

SECRET CHURCH™

KNOW HIS WORD. KNOW HIS PERSECUTED.

For millions of believers around the world, faith in Christ and belief in the teachings of the Bible are not only discouraged but actually dangerous.

KNOW HIS WORD.
KNOW HIS PERSECUTED.

Periodically, Secret Church gatherings are held to engage in an intense six-hour Bible study as we identify with and pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the globe.

The objective of Secret Church is for you to pass along what you learn in these gatherings to others so that you can make disciples of Christ in all nations for God's glory.

secretchurch.org

What Is Secret Church?

Secret Church began at The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Alabama, based on time Dr. David Platt spent with brothers and sisters in underground Asian house churches. In those contexts, they gather together at the risk of their lives for 8-12 hours at a time simply to pray, worship, and study the Word. It's simple, raw, dangerous, and satisfying ... all at the same time.

The leaders at Brook Hills began asking if they could do the same thing and decided to try it. They set up a Friday evening where people could gather from 6pm until midnight for two main purposes: to worship through intensive study of the Word, and to identify with our persecuted brothers and sisters by praying intentionally for them. Simply six hours of straight teaching and prayer.

At the first gathering there were about 1,000 people, and after that it began to grow. "Secret Church" now takes place with thousands of believers joining together in homes, church buildings, and other locations all around the world. One of Dr. Platt's favorite sights is to look out across a room packed with people at midnight with their Bibles open just soaking in the Word of God.

The objective of Secret Church is not just to come and learn for one night but to take what we've learned and pass it along to others. We also want to recognize the great need to pray and come alongside our brothers and sisters who live in places around the world where there is little to no gospel witness or where the gospel is met with resistance. We want to use what we've learned during this gathering to make disciples of Christ—both locally and globally.

Beyond These Walls

We're glad you've decided to participate in Secret Church. But even if no one showed up, it would still be worth the effort. Actually, this Bible study will hopefully benefit far more people than just those who were in attendance.

Here's how ...

Whenever we gather together for Secret Church, we record the teaching sessions. Those recordings are then transcribed and translated into many different languages, including Spanish, Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, and others. The foreign language versions of Secret Church will be available online as translations are completed. But that is just the beginning.

Most Christ-followers around the world don't have access to seminaries or Bible colleges. In fact, Christ-followers in many parts of the world have no formal Christian teaching at all. David will lead additional Secret Church studies, creating numerous hours of Bible teaching on various biblical and theological issues. We will then be able to distribute those resources worldwide. The sessions together will comprise a portable seminary, so to speak, with mini-courses in biblical training accessible to anyone.

At each Secret Church gathering we take up an offering. All the proceeds will support persecuted Christians worldwide through ongoing ministry initiatives and provide Secret Church Bible teaching materials in multiple languages. Imagine a house-church leader in Asia or the Middle East, now able to hear hours of Bible teaching as he listens to Secret Church in his own language. With your help, this can become a reality.

If you would like to make a donation to Secret Church or would like any of the Secret Church resources in another language go to Radical.net.

CHRIST, CULTURE, AND A CALL TO ACTION

Secret Church

See the Culture Around Us ...

- Abortion
 - In the world ...
 - Over 42 million abortions occur every year; more than 115,000 abortions occur every day.
 - At least one woman has an abortion every second of every day.
 - In the United States ...
 - Over 45 million abortions have occurred since 1973.
 - 1.4 million abortions occur every year; 3,000 abortions occur every day.
 - One-third of American women have an abortion at some point in their lives.
- Orphans and Widows
 - Orphans
 - Approximately 153 million children live as orphans (meaning they have lost at least one parent).
 - That number includes 18 million children who have lost both parents.
 - That number does NOT include millions of effectively orphaned children who live in institutions or on the streets, in addition to others who live as “social orphans” (meaning a child rarely sees his or her parent or experiences life as a part of a family).
 - Widows
 - Approximately 245 million women live as widows in the world.
 - About 115 million of them live in significant economic deprivation and/or social isolation as a result of being a widow.
- Poverty
 - Today, over 1 billion people live (and die) in desperate poverty (on less than \$1 a day).
 - The people ...
 - 700 million in slums.
 - 500 million on the verge of starvation.
 - 93 million beggars.
 - 200 million children exploited for labor.
 - The poverty ...
 - Lack of food and water.
 - Illiteracy.
 - Inadequate medical care.
 - Disease.
 - Brain damage.
 - Over 2 billion others live on less than \$2 a day.

- More than 18,000 children will die today due to either starvation or a preventable disease.

“While the average American lives on more than 90 dollars per day, approximately 1 billion people live on less than 1 dollar per day and 2.6 billion—40 percent of the world’s population—live on less than 2 dollars per day The Bible’s teachings should cut to the heart of North American Christians. By any measure, we are the richest people ever to walk on planet Earth. Furthermore, at no time in history has there ever been greater economic disparity in the world than at the present.”

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

- Slavery

- Over 27 million people live in slavery today.
 - This is more than any other time in history.
 - There are more slaves today than were seized from Africa in four centuries of the transatlantic slave trade.
- Many of these millions are bought, sold, and exploited for sex in what has become one of the fastest-growing industries on earth.
 - Sex trafficking is a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide. A human trafficker can earn 20 times what he or she paid for a girl. Provided the girl was not physically brutalized to the point of ruining her beauty, the pimp could sell her again for a greater price because he had trained her and broken her spirit, which saves future buyers the hassle. One study in the Netherlands found that, on average, a single sex slave earned her pimp at least \$250,000 a year.
 - Sex traffickers use a variety of ways to “condition” their victims, including subjecting them to starvation, rape, gang rape, physical abuse, beating, confinement, threats of violence toward the victim and victim’s family, forced drug use, and shame. These victims suffer devastating physical and psychological harm. However, due to language barriers, lack of knowledge about available services, and the frequency with which traffickers move victims, human trafficking victims and their perpetrators are difficult to catch.
 - Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises because it holds relatively low risk with high profit potential. Criminal organizations are increasingly attracted to human trafficking because, unlike drugs, humans can be sold repeatedly.
 - According to United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), over the past 30 years, over 30 million children have been sexually exploited through human trafficking.

- Marriage

- Nearly half of all first marriages will end in divorce.
- Over the last 30 years, the number of cohabitating couples nearly quadrupled.

- Over the past 40 years, the number of independent female households in the U.S. grew by 65%, and the number of independent male households leapt 120%.
- Fewer than half of all American households today are made up of married couples.
- Pornography
- Racial Strife
- Illegal Immigration
- Decreasing Liberty
- Increasing Persecution
 - Christians face persecution of some kind in more than 60 different countries today.
 - At least 100 Christians around the world are killed every month for their faith in Christ.
 - Countless others are persecuted through abuse, beatings, imprisonment, torture, and deprivation of food, water, and shelter.
- Lack of Gospel Access

Hear Christ's Call to Us ...

Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther 4:13-14

- Not to accommodate.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

1 John 2:15-17

"Today, the greatest challenge facing American evangelicals is not persecution from the world, but seduction by the world."

C.J. Mahaney

"We need a young generation and others who will be willing to stand in loving confrontation, but real confrontation, in contrast to the mentality of constant accommodation with the current forms of the world spirit as they surround

us today, and in contrast to the way in which so much of evangelicalism has developed the automatic mentality to accommodate at each successive point.”

Francis Schaeffer

“If we look at many of our evangelical leaders and at much of our evangelical literature we find the same destructive views on divorce, extreme feminism, and even homosexuality as we find in the world Evangelicalism is deeply infiltrated with the world spirit of our age when it comes to marriage and sexual morality There are those who call themselves evangelicals and who are among evangelical leadership who completely deny the biblical pattern for male and female relationships in the home and church. There are many who accept the idea of equality without distinction and deliberately set aside what the Scriptures teach at this point. And there are others who call themselves evangelical and then affirm the acceptability of homosexuality and even the idea of homosexual ‘marriage.’... The idea of absolute, autonomous freedom from God’s boundaries flows into the idea of equality without distinction, which flows into the denial of what it truly means to be male and female, which flows into abortion and homosexuality, and the destruction of the home and the family, and ultimately the destruction of our culture.”

Francis Schaeffer

“I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church Put your finger on any prosperous page in the Church’s history, and [you] will find a little marginal note [that says]: ‘In this age [people] could readily see where the Church began and where the world ended.’”

Charles Spurgeon

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.” Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

- **Nor to acquiesce.**

“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you

do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.”
Ezekiel 33:7-9

“We must ask where we as evangelicals have been in the battle for truth and morality in our culture. Have we as evangelicals been on the front lines contending for the faith and confronting the moral breakdown over the last forty to sixty years? Most of the evangelical world has not been active in the battle, or even been able to see that we are in a battle The last sixty years have given birth to a moral disaster, and what have we done? Sadly we must say that the evangelical world has been part of the disaster. More than this, the evangelical response itself has been a disaster. Where is the clear voice speaking to the crucial issues of the day with distinctively biblical, Christian answers? With tears we must say it is not there and that a large segment of the evangelical world has become seduced by the world spirit of this present age. And more than this, we can expect the future to be a further disaster if the evangelical world does not take a stand for biblical truth and morality in the full spectrum of life.”
Francis Schaeffer

- But to _____ **act** _____.

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
Matthew 5:13-16

- With _____ **conviction** _____.
 - We are involved in a spiritual war.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
Ephesians 6:12

Be sober-minded; be watchful. [Our] adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
1 Peter 5:8

- We must battle with spiritual weapons.

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ ...

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:13-20

- So let's _____ hear _____ God's Word.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

2 Timothy 3:16-4:4

- The Word is my only source of authority.
 - A preacher's authority is NOT personal.
 - A preacher's authority is NOT organizational.
 - A preacher's authority is NOT intellectual.
 - A preacher's authority is NOT psychological.
 - A preacher's authority is NOT experiential.
 - A preacher's authority is ONLY biblical.
- The Word is our ultimate source of _____ accountability _____.

Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and

trembles at my word. He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like one who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations; I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight." Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word ...
Isaiah 66:1-5

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
Romans 10:17

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
2 Timothy 2:1-2

- Let's _____ believe _____ God's Word.
 - Let's be careful not to twist it.

"The Ten Commandments are based on 'nothing less than the tribal prejudices, stereotypes, and limited knowledge of the people who created them.' [Consequently, ...] Biblical sexual standards 'need to be exposed immediately as immoral and ... removed from the ethical guidelines that any of us today would seek to follow.'"
Retired Bishop John Shelby Spong

"The feminist movement in Western culture is engaged in the slow execution of Christ and Yahweh. Yet very few of the women and men now working ... [to change sexual morality] within Christianity and Judaism realize the extent of their heresy They understand themselves to be improving the practice of their religions I do not agree The reforms that Christian and Jewish women are proposing are major departures from tradition. When feminists succeed in changing the position of women in Christianity and Judaism they will shake these religions to their roots."
Naomi Goldenberg

"It is not persecution alone that we ought to fear, not those forces that in open warfare range abroad to overthrow and defeat the servants of God. It is easy enough to be on one's guard when the danger is obvious; one can stir up one's courage for the fight when the Enemy shows himself in his true colors. There is more need to fear and beware of the Enemy when he creeps up secretly, when he beguiles us by a show of peace and steals forward by those hidden approaches which have earned him the name of the 'Serpent.' ... Those whom he has failed to keep in the blindness of their old [pagan] ways he beguiles, and leads them up a new road of illusion. He snatches away people from within the Church herself, and while

they think that coming close to the light they have now done with the night of the world, he plunges them unexpectedly into darkness of another kind. They still call themselves Christians after abandoning the Gospel of Christ and the observance of His [moral] law; though walking in darkness they think they still enjoy the light.”
Cyprian

- Let's be intentional to trust it.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*
Proverbs 3:5-6

- And let's _____ obey _____ God's Word.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
James 1:22-27

- With _____ compassion _____.

