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.

If we wish to please the Father we must _____ in Him and in His promises. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without _____ it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is

and that He is a rewarder of those who _____ Him.” The Lord has blessed us richly, and He’s blessed those who call themselves Christians with the knowledge of His will found in the scriptures, and these also include His promises, so that by His teaching and promises we may become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the _____ by lust. This is a great blessing to be treasured and never taken for granted. The Lord expects us to _____ ourselves to becoming His people and following His will.

Second Peter 1:5-11 says, “For this very reason, make every _____ to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they _____ you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is _____, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to _____ your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an inheritance, an entrance into the _____ kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

The Lord Jesus is our example in all things, yet He realized His _____ was to do the will of the Father. When the disciples wondered why Jesus didn’t eat the food they brought to Him as He sat by the well near Sychar, Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the _____ of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work” (John 4:34). On another occasion, the Lord Jesus said, “I can do nothing on My _____. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who _____ Me” (John 5:30).

The Lord Jesus knew the day would come when He would die for the _____ of the world. Many doubted Jesus during His earthly ministry, but Jesus knew _____ He had come to earth and that He was indeed the Son of God and the Messiah. The Lord Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man [that is, when I’m crucified], then you will _____ that I am He [that is, the Son of God, the Messiah], and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father _____ Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are _____ to Him” (John 8:28-29). At the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus determined to do the will of the Father and not His own will, even at the _____ of His life on a cruel cross.

The Lord Jesus said in Hebrews 10:9 in fulfillment of the prophecy of His sacrifice found in Psalm 40:7-8, “Behold I have _____ to do Your will.” If the Lord Jesus felt the necessity of pleasing His Father in heaven, and if we follow His _____, shouldn’t we do everything in our power to please the Father. The Lord Jesus said, “If you keep My commandments, you will _____ in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love” (John 15:10). I want to remain in the love of the Father, and I want to remain in the love of the Son!

The apostle Paul by inspiration also encourages us to _____ the Lord by our attitudes, our words, our deeds, and by how we treat others. Romans 12:1-2 says, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy _____, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the _____ of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” We are to live out the will of God in our lives and not be conformed to the ways of the world.

Let’s look once again at 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the _____? Run in such a way that you may _____. Now everyone who

competes in the games exercises self-control in _____ things. They then do it to _____ a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my _____, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.” Athletes train for years to be the _____ at their sport for an earthly and perishable reward. Our spiritual _____ is to receive an imperishable crown and to live with the Lord forever. We don’t want to be disqualified by _____ to discipline our lives, to control our thinking, to control our actions, to control our actions, to control our attitudes and to control everything about how we treat others. We want to remain _____ from sinful ways.

Colossians 1:10 urges us to “walk in a manner _____ of the Lord” and “to please Him in all respects.” Whatever God desires should be _____ heart’s desire. We should love the things that God loves and stay _____ of the things that God is offended by. Paul urged the young man Timothy, “Now _____ from youthful lusts and _____ righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22). Let’s keep our hearts pure and serve the Lord with all our hearts and all our soul.

Matthew 17:1-5 says, “Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and _____ them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, _____ with Him. Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it’s good for us to be here; if You wish, I’ll make three tabernacles here, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ And while he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; _____ to Him!’”

The Father in heaven wants us to listen to the Lord Jesus. Whether we listen to Him _____. He will _____ us on the last day by His words (John 12:48). If we’re obedient to His will, we can _____ eternal salvation. 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.”

Obedience to the gospel is necessary to our salvation, and living faithfully to the Lord afterwards is also necessary. To become a Christian, hear the gospel, place your trust in the Lord Jesus and in what He says, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. And this means being immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ. And when you’re baptized, you’re baptized into the death of Christ; and God will wash your sins away (Acts 22:16). When you’re baptized you’re also raised with Christ in that baptism, and you’re able to walk a new life, and it’s free from sin (Romans 6:4-7).



Overcome

Life presents _____ challenges to our Christian lives. Can we overcome them? Today, we're exploring the challenge and the rewards to overcoming life's _____. We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The word of God opens a _____ so that we can see ourselves as we truly are. It warns us of dangers, gives us promises, rebukes our weaknesses, and strengthens our _____. The inspired word of God is profitable for _____, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. It gives us everything we need to know spiritually how to live _____ lives and how to have eternal life.

In the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus addresses the _____ churches of Asia. Some of these congregations were holding _____ and doing well, while others were in spiritual danger. Some of these congregations had in the same assembly people who held fast to the Lord worshiping with others who were deep in _____. Some were facing _____ persecution, while others were challenged by evil or indifference. This sounds similar to churches in our _____ day. Some are healthy, some are dead, some are holding to the truth, and some are in great error.