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
Matthew 9:35-36

- Let's feel His heart.

*And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!
But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*
Luke 19:41-44

- Let's reflect His heart.

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Romans 9:1-5

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:34-40

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, 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.

1 John 3:16-18

o With _____ **courage** _____.

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' —for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:23-31

- Let's pray with confidence.
- Let's _____ **proclaim** _____ the truth.

"If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proven, and to be steady on all the battle fronts besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

Elizabeth Rundle Charles, commenting on Martin Luther

- Let's participate with God.

Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Acts 5:12-16

- Leaning on His _____ grace _____.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Titus 2:11-14

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Colossians 2:13-15

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
Psalms 103:8-12

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
Romans 8:1-2

- Living for His _____ glory _____.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.
1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

"A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, wholehearted, fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing; and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies, whether he has health, or whether he has sickness, whether he is rich, or whether he is poor, whether he pleases man, or whether he gives offense, whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish, whether he gets blame, or whether he gets praise, whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame, for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it; he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn; and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him."
J.C. Ryle

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbling man wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.
Acts 17:16-21

- In the midst of _____ idolatry _____,
let's long for God to be praised.

*I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to
no other, nor my praise to carved idols.
Isaiah 42:8*

*"I cannot endure existence if Jesus is not glorified; it
is hell to me, if he is always dishonored."
Henry Martyn*

*So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive
that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed
the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the
unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you."
Acts 17:22-23*

- He is the Creator of the universe.

*"The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of
heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man ..."
Acts 17:24*

- He is the Sustainer of life.

*"... nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything,
since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."
Acts 17:25*

- He is the Ruler of the nations.

*"And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live
on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods
and the boundaries of their dwelling place ..."
Acts 17:26*

- He is the Savior of the needy.

*"... that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him
and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us ..."
Acts 17:27*

- He is the Father of each of us.

“... for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”
Acts 17:28

- He is the King over all of us.

“Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.”
Acts 17:29

- He is the Judge of the world.

“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands 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.” Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.
Acts 17:30-34

- In the midst of _____ immorality _____,
let’s believe in the power of the gospel.

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.
Acts 18:1-11

- We are not _____ afraid _____.
- We are not alone.

- We will not be silent.
- We will not be _____ stopped _____.

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law." But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things." And he drove them from the tribunal. And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this. After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus. When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.
Acts 18:12-22

- We serve a great God.

*Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!
 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."
 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth.
 He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.*
Psalm 96:3-13

- We share a glorious _____ gospel _____.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."
 Romans 1:16-17*

- There is hope for the hurting!

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

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 cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

- There is freedom for the enslaved!

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:17-21

- There is love for the lost!

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Luke 19:10

- There is beauty for the battered!

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:1-3

(See also Luke 4:17-19.)

- He makes the weak strong!

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalms 46:1

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
2 Corinthians 12:9-10

▪ He makes the unclean clean!

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
Psalm 51:1-2

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.
Isaiah 43:25

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:17-21

▪ He makes the dead _____ live _____!

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."
John 11:25-26

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor

*crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."
Revelation 21:3-5*

Consider Where We're Going ...

- The Gospel of Christ: The Greatest Offense
 - Who God Is
 - Who We Are
 - Why Jesus Is Unique
 - What We Must Do
 - What Is At Stake
- Issues in our Culture: A Call to Action
 - Abortion
 - Orphans and Widows
 - Poverty
 - Slavery
 - Sexuality
 - Ethnicity and Immigration
 - Liberty and Persecution
- The Greatest Injustice of All
- The Ultimate Hope for All

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST: THE GREATEST OFFENSE

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
1 Corinthians 1:18-25

The Gospel is the good news that the just and gracious Creator of the universe has looked upon hopelessly sinful men and women and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that everyone who turns from their sin and themselves and trusts in Jesus as Savior and Lord will be reconciled to God forever.

- Who God Is
- Who We Are
- Why Jesus Is Unique
- What We Must Do
- What Is At Stake

Who God Is ...

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

- He is the _____ Creator _____ of all.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.
Isaiah 40:28

- We belong to Him.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
Colossians 1:16-17

- We are sustained by Him.

“... for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”
Acts 17:28

- We are accountable to Him.

He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.
Romans 2:6-11

- He is _____ holy _____ above all.

“I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.”
Isaiah 43:15

- He is without equal.

To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.
Isaiah 40:18-26

- He is without error.

*“The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.”
Deuteronomy 32:4*

- He is _____ just _____.

*The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me.
Psalm 7:8*

*He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
Proverbs 17:15*

- He is _____ good _____.

*The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.
Psalm 145:9*

*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
Genesis 1:31*

- He is _____ gracious _____.

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people ...
Titus 2:11*

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
John 3:16*

Who We Are ...

*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
Genesis 1:26-28*

- We are created by _____ God _____.

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Psalm 139:13-16

- We are corrupted by _____ sin _____.

"We are able to think, choose, create, love and worship; but we are also able to hate, covet, fight and kill. Human beings are the inventors of hospitals for the care of the sick, of universities for the acquisition of wisdom, and of churches for the worship of God. But they have also invented torture chambers, concentration camps, and nuclear arsenals. This is the paradox of our humanness. We are both noble and ignoble, both rational and irrational, both moral and immoral, both creative and destructive, both loving and selfish, both Godlike and bestial."

John Stott

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Genesis 2:16-17

- This is not about mere information concerning good and evil.
- This is all about the determination of good and evil.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:1-5

- We take commands from God and turn them into _____ questions _____ about God.
 - We reject God's authority.
 - We relativize all morality.

*"The position of the modern evolutionist, therefore, is that ... morality is a biological adaptation no less than are hands and feet and teeth Considered as a rationally justifiable set of claims about an objective something, it is illusory."
Michael Ruse, Agnostic Philosopher of Science*

*"In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, and no other good. Nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music."
Richard Dawkins, Atheist*

- We are centered on _____ **self** _____.

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ...
Romans 5:12*

*... as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
Romans 3:10-12*

- We are morally _____ **evil** _____.

*And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.
Genesis 8:21*

- We are spiritually sick.

*But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."
Matthew 9:12*

- We are slaves to sin.

*Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."
John 8:34*

- We are blinded to truth.

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4:4

- We are children of wrath.

... among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:3

- We are spiritually _____ dead _____.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ...

Ephesians 2:1

Why Jesus Is Unique ...

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6

"One of the most extraordinary things Jesus did in his teaching (and did it so unobtrusively that many people read the Gospels without even noticing it) was to set himself apart from everybody else. For example, by claiming to be the good shepherd who went out into the desert to seek his lost sheep, he was implying that the world was lost, that he wasn't, and that he could seek and save it. In other words, he put himself in a moral category in which he was alone. Everybody else was in darkness; he was the light of the world. Everybody else was hungry; he was the bread of life. Everybody else was thirsty; he could quench their thirst. Everybody else was sinful; he could forgive their sins. Indeed, on two separate occasions he did so, and both times observers were scandalized. They asked, 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' (Mark 2:5-7; Luke 7:48-49). If Jesus claimed authority to forgive the penitent, he also claimed authority to judge the impenitent. Several of his parables implied that he expected to return at the end of history. On that day, he said, he would sit on his glorious throne. All nations would stand before him, and he would separate them from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats. In other words, he would settle their eternal destiny. Thus he made himself the central figure on the day of judgment."

John Stott

- The ultimate problem ...
 - How can a just God save rebellious sinners who are due His judgment?

*He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
Proverbs 17:15*

- The only solution ...

*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ...
1 Timothy 2:5*

- Jesus' life displayed the _____ righteousness _____
- of God.

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:21*

- He is fully man.

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.
Luke 2:7*

*Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
Hebrews 2:17*

- He is fully God.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
John 1:1-4*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
Colossians 1:15-17*

*For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily ...
Colossians 2:9*

"The doctrine of Christ's divinity seems to me not something stuck on which you can unstick but something that peeps out at every point so that you'd have to unravel the whole web to get rid of it."

C.S. Lewis

- He is without _____ sin _____.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:15-16

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

1 Peter 2:22

You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

1 John 3:5

- Jesus' death satisfied the _____ justice _____ of God.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26

- At the cross, God expressed His judgment upon sin.
- At the cross, God endured His judgment against sin.
- At the cross, God enabled _____ salvation _____ for sinners.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Romans 5:9

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

- o Jesus' resurrection demonstrated the _____ power
of God.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
1 Corinthians 15:3-5

I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.
Revelation 1:18

What We Must Do ...

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
Acts 2:37-41

- We must _____ repent _____ (turn from our sin and ourselves).

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
Mark 1:14-15

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out ...
Acts 3:19

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."
Luke 9:23-24

- We must _____ believe _____ (trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord).

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."
Acts 16:31

*"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."
Acts 2:36*

*... because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
Romans 10:9*

What Is At Stake ...

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."
John 3:16*

- Heaven is a glorious reality for all who trust in Christ.

*But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
Philippians 3:20-21*

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."
Revelation 21:1-4*

- Hell is a dreadful reality for all who die without Christ.

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
Revelation 20:11-15*

"If Jesus, the Lord of Love and Author of Grace spoke about hell more often, and in a more vivid, blood-curdling manner than anyone else, it must be a crucial truth."
Tim Keller

- It is a place of ultimate _____ justice _____.

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

Revelation 19:1-4

- It is a place of fiery agony.

"And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'"

Mark 9:43-48

- It is a place of conscious _____ torment _____.

"The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'"

Luke 16:22-28

- It is a place of outer darkness.

"I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while

the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 8:11-12

- It is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

... and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:42

- It is a place of continual _____ rebellion _____.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

"The sinner in hell does not become morally neutral upon his sentence to hell. We must not imagine the damned sinner displaying gospel repentance and longing for the presence of Christ. The damned indeed are longing for an escape from punishment, but they are not 'new creations.' They do not, in hell, love the Lord their God with heart, mind, soul, and strength. Instead, they are now handed over to the full display of their natures apart from grace, natures that are satanic (John 8:44). Thus, the condemnation continues forever and ever and ever, with no end in view either for the sin or the punishment thereof."

Russell Moore

- It is a place of vile association.

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Matthew 25:41

- It is a place of divine _____ destruction _____.

But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

2 Peter 3:7

- It is a place of complete separation.

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ...

2 Thessalonians 1:9

- o It is a place of eternal _____ duration _____.

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

Revelation 14:9-11

"When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions and millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then you will have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains."

Jonathan Edwards

- The gospel demands a decision ...
 - o Will you turn _____ from _____ Jesus?
 - Live without Christ now.
 - Die without Christ forever.
 - o Or will you turn _____ to _____ Jesus?
 - Die with Christ now.
 - Live with Christ forever.

"The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions. It hushes their fears and allows them to practice all pleasant forms of iniquity while death draws every day nearer and the command to repent goes unheeded."

A.W. Tozer

"What is most needed today is a wide proclamation of those truths which are the least acceptable to the flesh. What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the character of God—His absolute sovereignty, His ineffable holiness, His inflexible justice, His unchanging veracity. What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the condition of the natural man—his total depravity, his spiritual insensibility, his inveterate hostility to God, the fact that he is 'condemned already' and that the wrath of a sin-hating God is even now abiding upon him. What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the alarming danger in which sinners are—the indescribably awful doom which awaits them, the fact that if they follow only a little further their present course they shall most certainly suffer the due reward of their iniquities. What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the nature of that punishment which awaits the lost—the awfulness of it, the hopelessness of it, the unendurableness of it, the endlessness of it."

A.W. Pink

ISSUES IN OUR CULTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

- **Abortion**
- Orphans and Widows
- Poverty
- Slavery
- Sexuality
- Ethnicity and Immigration
- Liberty and Persecution

ABORTION

He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments ...

Psalm 78:5-7

Abortion and God ...

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Psalm 139:13-16

- Abortion is an affront to God's sovereign _____ authority _____
- as Creator.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

Isaiah 40:28

- He is the giver of life.

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Job 33:4

- o He is the taker of life.

*And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."
Job 1:21*

*See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
Deuteronomy 32:39*

- Abortion is an assault on God's glorious _____ work _____ in creation.

*O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
Psalm 104:24*

- o The way God creates people compels praise.

*These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works, who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.
Psalm 104:27-34*

- The womb contains a _____ person _____ formed in the image of God.

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
Genesis 1:26-28*

- If the unborn is not human, no justification for abortion is necessary.
- If the unborn is human, no justification for abortion is _____adequate_____.
-

- o “But women have a right to privacy with their doctors.”
- o “But making abortions illegal forces women into back alleys with coat hangers.”
- o “But more children will create a drain on the economy.”
- o “But women should have the freedom to choose.”

“Think of a little girl named Rachel. Rachel is two months old, but she is still six weeks away from being a full-term baby. She was born prematurely at 24 weeks, in the middle of her mother’s second trimester. On the day of her birth Rachel weighed one pound, nine ounces, but dropped to just under a pound soon after. She was so small she could rest in the palm of her daddy’s hand. She was a tiny, living, human person. Heroic measures were taken to save this child’s life. Why? Because we have an obligation to protect, nurture, and care for other humans who would die without our help—especially little children. Rachel was a vulnerable and valuable human being. But get this ... If a doctor came into the hospital room and, instead of caring for Rachel, took the life of this little girl as she lay quietly nursing at her mother’s breast, it would be homicide. However, if this same little girl—the very same Rachel—was inches away resting inside her mother’s womb, she could be legally killed by abortion.”

Gregory Koukl

- Though the unborn is visibly hidden from man, he/she is never hidden from God.

Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether. Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust. Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose.

Job 10:8-13

- o All of God’s works are _____ wonderful _____.
- Even (or especially) in the case of disability.

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

John 9:1-3

- Even (or especially) in the midst of _____ difficulty _____.

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
Romans 8:28-30

- What about rape?

“Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.”
Deuteronomy 24:16

- What about incest?

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram ...
Matthew 1:1-3

- The message of the gospel: God takes unimaginable evil and turns it into ultimate _____ good _____.

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.
Acts 2:22-24

- Abortion is an attack on God’s _____ intimate _____ relationship with the unborn.
 - He fashions them.

*Did not he who made me in the womb make him?
And did not one fashion us in the womb?*
Job 31:15

- He _____ values _____ them.

When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman’s husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if

there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
Exodus 21:22-25

- He knows them.

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.
Jeremiah 1:5

- He relates to them.

Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.
Psalm 22:9-10

- He _____ calls _____ them.

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace ...
Galatians 1:15

- He names them.

Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.
Isaiah 49:1

- He anoints them.

... for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.
Luke 1:15

For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.
Luke 1:44

Abortion and God ...

- God is the _____ Judge _____ of sin.

Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?
Genesis 18:25

He will render to each one according to his works ...
Romans 2:6

- Mothers who have aborted babies.
- Fathers (and friends) who have _____ encouraged _____ abortion.
- Grandparents (and others) who have supported abortion.
- Doctors who have performed abortion.
- Leaders who have _____ permitted _____ abortion.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.
Romans 13:1-4

- Government is given by God for the good of people.
- Government is given by God for the legislation of _____ morality _____.
- Christians who have done _____ nothing _____
- about abortion.

"To endorse or even to be neutral about killing innocent children created in God's image is unthinkable in the Scriptures, was unthinkable to Christians in church history, and should be unthinkable to Christians today."
Randy Alcorn

- God is the _____ Savior _____ of sinners.

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by

*his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
Titus 3:3-7*

- He forgives entirely.

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
Psalm 103:11-12*

- He heals deeply.

*“Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”
Luke 7:47-50*

- He restores completely.

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:1*

- He redeems _____ fully _____.

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28*

Abortion and the Church ...

*Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.
Ephesians 5:7-11*

- _____ Look _____ around ...
 - Learn the facts about abortion.
 - See the pictures of abortion.
 - Listen to the victims of abortion.
- _____ Step _____ forward ...
 - Share your burdens from the past with brothers and/or sisters.

- Share your struggles in the present with brothers and/or sisters.
- Speak up ...
 - Before God.
 - Before the government.
- Reach out ...
 - Through giving to pro-life causes and ministries.
 - Through serving unwed and under-age mothers.
 - Through volunteering at pregnancy centers.
 - Through supporting abortion alternatives.
 - Through adopting unwanted children.

ISSUES IN OUR CULTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

- Abortion
- **Orphans and Widows**
- Poverty
- Slavery
- Sexuality
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- Liberty and Persecution

ORPHANS AND WIDOWS

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.
Deuteronomy 10:17-18

God and the Lonely ...

Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.
Psalm 68:5-6

- He _____ seeks _____ the lonely as His family.

Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you." Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest." Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women."
Ruth 2:1-8

- He _____ saves _____ the lonely from harm.

"Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

Ruth 2:9-13

- He _____ serves _____ the lonely at His table.

And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her." So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers." And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted." So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth 2:14-23

- He _____ showers _____ the lonely with His grace.

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi,

“Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.
Ruth 4:13-17

God and the Orphan ...

O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.
Psalm 10:17-18

For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in.
Psalm 27:10

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
James 1:27

Gospel Foundations ...

- By God’s grace, we have been adopted as _____ sons _____ of God.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
Galatians 4:4-5

- Adoption requires someone who comes at the right time.
- Adoption requires someone who possesses the right qualifications.
- Adoption requires someone who has the right _____ resolve _____.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of

his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
Ephesians 1:3-10

- He determined to redeem us.
- He died to rescue us.
- For God's glory, we have been given the _____ **privileges** _____ of sonship.

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
Galatians 4:6-7

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.
Romans 8:14-17

- God is our _____ **Father** _____.

"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name ...'"
Matthew 6:7-9

- He loves us.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
1 John 3:1

- He understands us.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.
Psalms 103:13-14

- He provides for us.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, 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. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Matthew 6:25-34

- He forgives us.

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Matthew 6:9-12

- He disciplines us.

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:5-11

- He leads us.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Romans 8:14

- We are His _____ children _____.
- We have a new name.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:12-13

- We have a new spirit.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God ...

Romans 8:16

- We have _____ access _____ to the Father's presence.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

- We have an _____ inheritance _____ in the Father's kingdom.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:16-17

Gospel Implications ...

- We _____ worship _____ God our Father.

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

Matthew 6:9

- We glorify God our Father.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

- We imitate God our Father.

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
Ephesians 5:1*

- We obey God our Father.

*By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.
1 John 3:10*

- We _____ reflect _____ God our Father.

*Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.
Psalm 68:5*

*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
James 1:27*

*And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."
Genesis 50:24-25*

*What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
Psalm 8:4*

*Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people; help me when you save them ...
Psalm 106:4*

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people ...
Luke 1:68*

*"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."
Luke 1:76-79*

Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"
Luke 7:16

When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.
Acts 7:23

Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.
Acts 15:14

And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are."
Acts 15:36

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?" Then he will answer them, saying, "Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
Matthew 25:31-46

- With millions of orphans in the world ...
 - Ignorance is inexcusable.
 - They are easier to forget until you see their faces.
 - They are easier to forget until you know their names.

- Inaction is _____ action _____.
- Gospel-driven orphan care ...
 - We care for orphans not because we are rescuers.
 - We care for orphans because we are the _____ rescued _____.

God and the Widow ...

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
James 1:27

Gospel Foundations ...

- See the care of the _____ Father _____ for the widow.

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him! Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.
Psalm 68:4-6

You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.
Exodus 22:22-24

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.
Deuteronomy 10:17-18

"Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow." And all the people shall say, "Amen."
Deuteronomy 27:19

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.
Isaiah 1:17

The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
Psalm 146:9

- See the compassion of the _____ Son _____ for the widow.

Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

Luke 7:11-17

And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation." And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Mark 12:38-44

So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

John 19:25-27

- See the concern of the _____ church _____ for the widow.

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they

set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 6:1-6

Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

Acts 9:36-41

Gospel Instructions ...

Honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan. If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

1 Timothy 5:3-16

- Honor destitute widows through _____ support _____.

"The dowry, which was provided by the bride's father, always accompanied a woman to her marriage. It constituted an important legal aspect of marriage In the event of a husband's death, the laws governing that dowry were clearly defined. A widow was cared for by the person in charge of that dowry. Two options were open

to her. If she had children, she might remain in her deceased husband's home. There she would be maintained by the new 'lord' of the household, possibly her son. She could also return to her parents, taking her dowry back to her family."

Bruce Winter

- They must be _____ **devoid** _____ of relatives.

But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

1 Timothy 5:4

- Sons and daughters support their parents and grandparents.
 - This pleases God and demonstrates the gospel.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:8

- This relieves the church.

If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

1 Timothy 5:16

- They must be _____ **dependent** _____ on God.

She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day ...

1 Timothy 5:5

Leave your fatherless children; I will keep them alive; and let your widows trust in me.

Jeremiah 49:11

Then the word of the LORD came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you."

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and

your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.
1 Kings 17:8-16

- They must be _____ devoted _____ to prayer.

*And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
Luke 2:36-38*

*"It seems to me that widows have entered into a dimension of dependence on God that prepares them for the ministry of intercessory prayer. The widow's mite was recognized and commended by Jesus because 'she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on' (Mark 12:44). Perhaps the widow's 'might' is most mighty when these women band together as helper-defenders in intercessory prayer. Older women who do not have the daily responsibilities of jobs are another power source for intercessory prayer."
Susan Hunt*

- Enlist older widows for _____ service _____.

*Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.
Titus 2:3-5*

*Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.
1 Timothy 5:9-10*

- They must be mature women.
- They must have been faithful wives.
- They must care for children.
- They must be hospitable hosts.
- They must be humble servants.

- They must be unselfish.
- They must be kind.
- Encourage younger widows to _____ marry _____.

But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan.

1 Timothy 5:11-15

- They must avoid laziness.

How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Proverbs 6:9-11

- They must abhor _____ gossip _____.

Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbler.

Proverbs 20:19

- The gospel compels ...
 - Families to care for their relatives.

"Before the church has to carry the burden, let the children do their duty."

John Calvin

- _____ Churches _____ to care for the widowed.

If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

1 Timothy 5:16

ISSUES IN OUR CULTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

- Abortion
- Orphans and Widows
- **Poverty**
- Slavery
- Sexuality
- Ethnicity and Immigration
- Liberty and Persecution

POVERTY

Essential Questions ...

- Are we willing to _____ hear _____ the Word even if it convicts us?
 - God's Word on money is true.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

- God's Word on money is thorough.
 - Over _____ 2,300 _____ verses.
 - More than on faith and prayer.
 - More than on heaven and hell.
- God's Word on money is clear.

"My interactions with people as a pastor, teacher, counselor, and researcher—as well as my observation of my own tendencies—have convinced me that in the Christian community today there is more blindness, rationalization, and unclear thinking about money than anything else."

Randy Alcorn

- God's Word on money is _____ complex _____.

Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

Luke 12:33

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Hebrews 13:2

- God's Word confronts us.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

- God's Word comforts us.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Psalms 19:7-11

- God's Word frees us.

I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!

Psalms 119:32

- God's Word guides us.

"I feel pulled in opposite directions over the money issue. Sometimes I want to sell all that I own, join a Christian commune, and live out my days in intentional poverty.

At other times, I want to rid myself of guilt and enjoy the fruits of our nations' prosperity. Mostly, I wish I did not have to think about money at all. But I must somehow come to terms with the Bible's very strong statements about money."

Philip Yancey

- Are we willing to _____ obey _____ the Word even if it costs us?

Biblical Foundations ...

- Based upon who God is ...

"Tell me what you think about money and I can tell you what you think about God."

Billy Graham

- God is the sovereign owner of all things, and we are His _____ stewards _____.

“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Matthew 25:14-30

- God’s ownership ...
 - He has _____ **authority** _____.
 - He has expectations.
 - He gives trust.
 - He is strict.
 - He is generous.
 - He is absent.
 - He will _____ **return** _____.
- Our stewardship ...
 - We are _____ **accountable** _____.
 - We must be faithful.
 - We must be focused.
 - We must be fearful.
 - We must work.
 - We must be wise.
 - We must be _____ **ready** _____.
- God is the compassionate Judge over all peoples, and we are His _____ **servants** _____.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Matthew 25:31-46

- In His compassion ...
 - God cares for the poor.

I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy.

Psalms 140:12

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Isaiah 41:17

- God _____ defends _____ the powerless.

"Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the LORD; "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."

Psalms 12:5

For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall ...

Isaiah 25:4

- In His justice ...
 - God dispenses property and possessions to people.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

James 1:17

- God _____ condemns _____ the prosperous who disregard the poor.

Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.

Proverbs 21:13

Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.

Proverbs 28:27

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."

Luke 6:24-25

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

James 5:1-5

- As His servants ...

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

- Our goal is not _____ luxury _____ in this world.
- Our goal is _____ love _____ for God.

- In the lives of sinful men and women, asceticism and materialism both pervert God's design for possessions.

Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me ...

Proverbs 30:8

- Asceticism sees money and possessions as _____ sinful _____.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

1 Timothy 4:1-5

- Materialism sees money and possessions as _____ all-satisfying _____.

But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

- Materialism _____ blinds _____ us to our spiritual poverty.
- Materialism brings us worry and anxiety.
- Materialism leads us to endless futility.
- Materialism lures us into self-_____ sufficiency _____.
- Materialism traps us in self-centeredness.
- Materialism distracts us from our purpose.
- Materialism deceives us in our _____ churches _____.
- Materialism keeps us from the kingdom.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

- Based upon why Jesus is unique ...
 - The _____ incarnation _____ of Christ lays the foundation for generosity in the church.

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.
2 Corinthians 8:9*

- We see His _____ poverty _____ in the world.
 - He gives up His rights.
 - He gives us His resources.
- We are His _____ people _____ in the world.
 - We give up our rights.
 - We give others our resources.

*We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.
2 Corinthians 8:1-7*

*The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!
2 Corinthians 9:6-15*

- When Jesus saves us spiritually, He transforms us _____ materially _____.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:41-47

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 4:32-37

- Jesus covers our sin.

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Luke 19:8-10

- Jesus changes our lives.
 - We do not live/give sacrificially because we are in _____ debt _____ to Christ.
 - We live/give sacrificially because we are indwelt by Christ.
 - We are not ultimately motivated to give by guilt.
 - We are ultimately motivated to give by _____ grace _____.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Philippians 2:12-13

- Based upon what we must do ...
 - Faith in Christ involves _____ surrender _____ of all our possessions to Christ.

*So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.
Luke 14:33*

- For some of us, this means _____ selling _____ our possessions to advance His kingdom.

*And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."
Mark 10:21*

- For all of us, this means _____ using _____ our possessions to advance His kingdom.

*As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.
Mark 5:18-20*

- Faith in Christ results in _____ generosity _____ toward people.

*Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.
1 Chronicles 29:9*

*By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, 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.
1 John 3:16-18*

- Faith in Christ reconciles us to _____ God _____.
 - We no longer live for earthly treasure.
 - We now love our eternal treasure.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:19-21

- Faith in Christ reconciles us to _____ one another _____.
- We no longer live for selfish gain.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 2:14-17

- We now live with selfless generosity.

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Hebrews 13:16

- Based upon what is at stake ...

“A startling thing has happened among Western Christians. Many of us habitually think and act as if there were no eternity—or as if what we do in this present life has no eternal consequences.”

Randy Alcorn

- The Christian's use of money and possessions carries eternal consequences _____.

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

Matthew 25:31-32

- God will judge us in eternity according to our works, which includes our use of possessions.
 - Works ARE NOT a necessary basis or means of our justification.
 - Works ARE necessary _____ evidence _____ of our justification.
- God will reward us in eternity according to our works, which includes our use of possessions.

- As we live for God's eternal glory ... we experience our eternal
_____ good _____.
- The Christian's use of money and possessions reveals our
_____ values _____.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Matthew 6:19-24

- The world uses money to store up earthly trinkets.
 - Value: _____ Temporal _____ satisfaction.
- The Christian uses money to spread everlasting treasure.
 - Value: _____ Eternal _____ salvation.
- The Christian's use of money and possessions foreshadows eternal
_____ redemption _____.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

Revelation 21:1-7

- Looking forward to the new creation ...
 - A place of spiritual reconciliation.
 - A place of _____ material _____ restoration.
- Living now as a new creation ...
 - We use our resources to share the gospel with _____ lost _____ masses.
 - We use our resources to show the gospel to _____ starving _____ multitudes.

Practical Applications ...

- _____ Submit _____ to Christ.

*And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
Matthew 4:19*

- God gives objective truth in Scripture.

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who
has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2:15*

- God gives subjective guidance through the _____ Spirit _____.

*"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father,
and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit
of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor
knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."
John 14:15-17*

*"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper,
the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you
all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."
John 14:25-26*

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he
will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak,
and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me,
for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is
mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
John 16:13-15*

- Don't _____ compare _____ ...
 - The life of Christ is our standard.
- Don't despair ...
 - The presence of Christ is our hope.
- Avoid apathy ...
 - The joy of Christ is our possession.
- Avoid _____ lethargy _____ ...
 - The glory of Christ is our goal.

*... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and
may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death ...
Philippians 3:10*

- Commit to the _____ church _____.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47

- We are not alone.
 - Learn from each other.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25

- Live for each other.
- We are on a mission.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:16-21

- A spiritual mission ...
 - Preaching good news.
- With _____ social _____ ramifications ...
 - Addressing deep needs.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

John 20:21

- _____ Work _____ wisely.

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24

- As long as you are able, work hard.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Genesis 2:15

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates."

Exodus 20:8-10

Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Proverbs 6:6-11

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Ephesians 4:28

- As much as you are able, gain _____ wealth _____.

"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much."

Luke 16:10

- NOTE: The Bible never encourages _____ retirement _____.
 - We don't save up money for a life spent on luxury.
 - We might save up money for a life spent on _____ ministry _____.
 - Our hope is not in our retirement.
 - Our hope is in Christ's _____ return _____.

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought

to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

- Live _____ simply _____.

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

- God gives enough for us ...
 - _____ Identify _____ your enough.

But godliness with contentment is great gain ...

1 Timothy 6:6

"Christians should give away all but the plain necessities of life—that is, plain, wholesome food, clean clothes, and enough to carry on one's business Any Christian who takes for himself anything more than the plain necessities of life lives in an open, habitual denial of the Lord ... He has gained both riches and hell-fire!"

John Wesley

- Prioritize necessities.
- Minimize luxuries.
- Ask questions ...
 - What possessions need to be shared?
 - What possessions need to be sold?
 - What possessions need to be _____ sacrificed _____?
- God gives excess for others ...

- _____ Isolate _____ your excess.
 - God has given us extra not so that we can have more.
 - God has given us extra so that we can _____ give _____ more.
- _____ Give _____ sacrificially.

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord ...

2 Corinthians 8:1-3

- One initial question ...
 - Are you giving less than your ability, according to your ability, or _____ beyond _____ your ability?

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them."

C.S. Lewis

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

- Sacrificial giving is generous.
- Sacrificial giving is consistent.
- Sacrificial giving is voluntary.
- Sacrificial giving is _____ excellent _____.

But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

2 Corinthians 8:7

- Sacrificial giving is cheerful.

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly
or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:7

- Sacrificial giving is worshipful.

*But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will
not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing."*

2 Samuel 24:24

- Sacrificial giving is proportionate.

*And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting
money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a
poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.*

*And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you,
this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the
offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out
of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."*

Mark 12:41-44

- Sacrificial giving is quiet.

*"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen
by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.
Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites
do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others.*

*Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the
needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your
giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*

Matthew 6:1-4

- Sacrificial giving is honest.

*But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with
his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought
only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has
Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part
of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own?
And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived
this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." When Ananias heard
these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who
heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried
him. After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had
happened. And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much."*

And she said, "Yes, for so much." But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

Acts 5:1-11

- Sacrificial giving is _____ purposeful _____.
 - Give in ways that are Gospel-centered.
 - Give in ways that are church-focused.
 - Give to people/churches/organizations with integrity.
 - Give to people/churches/organizations with reliability.
 - Give to people/churches/organizations with sustainability.
 - Give in ways that promote relational ministry.
 - Give in ways that you can connect with through _____ personal _____ ministry.
- One final question ...
 - What would happen if we stopped asking how much we could spare and started asking how much it would _____ take _____ ?
- _____ Help _____ constructively.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 2:14-17

- Helping the poor is a _____ responsibility _____ of a Christian.

"That bread which you keep belongs to the hungry; that coat which you preserve in your wardrobe, to the naked; those shoes which are rotting in your possessions, to the shoeless; that gold which you have hidden in the ground, to the needy. Wherefore, as often as you are able to help others, and refuse, so often did you do them wrong."

Augustine

"Do not tell me, as a good man did today, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they my poor?"

Ralph Waldo Emerson, on Self-Reliance

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:39

- Helping the poor is a _____ mark _____ of a church.

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 4:32-37

"The impious Galileans support not only their own poor but ours as well; everyone can see that our people lack aid from us."

Roman Emperor Julian, complaining about Christians

"It is our care of the helpless, our practice of loving kindness that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Only look,' they say, 'look how they love one another!'"

Tertullian

- Be focused.
 - _____ Prioritize _____ the church.
 - _____ Evangelize _____ the lost.
- Be wise.
 - We should not subsidize the irresponsible.

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

- We should _____ supplement _____ the responsible.

Honor widows who are truly widows.

1 Timothy 5:3

- Be relational.
 - Give consistent accountability.
 - Give _____ personal _____ attention.
 - Give long-term commitment.
- Acknowledge diversity.
 - People are poor for different _____ reasons _____.

- Sinful personal choices.
- Unbiblical worldviews.
- Disasters.
- Lack of technology.
- Inequalities of power.
- We must help the poor in different _____ ways _____.
- Avoid excuses.
 - “I’m not doing anything to hurt the poor.”
 - God desires for His people to _____ help _____ the poor.
 - “But I’m just one person; what can I do?”
 - The logic that says, “I can’t do everything, so I won’t do anything,” is straight from the pit of hell.
 - “I’m only responsible for helping people close to me.”
 - Yes, proximity is significant.
 - But, physical distance does not necessitate spiritual separation.

This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Romans 15:22-29

- _____ Invest _____ eternally.

“I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all. But whatever I have placed in God’s hands, that I still possess.”