The Lord speaks to these seven churches with _____. He is indeed Lord, and every _____ is accountable to Him. When churches fail to _____ Him, He calls them to wake up and remember, remember what the Lord did for them on the cross and how He saved them. Some churches simply need to _____ of their sin and lawless ways. Some need to start loving the Lord again, because they have _____ to love or need Him. Whatever challenge they face, they could either fall away, losing their place as a church; or they could overcome the challenge and be the kind of congregation that God _____. The Lord knocked at the door of the people in Laodicea, and He will knock at our door. Will we let Him in or turn Him away? My friend, let Him in!

Our reading today comes from the book of Revelation 2:1-6.

Let's pray. "O, Father help us to love You, to serve You, and to stay close to You, and to live with You always in love and in service. In Jesus' name, Amen."

The book of Revelation makes _____ seven times to those who overcome in chapters 2 and 3. These seven churches _____ in their attitudes, their devotion, and their behavior. Churches are made up of _____. Each person addressed was assembled with one of these seven congregations. Each church member faces a challenge to remain _____ to the Lord. Congregations today _____ in many ways, and some today are very much like some of these seven churches. We may face different challenges, but the challenge to _____ and to be what God would have us to be remains with us all. Some have doctrinal challenges, some face social challenges, some have moral challenges, some have lost their first love, and some simply have stopped caring. You aren't the first one to _____ these challenges, and you can overcome just as many of them did.

The Lord Jesus told the church at Ephesus, "I know your _____ and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they're not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have _____ for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have _____ your first

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love.” Though they were doctrinally strong and persevered in their faith, they had lost the strong love they had in earlier days. Many Christians today face this same challenge to _____ their love for God strong and alive. They may have taken their _____ off of the love found in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

They needed to remember and to _____. The Lord said in Revelation 2:5, “Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the _____ you did at first; or else I’m coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.” Yes, a loss of love means this whole church can _____ its place with God. Jesus gave them hope and an opportunity to _____. The Lord said in verse seven, “To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.”

The Lord prepared the church at Smyrna for the _____ that would come upon them. The city of Smyrna was loyal to Rome and its emperor. The church was _____ in its possessions but _____ with God. They faced slander and imprisonment from their enemies, from both the Jews and the Romans. The Lord said, “Do not _____ what you’re about to suffer. Behold the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be _____, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the _____ of life” (Revelation 2:9-10). He promises, “He who overcomes shall not be _____ by the second death.” The second death means that one will be _____ into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). The one who stays _____ need not fear the lake of fire. He will have a crown of life and _____ eternally with the Lord.

The Lord saw a mixed group at Pergamum, the place where Satan’s _____ is. Some held fast to their faith and didn’t _____ their faith in the Lord. He even mentions Antipas, who died bearing _____ to his faith. But the Lord Jesus had a few things against the church at Pergamum, because they allowed someone to _____ them they could eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. Some also held the _____ views of the Nicolaitans, who like Balaam may have felt they could compromise with the pagans in public and could be sexually free. Jesus told them to _____ or He would come against them with the sword of His mouth. The challenge to remain _____ from sin and from the teaching of the world is great even in our day. Jesus promised, “To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden _____, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it” (Revelation 2:17). God would give them the manna they needed. The white stone probably meant God regarded them as acquitted of sin.

The Lord Jesus knew the _____ of the church at Thyatira, just as He knows our works today. The Lord knew Thyatira’s works, their love, their faith, their _____, and their patient endurance. Unlike Ephesus, their _____ works exceeded their first. But the Lord had much against them, because they _____ Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess. She taught and seduced the servants of God to _____ sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. The Lord gave her time to repent, but she _____ to repent of her sexual immorality. To hear some speak today, there’s no such thing as sexual immorality; but the Lord demands that we live _____ lives.

The Lord said He would _____ those who commit adultery with great tribulation. Unless they repent, He will strike her children, so that all the churches will know that He is the One who searches the mind and heart and will give to each one what his works _____. Others at Thyatira did not hold to her teaching, what some call the deep things of Satan. He told them to hold _____ what you have until I come. He promised, “And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My _____ until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and will give him the morning star” (Revelation 2:26-28). Notice these promises are to the person who _____ faithful to the end.