Martin Luther

- Realize ... God’s return on your investment is better than anyone else’s.

Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Mark 10:29-31

- o Remember ... this world is not our _____ home _____.

"Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home."

C.S. Lewis

Critical Cautions ...

"Jesus, however, came to redeem us from Satan's power and dominion over us We are to reign as kings in life. That means that we have dominion over our lives. We are to dominate, not to be dominated. Circumstances are not to dominate you. Poverty is not to rule and reign over you. You are to rule and reign over poverty. Disease and sickness are not to rule and reign over you. You are to rule and reign over sickness. We are to reign as kings in life by Christ Jesus, in whom we have our redemption."

Kenneth Hagin

- A definition of the "prosperity gospel" ...
 - o A theology which believes that God's aim is to make believers _____ healthy _____ and _____ wealthy _____ in this life.
 - We enjoy excesses.
 - We live like King's kids.
- The deception in the "prosperity gospel" ...
 - o A consistent error ...
 - Ripping texts from _____ contexts _____.

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

3 John 2

- Does prayer _____ guarantee _____ health and wealth?

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."

Mark 10:29-30

- Have those who claimed the benefits paid the _____ price _____?

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases ...

Psalms 103:2-3

- Is this general praise or a guaranteed _____ promise _____ ?
- Key counter-examples ...
 - The life and teachings of _____ Jesus _____.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."
 Luke 9:57-62

- Not the "health and wealth gospel."
- More like the "homeless and wounded gospel."
- God may accomplish higher purposes in our _____ death _____ than in our life.

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."
 John 12:23-26

- The life and teachings of _____ Paul _____.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.
 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger

from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.
2 Corinthians 11:23-28

- Not the “prosperity gospel.”
- More like the “adversity gospel.”
- God may accomplish higher purposes in our
sickness than in our health.

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus.
2 Timothy 4:20

... and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also. I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.
Philippians 2:24-30

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.
1 Timothy 5:23

“When Paul was taken in chains from his filthy Roman dungeon and beheaded at the order of the opulent madman Nero, two representatives of humanity faced off, one of the best and one of the worst. One lived for prosperity on earth, the other didn’t. One now lives in prosperity in heaven, the other doesn’t. We remember both men for what they truly were, which is why we name our sons Paul and our dogs Nero.”
Randy Alcorn

- The dangers of the “prosperity gospel” ...
 - It perverts our _____ understanding _____ of wealth.
 - Is wealth always a sign of God's approval?
 - Is poverty always a sign of God's disapproval?
 - It disregards the _____ purpose _____ of wealth.
 - Does God give us more so that we can get more?
 - Or does God give us more so that we can give more?
 - It minimizes the _____ dangers _____ of wealth.
 - Wealth is not just a blessing from the King; it is also a barrier to the kingdom.
 - It feeds the desire to be rich while Scripture forewarns us against the desire to be rich.
 - It commends selfish luxury over selfless _____ generosity _____ .
 - It explicitly encourages people to indulge in pleasures.
 - It implicitly leads people to ignore the poor.
 - It appeals to the desires of the flesh instead of calling people to _____ deny _____ the flesh.

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

Luke 9:23-24

So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:33

- It encourages people to _____ waste _____ their lives on things that do not last.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:19-21

- It exalts God's _____ gifts _____ (things we receive from God) above God's _____ glory _____ (the treasure we have in God).

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

John 6:35

- It abuses God by making Him a _____ means _____ to an end.
 - Instead of trusting God for our needs, we use God for our wants.

- Instead of God-centered intercession, prayer becomes man-centered coercion.
- It overlooks the _____ design _____ of suffering.
 - Christians may suffer despite their righteousness.
 - Christians may suffer because of their righteousness.

"Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours."

John 15:20

It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

Matthew 10:25

... strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Acts 14:22

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 8:16-18

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

1 Peter 4:12-14

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted ...

2 Timothy 3:12

- It subtly infuses _____ all _____ of Christianity.
 - This is evident in how little we give.
 - This is evident in how extravagant we live.

ISSUES IN OUR CULTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

- Abortion
- Orphans and Widows
- Poverty
- **Slavery**
- Sexuality
- Ethnicity and Immigration
- Liberty and Persecution

SLAVERY

Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things.

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Slavery in History ...

- World history is filled with various _____ types _____ of slavery.

"If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you. Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you. You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God. If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: he shall be with you as a hired worker and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee. Then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the possession of his fathers. For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. You shall not rule over him ruthlessly but shall fear your God."

Leviticus 25:35-43

- Hebrew servanthood.
- Roman slavery.
- Indentured servitude.
- African slave trade.

“He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slave-holding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip ... till she was literally covered with blood. No words, no tears, no prayer, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose.”
Frederick Douglass, commenting on Captain Anthony

- Biblical history is filled with various _____ perspectives _____ on slavery.
 - Slavery is not a part of creation.
 - It was not a part of God's original design.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
Genesis 1:26

- It is not a part of God's ultimate desire.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
Revelation 21:1-4

- Slavery is a product of _____ sin _____.
- Specific situations in a sinful world warrant specific instructions _____ to _____ a sinful world.
- Biblical instructions concerning slavery do not imply biblical _____ approval _____ of slavery.

Slavery in Scripture ...

- The Bible _____ condemns _____ slavery.
 - The Bible condemns slavery that undermines God's creation.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
Genesis 1:27

- We have equal _____ dignity _____ before God.

*Did not he who made me in the womb make him?
And did not one fashion us in the womb?
Job 31:15*

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28*

*My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.
James 2:1*

- We are equally submissive to God.

*Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.
Colossians 3:22*

*Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ ...
Ephesians 6:5*

*Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.
Colossians 4:1*

- We will receive equal _____ justice _____ from God.

*For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.
Colossians 3:25*

*Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.
Ephesians 6:9*

- The Bible condemns slavery that violates God's _____ Word _____.
- The Bible denounces physical abuse.

*"When a man strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys it, he shall let the slave go free because of his eye. If he knocks out the tooth of his slave, male or female, he shall let the slave go free because of his tooth."
Exodus 21:26-27*

“When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged.”

Exodus 21:20

- The Bible denounces human trafficking.

“Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.”

Exodus 21:16

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

1 Timothy 1:8-11

- The Bible _____ regulates _____ slavery.

- God mandates physical protection for slaves.
- God requires financial provision for slaves.

“If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: he shall be with you as a hired worker and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee.”

Leviticus 25:39-40

Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, “All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

2 Samuel 9:9-10

- God ensures caring supervision of slaves.

... but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

Exodus 20:10

- God provides eventual _____ freedom _____ from slavery.

"If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release is near,' and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and you be guilty of sin. You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.' If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed. You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. But if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he is well-off with you, then you shall take an awl, and put it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your slave forever. And to your female slave you shall do the same. It shall not seem hard to you when you let him go free from you, for at half the cost of a hired worker he has served you six years. So the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do."

Deuteronomy 15:7-18

"If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him."

Exodus 22:25

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 19:9-10

"And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 23:22

"Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you. You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit."

Leviticus 25:36-37

But there will be no poor among you; for the LORD will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess ...
Deuteronomy 15:4

When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.
Deuteronomy 24:20-21

Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)
1 Corinthians 7:21

I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.
Philemon 10-20

- The Bible _____ encourages _____ slaves.

Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things.
1 Timothy 6:1-2

- Honor unbelieving _____ masters _____.
 - For the glory of God.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high

positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior ...
1 Timothy 2:1-3

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.
1 Timothy 3:7

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.
1 Peter 2:18-20

- For the advancement of the gospel.

Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.
Titus 2:9-10

- Christianity is not aimed first at social reform.
- Christianity is aimed first at personal redemption ... which then leads to social reform.

"The gospel 'lays the explosive charge ... that ... ultimately ... lead[s] to detonation, and the destruction of slavery.'"
Murray J. Harris

- Respect believing masters.
 - Work wholeheartedly.
 - Serve selflessly.
- The Bible redeems slavery.
 - The beauty of Christ ...
 - Our Master has become our servant.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
Philippians 2:5-7

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his

waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.
John 13:3-5

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:45

- The essence of Christianity ...
 - We become His _____ slaves _____.

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God ...
Romans 1:1

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons ...
Philippians 1:1

- Christ is a good Master.
- We are His glad slaves.

As Slaves of Christ Living in a Culture of Slavery ...

- Let's _____ plead _____ before God.
 - Pray for _____ victims _____ ...
 - For their strength and salvation.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.
Psalms 138:7

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.
Isaiah 40:29

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."
Luke 19:10

- For their protection, freedom, and justice.

"Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
Psalms 82:4

The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.
Psalms 103:6

... who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free ...
Psalm 146:7

- For their hope and healing.

I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.
Psalm 40:1-3

"For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the LORD, because they have called you an outcast: 'It is Zion, for whom no one cares!'"
Jeremiah 30:17

There is hope for your future, declares the LORD, and your children shall come back to their own country.
Jeremiah 31:17

- Pray for _____ traffickers _____ ...
 - For conviction, repentance, and salvation.

... let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
Isaiah 55:7

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die ...
Romans 5:6-7

... correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth ...
2 Timothy 2:25

- For criminal networks to be dismantled.

Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous— you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God!
Psalm 7:9

For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous. The LORD knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain

forever; they are not put to shame in evil times; in the days of famine they have abundance. But the wicked will perish; the enemies of the LORD are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish—like smoke they vanish away.
Psalm 37:17-20

- For oppressors to be arrested and prosecuted.

... let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; be a shelter to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land ...
Isaiah 16:4

Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.
Jeremiah 22:3

Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.
Amos 5:15

- Pray for _____ governments _____ ...
 - For corruption to cease.

You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous.
Deuteronomy 16:19

For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins— you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate.
Amos 5:12

These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace ...
Zechariah 8:16

- For implementation of just legislation.

By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just ...
Proverbs 8:15

By justice a king builds up the land, but he who exacts gifts tears it down.
Proverbs 29:4

You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right rules and true laws, good statutes and commandments ...
Nehemiah 9:13

- For discernment in forming alliances.

... behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.
1 Kings 3:12

My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion ...
Proverbs 3:21

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- Pray for the _____ church ...
 - To awaken to this issue.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.
Isaiah 60:1-2

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”
Matthew 5:13-14

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
Matthew 16:18

- For advocates and laborers to emerge.

Who rises up for me against the wicked? Who stands up for me against evildoers?
Psalms 94:16

*Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.
Proverbs 31:8*

*Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."
Matthew 9:37-38*

- To unite against injustice.

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.
Psalm 133*

*"I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."
John 17:23*

*May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus ...
Romans 15:5*

- Let's _____ **participate** _____ with God ...

*"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
Micah 6:6-8*

ISSUES IN OUR CULTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

- Abortion
- Orphans and Widows
- Poverty
- Slavery
- **Sexuality**
- Ethnicity and Immigration
- Liberty and Persecution

SEXUALITY

"The most important revolution of the twentieth century [was] the sexual revolution ... Contraception replaced conception. Pleasure was separated from responsibility. It was as if a license was given out, legitimizing the bending of every part of our lives around serving ourselves. Since that time, divorce, remarriage, abortion, premarital sex, and extramarital sex, as well as homosexuality have been accepted by increasing percentages of the public. Pornography is huge business. [And] this is not just a problem with society out there. Many churches have found their members plagued by failed marriages and illicit affairs, by so-called private sins that turn into public disgraces, some of which are known, some of which are not yet known."

Mark Dever

Three Initial Foundations ...

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 1:26-31

- God created men and women with equal dignity.
- God created men and women with different roles.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Genesis 2:18-23

- Man and woman complement one another.
 - Man was created to be the head.

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

1 Corinthians 11:3

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

Ephesians 5:23

- Woman was created to be the helper.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

Genesis 2:18

The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

Genesis 2:20

- Man was created to exercise loving authority over woman.
- Woman was created to extend glad submission to man.
- God created men and women as a reflection of the Trinity.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth"

and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 1:26

- The persons of the Trinity are equally divine.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high ...

Hebrews 1:3

... waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ ...

Titus 2:13

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:1-3

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”

Acts 5:3-4

- The persons of the Trinity are positionally different.
 - The Father has _____ authority _____ over the Son.

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.”

John 4:34

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Romans 8:34

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

1 Peter 3:21-22

- The Son is _____ **subject** _____ to the Father.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

1 Corinthians 11:3

- This is loving authority and glad submission in the context of beautiful _____ **relationship** _____.

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."

John 5:19-23

"We can say then that a relationship of authority and submission between equals, with mutual giving of honor, is the most fundamental and most glorious interpersonal relationship in the universe. Such a relationship allows interpersonal differences without 'better' or 'worse,' without 'more important' and 'less important.' And when we begin to dislike the very idea of authority and submission—not distortions and abuses, but the very idea—we are tampering with something very deep. We are beginning to dislike God Himself."

Wayne Grudem

[Three Initial Foundations ...]

- God created men and women with equal dignity.
- God created men and women with different roles.
- God created men and women as a reflection of the Trinity.

Three Initial Conclusions ...

- All of this is good for us.

*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.
Genesis 1:31*

- Unity in diversity: We are attracted to one another by our differences.
- Equality amidst intimacy: We honor one another as we enjoy one another.

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.
Genesis 2:24-25*

- All of this is glorifying to God.
 - We reflect His character.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:1-2*

- He is our Head.
- He is our Helper.
- We trust His Word.
- All of this is the essence of the gospel.

*"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
Ephesians 5:31-32*

- Christ is our sacrificial groom.
 - He died to save us.
- We are His submissive bride.
 - We live to serve Him.
- God has designed the headship of men and the help of women to display the glory of Christ in the salvation of the church.

Christ and Marriage ...

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
Genesis 2:24*

*"But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh."
Mark 10:6-8*

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water 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. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
Ephesians 5:22-33*

- The glory of God is the ultimate _____ aim _____ of marriage.

*Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!
Psalm 34:3*

- Marriage exists for God more than it exists for you.
- The ultimate starting point of marriage:
 - Not, "What is best for me?"
 - Instead, "What is best for _____ God _____?"

*Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.
Psalm 119:35-37*

*He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.
Proverbs 18:22*

- The grace of God is the ultimate _____ hope _____ for marriage.
 - The major problem in every marriage: sin.

As it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to

deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”
Romans 3:10-18

- The major solution for any marriage: a Savior.

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
Romans 8:10-11

- The gospel of God is the ultimate _____ picture _____ in marriage.

“For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD, your Redeemer.
Isaiah 54:5-8

You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm ...
Isaiah 62:4-5

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
2 Corinthians 11:2

- Wives give a picture of the _____ church _____ to the world.
 - As the church relates to Christ, the wife is the helper for her husband.

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”
Genesis 2:18

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.
Ephesians 5:22-24

- Husbands give a picture of _____ Christ _____ to the world.
 - As Christ relates to the church, the husband is the head of his wife.

... that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church ...
Ephesians 1:20-22

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.
1 Corinthians 11:3

- The wife's responsibilities ...

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.
Proverbs 31:10-31

- Revere Christ through submission to your husband.

*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Colossians 3:18*

*Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.
1 Peter 3:1-6*

- _____ **Respect** _____ your husband.

*However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
Ephesians 5:33*

- The husband's responsibilities ...

- Reflect Christ through sacrifice for your wife.

*Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.
Luke 22:26*

- _____ **Love** _____ your wife.

*However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
Ephesians 5:33*

*Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.
Colossians 3:19*

- Love her selflessly.

*When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be liable for any other public duty. He shall be free at home one year to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.
Deuteronomy 24:5*

- Love her effectively.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water 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.

Ephesians 5:25-27

- Husbands are responsible for leading marriages to be holy.
- Husbands are responsible for leading wives to be lovely.
- Love her carefully.

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

Ephesians 5:28-30

- Nourish her.
- Cherish her.

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:7

- Love her completely.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:39

- In a culture that is working to redefine marriage ...
 - It is good to be _____grieved_____ ... about the degradation (and supposed redefinition) of marriage.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

- o It is right to be concerned ... about religious liberty in our country.

*"Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,
and to God the things that are God's."
Matthew 22:21*

- o It is imperative to be _____ loving _____ ... toward our gay and lesbian friends and neighbors.

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
Genesis 1:26-28*

*And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.
And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 22:37-39*

*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
2 Peter 3:9*

- o It is wise to be _____ confident _____ ... in the resiliency of marriage, in the opportunity for the gospel, and in the sovereignty of our God.

*He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh.
What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
Matthew 19:4-6*

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water 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. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
Ephesians 5:22-33

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.
Revelation 19:1-10

Christ and Marriage ...

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with

his wife, it is better not to marry." But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

Matthew 19:3-12

To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.

1 Corinthians 7:10-15

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

- God _____ created _____ marriage.

So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

Matthew 19:6

"If marriage were of human origin, then human beings would have a right to set it aside. But since God instituted marriage, only He has the right to do so. Marriage as an institution (which includes individual marriages, of course) is subject to the rules and regulations set down by God. Individuals may marry, be divorced and be remarried only if, when and how He says

they may without sinning. The state has been given the task of keeping orderly records, etc., but it has no right (or competence) to determine the rules for marriage and for divorce; that prerogative is God's."
Jay Adams

- God _____ hates _____ divorce.

Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.
Malachi 2:15-16

- God hates the causes of divorce.
 - Divorce is always a result of _____ sin _____.

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.
Deuteronomy 24:1-4

He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."
Matthew 19:8

- Divorce is _____ almost _____ always sinful.
- God hates the consequences of divorce.

And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces

her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”
Malachi 2:13-16

- Divorce negatively affects physical offspring.
- Divorce negatively affects spiritual offspring.
- God _____ regulates _____ divorce.
 - One ground for divorce among believers: _____ adultery _____.

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house ...
Deuteronomy 24:1

They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
Matthew 19:7-9

It was also said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.” But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
Matthew 5:31-32

- Divorce is _____ possible _____ in this situation.
- Divorce between believers is not desirable.
 - We are not looking for reasons to divorce.

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
Ephesians 5:33

- Divorce between believers is not inevitable.
 - We are longing for _____ reconciliation _____ to occur.

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”
Matthew 18:21-22

- One ground for divorce between a believer and an unbeliever: abandonment.

To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.

1 Corinthians 7:12-15

- Divorce is preferable in this situation.
- Remarriage is biblically permissible only after biblical grounds for divorce.

But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 5:32

And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Mark 10:10-12

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

Luke 16:18

- God redeems divorce.

For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.

Isaiah 54:5

Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Isaiah 49:7

- Your Eternal Husband is always forgiving.

*For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
2 Corinthians 11:2*

*Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."
Revelation 19:6-9*

- Your Eternal Husband is always _____ faithful _____.

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
Hebrews 10:23*

- He will never commit adultery against you.

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."
Lamentations 3:22-24*

- He will never abandon you.

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9*

*"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:20*

- Practically ...

- If you are single ...
 - _____ Maximize _____ your singleness to advance the gospel.

*"For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."
Matthew 19:12*

- If you are married ...
 - Love your spouse in a way that portrays the gospel.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...

Ephesians 5:22-25

- If you are considering divorce ...
 - Remember the preciousness of the gospel and the power of God.

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

- If you are divorced for a biblical reason ...
 - Rest in the gospel in your singleness or possibly in a future marriage.
- If you are divorced for an unbiblical reason and single ...
 - Repent and rely on the gospel to glorify Christ as you stay single.
- If you are divorced for an unbiblical reason and married ...
 - Repent and reflect the gospel in your current marriage.

Christ and Sexual Immorality ...

"[This] is not about the culture out there. It's about those of us here—about what we as Christians are doing, what we are seeing, and what we may not know we are doing and seeing. I'm afraid we (including I) don't have the eyes to see how much the world has squeezed us into its mold. If we could transport Christians from almost any other century to any of today's "Christian" countries in the West, I believe what would surprise them most (besides our phenomenal affluence) is how at home Christians are with sexual impurity. It doesn't shock us. It doesn't upset us. It doesn't offend our consciences. In fact, unless it's really bad, sexual impurity seems normal, just a way of life, and downright entertaining."

Kevin DeYoung

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

- The central exhortation: _____ flee _____ sexual immorality.
- The biblical clarification: Flee any and all sexual activity _____ outside _____ of marriage between a man and a woman.

"The simplest way to understand porneia is to think about the things that would make you furious and heartbroken if you found out someone was doing them with your husband or your wife. If someone shook your wife's hand you would not be upset. If someone gave a casual side hug to your husband it probably wouldn't bother you. A kiss on the cheek or even a peck on the lips in some cultures might be appropriate. But if you found out another person had sex with your wife or saw her naked or touched certain parts of her body you would be furious. If you found another person made out with your husband or talked about sexual activities or made certain gestures you would be heartbroken. Why? Because these are all activities that are appropriate for a married couple but are inappropriate when practiced outside of the lawful relationship of a man and a woman in marriage. Any sexual activity between those who are not married, or between two men, or between two women, or among more than two persons, or between family members, or between those married to other people—any sexual activity in these contexts is sin and can be included in the prohibitions against porneia."

Kevin DeYoung

- Flee _____ sex _____ outside of marriage.

*You shall not commit adultery.
 Exodus 20:14*

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.
Hebrews 13:4

- o Flee sexual prostitution.

Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, lest the land fall into prostitution and the land become full of depravity.
Leviticus 19:29

Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life.
Proverbs 6:25-26

- o Flee homosexuality.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.
Leviticus 18:22

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature ...
Romans 1:26

- o Flee sex with animals.

And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion. Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean ...
Leviticus 18:23-24

- o Flee sex with relatives.

None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the LORD.
Leviticus 18:6

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.
1 Corinthians 5:1-2

- Flee sex with children.

Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Matthew 18:5-6

- Flee sexual violence.

Thus says the Lord GOD: Enough, O princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness.

Cease your evictions of my people, declares the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 45:9

- Flee sexual lust ... having wrong sexual desires for others.

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:28

- Flee sexual immodesty ... provoking wrong sexual desires in others.

It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.

Romans 14:21

... likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

1 Timothy 2:9-10

- Flee sexual allurements (including inappropriate emotional attachment) outside of marriage.

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Proverbs 4:23

My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge. For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.

Proverbs 5:1-6

For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness. And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart. She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home; now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him, "I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows; so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you. I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home." With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life. And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.
Proverbs 7:6-27

- o Flee sexual _____ looking _____ outside of marriage.

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him ...
Genesis 9:22-24

"I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high? Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? Does not he see my ways and number all my steps?"
Job 31:1-4

- o Flee sexual _____ touching _____ outside of marriage.

"When men fight with one another and the wife of the one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of him who is beating him and puts out her hand and seizes him by the private parts, then you shall cut off her hand. Your eye shall have no pity."
Deuteronomy 25:11-12

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Hebrews 13:4

- Flee sexual _____ entertainment _____ or joking outside of marriage.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

Ephesians 5:3-12

- Flee sexual worship.
 - Sex is good.
 - Sex is NOT _____ God _____.

"None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, and none of the sons of Israel shall be a cult prostitute."

Deuteronomy 23:17

So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD."