The Lord Jesus knew about Sardis. Sardis had the reputation of being _____, but they were _____. They needed to _____ up and to strengthen what remains and is about to die. I fear many congregations today are much like Sardis. The Lord had not found their works _____ in the sight of God. He told them to _____ what you received and heard; keep it and repent. If they would not wake up, Jesus said He would come against them like a _____ in the night. In spite of this, a few people had not soiled their garments, and they will _____ with the Lord in white, for they are worthy. Jesus promised, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will _____ his name before My Father, and before His angels” (Revelation 3:6).

The Lord also knew the _____ of the church at Philadelphia. He set before them an open _____, which no one could shut. They had little _____ but had kept His word and had not denied His name. He promised to make the synagogue of Satan _____ down before your feet. They will _____ that the Lord Jesus loved the church at Philadelphia. Because of their love and faith, the Lord _____ to keep them from the hour of trial. He urged them to hold fast to what you _____, so that no one may seize their crown. He promised, that “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the _____ of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name” (Revelation 3:12). Those who _____ to the Lord are loved and live with Him forever.

The Lord also knew about the _____ church at Laodicea. They weren't hot or cold but had become indifferent to God. They didn't _____; they could take up a cross or leave it. So offensive were they to the Lord that the Lord wanted to _____ them out of His mouth. They were saying, “I'm rich, I've prospered, and I need nothing.” You know, people today sometimes feel that they have _____ they need and really don't need God. The church then didn't _____ that they were in God's sight “wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.” People today are just as wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked; but they don't know it. He counseled the church at Laodicea to _____ gold refined by fire from Him, so they could really be rich in the things of God. To buy white garments from Him, so that they won't be ashamed of their _____ nakedness. Buy salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may _____ spiritually. While they had physical blessings, they lacked a warm, loving relationship with the _____. You may not be close to the Lord either. My friend, we all need the Lord; and nothing else, nothing else will do.

The Lord Jesus said, “Those whom I love, I _____ and discipline, so be zealous and repent. (Those at Laodicea) Behold, I stand at the door and _____. And if anybody _____ my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:19-20). Jesus loves and wants fellowship even with those who don't _____ Him. Friend, He wants fellowship with you. He promised, “He who overcomes, I will _____ to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (verse 21).

Friend, are you overcoming the challenges of your _____ or failing to overcome? Are you remembering and holding fast to the Lord's _____, or are you casting aside His words to do your own thing? Do you love Him deeply, or have you _____ your first love? Are you tolerating sinful things, or do you need to _____ of the sinful ways so prevalent that are in our world? Are you alive or are you dead spiritually?

Many people who were once faithful and practicing Christians have _____ indifferent to the Lord and to His church. They live according to their _____ rules and do as they please. They've forgotten the _____ and they have forgotten what the Lord did for them. The Lord is not blind or naive. He

knows and will reward or punish each person according to what he or she _____. You may tolerate evil beliefs or _____ ways, but the Lord won't tolerate them. He will give us _____ to repent of our lawless ways; but when people _____ to repent, there comes a time when His patience ends. Sin will harden your _____ and cause you to fall away in unbelief. In the end you will be lost.

The Lord loves those who love Him and _____ His commandments. He seeks to make a _____ in our lives. The Lord Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, he will _____ my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not _____ my words. And the word that you _____ is not mine but the Father's who sent me" (John 14:23-24). The Lord wants to love you and for you to love Him. That's why He's knocking at your door, hoping you will _____ the door. He won't barge in; you _____ open it for Him. No matter what your heart or life has been in the past, you can repent and _____ opening the door of your mind and your heart and let the Lord come in.

Can you hear the Lord knocking at your door? Can you hear His words calling you? Will you open the door or leave it closed? Will you turn to Him?

To each of the seven churches of Asia, the Lord Jesus said, "The one who has an ear, let him _____ what the Spirit says to the churches." Listening to what the Spirit says in the word of God is still just as important _____ as it was in the first century. The Spirit didn't speak these words to the people of the world, but to people who were _____ of the Lord's church. They knew about the grace and love of the cross; and they knew of the second coming and Judgment Day. They needed _____, however, that the Lord knew what was going on in their lives.

The words "wake up" appear twice in this chapter, "remember" appears twice, "faithful" appears three times, "hold fast" appears three times, and "repent" appears eight times. The Lord Jesus was trying to get the churches to wake up, to remember, to repent, to be faithful and to hold fast to Him. What the Lord Jesus said to these seven churches is just what we too _____ to hear as well. As a Christian, you may need to repent, confess your sins, and pray to God to forgive you. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

By "Christian," I mean one who has obeyed the gospel according to the teaching of the Scripture. To obey the gospel, believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repent of evil and turn to the Lord, confess Jesus as the Christ, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ. When you're baptized, God washes away your sins and gives you newness of life (Roman 6:3-7, and Acts 22:16).