And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

Exodus 32:2-6

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

1 Corinthians 10:8

- Based upon who God is ...
 - God has created our bodies for His ultimate glory.

... for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6:20

- God has designed our bodies for our eternal good.

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.
1 Corinthians 6:12-14

- God has designed sex to be relational.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
Genesis 2:24

For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it. And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless, lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner ...
Proverbs 5:3-10

- God has designed sex to be covenantal (and exclusive).

But you say, “Why does he not?” Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.
Malachi 2:14

Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?
Proverbs 5:15-20

- God has designed sex to be intimate.

- Sex is obviously physical, yet deeply spiritual.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.
Ephesians 5:22-23

- Sex is a union not only of bodies, but of souls.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
Genesis 2:24

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD."
Genesis 4:1

- God has designed sex to be fruitful.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
Genesis 1:28

- God has designed sex to be _____ selfless _____.

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."
Ephesians 5:28-31

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.
1 Corinthians 7:3-4

"Some wonder, of course, how sex can be truly satisfying or enjoyable without focusing on yourself. The idea of enjoying selfless sex seems contradictory. Does not getting the most out of sex require putting your own desires ahead of everything else? The surprising answer is no, both on biblical terms and based on human experience as well. God has imbedded a paradox in how sexual pleasure works that helps to restrain natural human selfishness. The more a couple focuses on pleasing each other, the more enjoyment each receives in return; and the more a person focuses on demanding his or her

own satisfaction, the less satisfaction is possible. Self-centeredness always destroys [sexual] satisfaction, while unselfishness always makes it better.”
Daniel Heimbach

- God has designed sex to be complex.
 - Sex involves the mind.

“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
Matthew 5:28

- Sex involves the body.

“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.
1 Corinthians 6:13-14

- Sex involves the soul.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!
1 Corinthians 6:15

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
2 Corinthians 6:14

“The monstrosity of sexual intercourse outside marriage is that those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one kind of union (the sexual) from all the other kinds of union which were intended to go along with it and make up the total union. The Christian attitude does not mean that there is anything wrong about sexual pleasure, any more than about the pleasure of eating. It means that you must not isolate that pleasure and try to get it by itself, any more than you ought to get the pleasures of taste without swallowing and digesting, by chewing things and spitting them out again.”
C.S. Lewis

- God has designed sex to be complementary.
 - Complementary gender.

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens

and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
Genesis 2:18-24

- Complementary kind.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.
Leviticus 18:22-23

- Based upon who we are ...

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.
Romans 1:18-27

- Sin disorders our hearts.
 - We exchange God's pattern for our _____ preferences _____.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.
Proverbs 14:12

- We exchange God's praise for our _____ pleasures _____.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.
1 Peter 2:11

- We are all born with a heart of _____ pride _____.

And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done."
Genesis 8:21

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
Psalm 51:5

- We are all bent toward sexual deviation.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.
1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

- Sin disorders our thoughts.

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 death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
Romans 8:5-8

- We exchange God's Word for our _____ experience _____.

But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came to sojourn, and

he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.
Genesis 19:4-11

... just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.
Jude 7

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.
Leviticus 18:22

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.
Leviticus 20:13

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.
1 Timothy 1:8-11

- Homosexual advocacy must maintain that ...
 - The Bible is irrelevant.

"Not to recognize, critique, and condemn Paul's equation of godlessness with homosexuality is dangerous. To remain within our respective Christian traditions and not challenge those passages that degrade and destroy us is to contribute to our own oppression Those passages will be brought up and used against us again and again until Christians demand their removal from the biblical canon or, at the very least, formally discredit their authority to prescribe behavior."
Gary David Comstock, Protestant Chaplain, Wesleyan University

- The Bible is inaccurate.

*"The scriptural texts in the Old and New testaments condemning homosexual practice are neither inspired by God nor [are they] of enduring Christian value."
William M. Kent, United Methodist Committee to Study Homosexuality*

- The Bible is _____ insufficient _____.

"I think it important to state clearly that we do, in fact, reject the straightforward commands of Scripture, and appeal instead to another authority when we declare that same-sex unions can be holy and good. And what exactly is that authority? We appeal explicitly to the weight of our own experience and the experience thousands of others have witnessed to, which tells us that to claim our own sexual orientation is in fact to accept the way in which God has created us. By so doing, we explicitly reject as well the premises of the scriptural statements condemning homosexuality—namely, that it is a vice freely chosen, a symptom of human corruption, and disobedience to God's created order."

Luke Timothy Johnson

Professor of New Testament, Candler School of Theology at Emory University

- We exchange truth for _____ tolerance _____.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

John 8:31-36

- Sin disorders our desires.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:16-21

- We exchange sexual responsibility for supposed _____ rights _____.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:1-4

- We exchange what Scripture says about our desires for what _____ science _____ says about our desires.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:16-21

- Improper sexual desire is immoral, not inevitable.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Ephesians 5:3-5

- Sin disorders our actions.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Ephesians 5:3-5

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Colossians 3:5-10

- We exchange moral obligations for _____ natural _____ explanations.

*For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.
Romans 2:14-16*

- Causation does not imply justification.

*The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."
Genesis 4:6-7*

- We do not always choose our temptations, but we always choose our _____ reactions _____.

*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
1 Corinthians 10:13*

- We succumb to personal _____ confusion _____ despite biblical conclusions.
- What about self-stimulated sex?

*And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
Galatians 5:24*

- God designed sex to be relational, but self-stimulated sex is lustful.
- God designed sex to be covenantal, but self-stimulated sex is non-committal.
- God designed sex to be intimate, but self-stimulated sex is superficial.
- God designed sex to be fruitful, but self-stimulated sex is fruitless.
- God designed sex to be selfless, but self-stimulated sex is self-centered.
- God designed sex as a complex union, but self-stimulated sex involves personal isolation.

- God designed sex as a complementary heterosexual act, but self-stimulated sex is a personal homosexual act.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:14

- How far is too far between a single man and a single woman?

“Forty-two percent of (single) evangelicals between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine are currently in a sexual relationship, twenty-two percent have had sex in the past year, and an additional ten percent have had sex at least once. Assuming the accuracy of [that] data, this means only twenty-percent of young evangelicals have remained abstinent. The pastoral community must shoulder much of the blame here. Simply put, we pastors are not quite certain how to counsel singles and teens regarding appropriate sexual boundaries. We either offer subjective-biblical standards (‘the Bible says be pure’) which can be massaged around like a wax nose, or objective-personal opinions (‘keep it above the neck’), which lack any real authority. Singles need an objective-biblical standard of premarital sexual ethics, and we pastors are the ones responsible for providing it.”
Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas

- Three God-ordained categories in Scripture ...
 - The _____ neighbor _____ relationship: sexual activity prohibited.

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”
Luke 10:25-37

I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
1 Corinthians 7:7-9

- The _____ family _____ relationship:
sexual activity prohibited.

*"None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the LORD."
Leviticus 18:6*

Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.
1 Timothy 5:1-2

- The _____ marriage _____ relationship:
sexual activity commanded.

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
1 Corinthians 7:1-5

- One God-glorifying conclusion from Scripture ...
 - Regardless of whether you are single or married, flee any and _____ all _____ sexual activity outside of marriage.

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.
1 Corinthians 6:18

- Based upon why Jesus is unique ...
 - Jesus has _____ purchased _____ our bodies with His blood.

... for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6:20

- Jesus has _____ united _____ our bodies with His body.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

1 Corinthians 6:15-17

- Based upon what we must do ...

For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

1 Thessalonians 4:2-8

- Turn from our sin and ourselves.
 - We are free from bodily sin that harms so deeply, controls so quickly, and devastates so painfully.
 - Repent of (and run from) any and all sexual activity outside of marriage.
- _____ Trust _____ in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
 - We are free to enjoy His great purpose for our bodies as we exalt His great glory with our bodies.
 - Rejoice in (and _____ run _____ to) sexual activity in marriage.

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5

If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin.

1 Corinthians 7:36

- Receive today (and _____ rest _____ in) the forgiveness and freedom, hope and healing that are found in Christ alone.

"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."

Isaiah 1:18

- Based upon what is at stake ...

"If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 1:19-20

- According to the sure judgment of God, _____ unrepentant sexual sin leads to hell.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell."

Matthew 5:27-29

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Ephesians 5:5

... just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 1:7

“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Revelation 21:8

- Only by the sheer grace of Christ, humbly _____ **repentant** _____ sinners enter into heaven.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:11

And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

Revelation 21:6-7

Christ and Pornography ...

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ ...

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- Don't miss the connections ...
 - Victims of sex slavery are used in the _____ **production** _____ of pornography.
 - Use of pornography leads to _____ **demand** _____ for sex slaves.
 - Exposure to pornography leads to further demand for sex slaves.
- Don't miss the conclusion ...
 - Every time we click on an image or a video on our phone or computer, we are _____ **contributing** _____ to a vicious cycle of sex slavery.
- So hear the exhortation ...
 - For God's sake, for your sake, and for the sake of sex slaves here and around the world ... _____ **FLEE** _____ **PORNOGRAPHY!**

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

1 Peter 2:11

- Based upon who God is ...
 - Cultivate unshakeable _____ **zeal** _____ for the glory of God's name.

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
Matthew 6:9-10

- Acknowledge your sexual drive as a _____ good _____ gift from a gracious God.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.
Genesis 2:24-25

- Based upon who we are ...
 - Run from every temptation, knowing that _____ one _____ sin is enough to warrant infinite damnation.

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6:18-20

- Guard yourself with godly _____ friendships _____ and gospel accountability.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
Hebrews 3:12-13

- Based upon why Jesus is unique ...
 - Contemplate the _____ price _____ Christ paid for your purity. See Him writhing on a cross in agony. Fight tempting images with that image.

*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."
But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.*
1 Corinthians 6:15-17

- Consider the _____ compassion _____ Christ has for the souls of men and women. Love and pray for them; don't exploit and abuse them.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:36

- Based upon what we must do ...

- Believe that God is _____ for _____ you ... and knows what is best for you.

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Psalms 34:8-10

- _____ Memorize _____ and meditate on Scripture.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!

I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalms 119:9-11

- Based upon what is at stake ...

- Ponder the eternal danger and _____ destruction _____ associated with sexual sin.

You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Matthew 5:27-30

- Ponder the eternal _____ delight _____ and joy associated with future salvation.

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Revelation 19:6-8

ISSUES IN OUR CULTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

- Abortion
- Orphans and Widows
- Poverty
- Slavery
- Sexuality
- **Ethnicity and Immigration**
- Liberty and Persecution

ETHNICITY AND IMMIGRATION

Reshaping the Conversation about Race ...

- See the initial foundation:
 - From the beginning, the Bible depicts a basic _____ unity _____ ...

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:26-28

- Behind worldly _____ diversity _____.

These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

Genesis 10:31-32

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us ...

Acts 17:24-27

- Then ask the common questions:
 - What race were Adam and Eve?
 - What color was their skin?
- Make the obvious deduction:
 - God doesn't equate membership in the human race with skin tone.
 - Fundamentally, all have the same roots as part of the same race.
- Then come to the clear conclusion:
 - To discuss diversity in terms of different races ...
 - Undercuts unity in the human race.
 - Much of our conversation about race is biblically unhelpful.
 - Moreover, our conversation about race is practically impossible.

"My barber in the Caribbean looks just like me. You'd think he was an African-American until he opens his mouth. When he speaks, he speaks Jamaican patois so it is clear that he's not an African-American. My administrative assistant is also proudly Jamaican—very white-skinned. The lady in my barbershop looks a lot like my wife. You might think she is African-American or even Caymanian. She is Honduran. This notion of artificially imposing categories on people according to color—biology—is sheer folly. It's an impossibility. This is why much of the field on race and ethnicity has largely abandoned the attempt to identify men based on biological categories of race."