Battles of the Heart

Throughout Scripture we're exposed to _____ people make. They'll either follow their _____ will or the will of God. Today, we're exploring _____ battles of the heart. We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures not only reveal the heart of God, they also _____ us to see ourselves. They help us _____ the temptations and challenges we face, that they're not unique to us. The Scriptures do not shun _____ the good and evil found in our lives. They honestly reveal when people have done the _____ thing and when people have failed. Through the Word of God we can see the _____ of choices people make, some for blessing and some not.

I want to tell the _____ of three battles of the heart. Three men, who went through a tremendous _____, discovering a lot about themselves. Battles of the heart _____ us a lot about ourselves. These battles _____ what kind of person we are. They _____ our strengths and our weaknesses. They reveal our commitment to God and what is right or what we are willing to _____ in our lives. They show us our priorities and what we truly _____.

The Lord Jesus said, "But store up for yourselves treasures in _____, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your _____ will be also" (Matthew 6:20-21). Where is your heart? What are your treasures? Romans 8:5-6 says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is _____, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and _____." You're making choices now that will affect your _____ destiny. Will you win or lose?

Our reading today comes from the Gospel according to Luke 22:31-34, and this discussion takes place on the night when Jesus of course was betrayed, the night before He was to be crucified.

Battles of the heart come to _____ of us, tempting and testing us. The New Testament tells of three people who _____ critical battles in their hearts over right and wrong. Each of them faced the consequences of their choices but each in a _____ way. These challenges of _____ come to all of us. How we _____ to matters makes a difference. So let's look closer at these three people.

First, we take a look at what Scripture _____ us about the heart of Judas Iscariot. Judas had a _____ with greed and money; he was in a position to use money that didn't _____ to him since he carried the money box for Jesus and the disciples. Judas got into the _____ of pilfering money to meet his own desires. You'll remember that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, broke an alabaster vial of perfume, to _____ the feet of Jesus. This perfume was a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard. Mary anointed his feet and wiped His feet with her _____. The house was filled with fragrance.

John 12:4-8 says: "But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, 'Why was this perfume not _____ for three hundred denarii and given to _____ people?' He said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a _____, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. Therefore Jesus said, 'Let her _____, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.'"

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

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Judas apparently had heard of the _____ to kill Jesus. Matthew 26:14-16 says: “Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What will you _____ me if I deliver him over to you?’ And they _____ him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to _____ him. Luke 22: says, “Satan entered into Judas.” When Jesus and the disciples were observing the Passover on the _____ before Jesus died, Matthew 26:20-25 says: “Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the _____ with the twelve disciples. As they were eating, He said, ‘Truly I say to you that _____ of you will betray Me.’ Being deeply grieved, they _____ one began to say to Him, ‘Surely not I, Lord?’ And He answered, ‘He who dipped his _____ with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. The Son of Man is to go, just as it is _____ of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been _____ for that man if he had not been born.’ And Judas, who was betraying Him, said, ‘Surely it is not I, Rabbi?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it _____.’”

Later that night in the _____ of Gethsemane, Judas betrayed Him. Matthew 26:47-50 says: “While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large _____ with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I _____, He’s the one; seize Him.’ Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, ‘Hail, Rabbi!’ and _____ Him. And Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you have _____ for.’ Then they came and laid _____ on Jesus and seized Him.”

Later Judas regretted the great _____ he committed. Matthew 27:3-5 says, “Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt _____ and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have _____ by betraying innocent blood.’ But they said, ‘What is that to us? See to that yourself!’ And he _____ the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and _____ himself.” The name Judas Iscariot will always be associated with betrayal and shame. This ending is _____ beyond measure.

The second person to face a battle of the heart that night was the Lord Jesus himself. Matthew 26:36-39 says: “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and _____.’ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and _____ to be grieved and distressed. And then He said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of _____; remain here and keep watch with Me.’ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His _____ and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup _____ from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.’” Jesus is here _____ what He knows that He will be condemned. He knows He’s going to _____ humiliation, false charges, beatings, scourging, and crucifixion. He knows He will die a _____, agonizing death. There was indeed a _____ battle going on in his heart. Do I save myself from death and fail my Father’s _____, or do I die an agonizing death and _____ His will? Thankfully, His _____ for the Father led Him to do what was right. His death _____ us all.

Hebrews 5:7-9 describes that night, “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was _____ because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned _____ from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who _____ Him the source of eternal salvation.” Because the Lord Jesus willingly offered His body as a sacrifice in obedience to His Father, we have _____ in our obedience to Him.

The third person to face a battle of the heart that night is Simon Peter. The Lord Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your _____ may not fail. And when you have _____ again, strengthen your

brothers.’ Peter said to him, ‘Lord, I’m ready to _____ with you both to prison and to death.’ And Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you _____ me three times that you know me’” (Luke 22:31-34). These four verses reveal a prediction, telling us of the battle of a heart.

Jesus had said to Peter, James and John, “The spirit is indeed _____, but the flesh is _____” in Matthew 26:41; and this is certainly true. We want to do what’s right, we plan to do what is right, but circumstances can lead our fears and our flesh to battle against our _____ desires.

Matthew 26:69-74 tells the story of what Peter did: “Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, ‘You too were _____ Jesus the Galilean.’ But he denied it before them all, saying, ‘I don’t _____ what you’re talking about.’ When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, ‘This man was _____ Jesus of Nazareth.’ And again he denied it with an _____, ‘I do not know the man.’ A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, ‘Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you _____ gives you away.’ Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I _____ know the man!’ And immediately a rooster _____.”

Luke 22:61 says that the third denial took place in the Lord’s _____, “The Lord turned and _____ at Peter.” Can you imagine how _____ Peter felt when he realized how he had failed Jesus? Matthew 26:75 says, “And Peter _____ the word which Jesus had said, ‘Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ And he went out and he _____ bitterly.” Have you ever wept bitterly over your sins? All Peter’s boasting and good intentions didn’t _____ him from shaming himself in front of the Lord. Just as the Lord saw and heard Peter, the Lord also sees and hears us when we sin (Proverbs 15:3).

Thankfully, this is not the _____ of the story. Peter did _____ back and strengthened his brothers. When the women came and told the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead, Peter went with John to the empty _____. They _____ for themselves the grave clothes without a body. When Peter saw Jesus at the Sea of Galilee, he professed his _____ for Jesus three times. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter with the eleven boldly _____ and served the Lord for the rest of his days. Peter faced a crisis of fear and temporarily lost, but he later gained his strength enough to _____ all that came his way. Let’s apply these battles to our lives.

Like Judas, some people fail God and _____ life is all over. They believe they can _____ be saved, so they withdraw from God and die bitterly sad and alone. Judas regretted what he did, returned the thirty pieces of silver, but did not _____. Judas didn’t _____ up to his failure and come back in repentance, asking for forgiveness. Instead he withdrew from God and took his own life.

I wish Judas could have realized how great the _____ of God truly is. The chief of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, became the apostle Paul. Paul said, “It’s a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to _____ sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found _____, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an _____ for those who would believe in Him for eternal life” (1 Timothy 1:15-16). I hope you know God stands ready to forgive you, when you turn to Him in obedience.

Like Jesus, some folks know what they have to do, as hard as it is, and _____ to do it, because they love God, and they love others, and they’re committed to doing what is right. The Lord Jesus said, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so _____ to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; _____ in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things

I've spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made _____" (John 15:8-11). Keeping God's commandments brings joy not regret.

Like Peter, many grow afraid, deny the Lord by their actions, and then _____ weep bitterly when they have to face it. Peter faced his sin, but he was able to _____ from it and bless the lives of others. He knew what it was like to be frightened by persecution, but he also understood the forgiveness that God gives to the penitent and the _____ He gives to the persecuted. First Peter 5:8-10 says, "Be of sober spirit, be on the _____. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring _____, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your _____, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you've suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who _____ you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

There's likely a battle in your heart. We _____ face them. Don't _____ on yourself if you fail. Everyone fails at some time or another. Many of us have failed often. We may even have developed a sinful _____ that controls us. When you fail, recognize what you've done, be honest with yourself, admit what you've done, and _____. As long as you hold on to a sinful behavior, you'll have to live with a _____ conscience; and you won't like yourself. Like the prodigal, you won't feel _____ to be called the Father's son or daughter.

You can let your _____ overcome you, as Judas did; or you can _____ from your mistakes and repent. You can turn back to God. Even slaves to sin can become _____ of God! Romans 6:16-18 says, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, that you're slaves of the one whom you _____, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the _____ of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."

No matter what your past has been, you can _____! Slaves of sin became slaves of God when they obeyed from the heart what God says. You can become a child of God. Believe with your heart Jesus Christ is God's son, repent and turn from sin to the Lord, confess your faith, and be baptized into Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). You can have a new life and a good conscience. Obey the Lord today!

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one.