Thabiti Anyabwile

- To discuss diversity in terms of different races ...
- Undercuts the goal of the gospel.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”
Revelation 7:9-17

Redefining the Conversation around Redemption ...

- See the Word in light of different _____ ethnicities _____.

These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.
Genesis 10:31-32

- _____ Social _____ distinctions.

... take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.
Acts 21:24

- Lingual distinctions.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”
Acts 2:5-12

- _____ Historical _____ distinctions.

So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.” Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself,

for I cannot redeem it." Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

Ruth 4:4-10

Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

Genesis 19:36-38

While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

Numbers 25:1-3

"No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever ..."

Deuteronomy 23:3

- o **Political distinctions.**

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

John 11:45-48

"They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice."

Acts 16:21

- o _____ **Religious** _____ **distinctions.**

"Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt,

and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”
Joshua 24:14-15

The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”
John 4:19-26

- See the _____ world _____ in light of diverse ethnicities.
 - Approximately 200 nations.
 - Multiple _____ thousands _____ of ethnolinguistic groups (people groups).
 - Common language.
 - Common ethnicity.
 - Common self-identity.
- See our _____ sin _____ in light of ethnic animosity.

Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.
Genesis 4:8

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
Genesis 6:5

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.
Genesis 11:1-9

In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar. Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five. Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.
Genesis 14:1-12

- See the _____ promise _____ God has made.

These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.
Genesis 10:32

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
Genesis 12:1-3

And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands,

and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed ..."
Genesis 26:2-4

And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."
Genesis 28:13-15

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!
Psalms 67

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes."
Ezekiel 36:22-23

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
Matthew 24:14

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing

before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 7:9-10

- See the _____ price _____ Christ has paid.

And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:11-14

- He shed His blood for every people.
- He shed His blood for every language.

And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 5:8-10

- See the _____ place _____ God has prepared.

"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 7:15-17

- In the future, we will worship together in perfect harmony.
- In the present, we now _____ work _____ together for unity in our diversity.

Reforming our Lives around Reconciliation ...

- We work toward ethnic harmony in light of God's _____ purpose _____ in history.

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Romans 15:8-13

- We acknowledge our distinctions.
- We _____ appreciate _____ our differences.
 - We shape and sharpen one another not in spite of our differences.
 - We shape and sharpen one another precisely because of our differences.
- We _____ affirm _____ our dignity.

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3:23-39

- We strive for ecclesiological _____ unity _____ for the sake of God's glory in the world.
 - God is most glorified when His people are most unified.

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

John 17:20-23

- There is no place for ethnocentric _____ pride _____ among God's people.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:3-14

... remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ...

Ephesians 2:12-14

For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ...

Ephesians 2:18-20

- There is no place for ethnocentric _____ preference _____ in the midst of God's people.

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

James 2:1

- We care for _____ immigrants _____ in the world around us.
 - Majority oppression of migrant people is no better than white segregation of black people.
 - We must see the _____ heart _____ of God in Scripture.

The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

Psalm 146:9

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear.

Deuteronomy 10:17-20

"The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice. And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have returned their way upon their heads, declares the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 22:29-31

"For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever."

Jeremiah 7:5-7

- We must _____ apply _____ the Word of God in our culture.
 - See immigrants as men and women made in the image of God.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 1:26-28

- They are not problems to be solved.
- They are _____ people _____ to be loved.

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Luke 10:25-37

- Stand for immigrants as men and women in need of the mercy of God.

And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart."

Zechariah 7:8-10

- We respect their personal dignity ... decrying any and all forms of oppression, exploitation, bigotry, or harassment.

"You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt."

Exodus 22:21

- We protect their familial unity ... working to keep husbands, wives, moms, dads, and children together.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:8

- We live as immigrants looking for a world to come.

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.
1 Peter 2:11*

*These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.
Hebrews 11:13-16*

- As migrants on this earth, the more we get involved in the lives of immigrants, the better we will understand the gospel.
- As citizens of an other-worldly kingdom, we care for all people (regardless of ethnicity or status) in this ever-changing country.

*And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us ...
Acts 17:26-27*

ISSUES IN OUR CULTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

- Abortion
- Orphans and Widows
- Poverty
- Slavery
- Sexuality
- Ethnicity and Immigration
- **Liberty and Persecution**

LIBERTY AND PERSECUTION

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.
1 Peter 2:13-17

Biblical Truths ...

- We are submissive _____ citizens _____ of a government.

*"Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,
and to God the things that are God's."
Matthew 22:21*

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.
Romans 13:1-7

- Government is given by God for the restraint of evil.
- Government is given by God for the promotion of good.
- We are free _____ servants _____ of God.

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

1 Peter 2:16

- We use our freedom in Christ to _____ model _____ good lives.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

1 Peter 2:15

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:13-16

- We use our freedom in Christ to _____ show _____ God's love.

For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

1 Peter 3:17

- We honor everyone, especially our leaders.
- We care for the church.
- We _____ fear _____ God.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

1 Peter 3:14-17

Cultural Applications ...

- We believe religious liberty is not primarily a political issue; it is a gospel issue.
 - Freedom of religion is ultimately given by God, not just granted by government.

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.

Luke 9:51-56

"Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town."

Luke 10:8-12

- Faith, in its essence, cannot be forced.

"When force is applied, the will is not aroused. One can enter the Church unwillingly, one can approach the altar unwillingly, one can receive the sacrament unwillingly; no one can believe except willingly."

Augustine

- Religion is a matter of voluntary choice, not involuntary coercion.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

- We work for religious liberty for all.

"Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Matthew 22:21

"We will not bend to any rule purporting to force us to bless immoral sexual partnerships, treat them as marriages or the equivalent, or refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it, about morality and immorality and marriage and

*the family. We will fully and ungrudgingly render to Caesar what is Caesar's.
But under no circumstances will we render to Caesar what is God's."*
Manhattan Declaration

- Religion exists to explore the questions of life and apply our conclusions to life.
- Government exists to protect this fundamental human privilege.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.
Romans 13:1-7

- Government does not exist for the establishment of religion.
- Government does not exist for the elimination of religion.
- Government exists for the free _____ exercise _____ of religion.
 - Those who gather for worship in private settings scatter to live out their beliefs in the public square.
 - Not just in episodic gatherings, but in _____ everyday _____ life.
- We obey our government _____ unless _____ it requires us to disobey God.
 - Four options ...
 - God alone is our authority.
 - The government alone is our authority.
 - God and government are authorities with _____ government _____ in the dominant position.
 - God and government are authorities with _____ God _____ in the dominant position.
 - One conclusion ...
 - We _____ must _____ obey God rather than men.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your

teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:27-29

Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Daniel 3:8-12

Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction. When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

Daniel 6:6-13

Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Hebrews 11:35-38

- We speak and serve on behalf of the _____ persecuted _____ church around the world.

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:23-31

- We _____ speak _____ ...
 - To God on their behalf.

... praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:18-20

- To our government and other governments on their behalf.
- We _____ serve _____ ...
 - We give and go to our persecuted brothers and sisters.
 - We _____ identify _____ with our persecuted brothers and sisters.
 - By following Christ no matter what it costs.

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

Luke 9:23-24

- By proclaiming the gospel to people around us and people around the world.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8

- Proclamation is the reason for persecution.
 - So let's identify with them by proclaiming the gospel _____ like _____ them.
- Unreached peoples are dangerous to reach peoples.
 - So let's identify with them by proclaiming the gospel _____ alongside _____ them.

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:22-24

THE GREATEST INJUSTICE OF ALL

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, and then for the Gentile.

Romans 1:14-16

Who Are The Unreached?

- Practically ...
 - You do not currently have _____ access _____ to the gospel.
 - Unless something changes, you will likely be born, live, and _____ die _____ without ever hearing the gospel.
- Biblically ...
 - You have _____ knowledge _____ of God.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Romans 1:18-20

- You have _____ rejected _____ God.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Romans 1:21-25

- You stand _____ condemned _____ before God.

What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive."

"The venom of asps is under their lips." "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:9-20

- You have _____ never _____ heard the good news about how you can be saved by God.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26

Why Must We Go To The Unreached?

- Because their knowledge of God is _____ only _____ enough to damn them to hell.

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:4-6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6

- Because the gospel of God is _____ powerful _____ enough to save them for heaven.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the

*Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."
Romans 1:16-17*

- Because the plan of God warrants the _____ sacrifices of His people.

*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"
Romans 10:12-15*

- We've been saved by the gospel.

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations ...
Romans 1:1-5*

- The inevitable reality ...
 - The beauty of the gospel creates a _____ burden for mission.

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:38-39*

*I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.
Romans 9:1-5*

- The bottom line ...
 - The gospel is good enough to throw yourself into _____ hell _____ so that other people can have it.

*So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."
Exodus 32:31-32*

- We've been _____ sent _____ by God.

*And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"
Romans 10:15*

*So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.
Acts 13:4*

- For others' salvation.

*For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.
1 Thessalonians 1:4-8*

*For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20*

- For His glorification.

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
Romans 11:33-36*

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Romans 16:25-27

- For our _____ **satisfaction** _____.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6

- We are slaves of Jesus Christ.

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God ...

Romans 1:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

- We sacrifice our bodies for His worship.
- We saturate our minds with His Word.
- We _____ **surrender** _____ our wills in this world.
- We are servants in His church.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith ...

Romans 12:3-6

- We're members of a family where everybody counts.
- We're members of a family where everybody _____ **contributes** _____.
- We are sure of His commission.

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20*

- We know we have not been commanded simply to make disciples among as many people as possible.
- We know we have been commanded _____ specifically _____ to make disciples among all the peoples of the world.

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
Matthew 24:14*

*"God alone knows the definition of terms [here]. I cannot precisely define who all the nations are, but I do not need to know. I know only one thing: Christ has not yet returned; therefore, the task is not yet done. When it is done, Christ will come. Our responsibility is not to insist on defining the terms; our responsibility is to complete the task. So long as Christ does not return, our work is undone. Let us get busy and complete our mission."
George Ladd*

- Because the Son of God _____ deserves _____ the praises of all peoples.

*And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."
Revelation 5:9-10*

- Jesus Christ died to redeem people from among all peoples for the praise of God.

*For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."
Romans 15:8-12*

- We as Christians live to reach people from among all peoples for the praise of God.

... and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."

Romans 15:20-21

Why Must We Go To The Unreached?

What Is Commanded For All Of Us ...

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphæna and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

Romans 16:3-16

- As the entire church ...
 - Men and women, single and married, young and old, rich and poor.
- We pray ...
 - For the church and for the lost.

I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

Romans 15:30-32

- We _____ give _____ ...
 - To spread the gospel and serve the poor.

This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
Romans 15:22-29

- We _____ go _____ ...
 - Right where we live and wherever God leads.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20

What Is A Calling For Each Of Us ...

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.
Acts 13:1-4

... and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."
Romans 15:20-21

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
Romans 8:14

- How _____ often _____ we pray and whom we pray for.
- How _____ much _____ we give and whom we give to.
- Where we go, how long we stay, what financial support we have, and what kind of work we do.
 - _____ Where _____ we go ...
 - Inside our community or outside our community.
 - Among our culture or across other cultures.
 - On this continent or beyond this continent.
 - How _____ long _____ we stay ...
 - Short-term (1-2 weeks).
 - Mid-term (2 months to 2 years).
 - Long-term (More than 2 years).
 - What financial _____ support _____ we have ...
 - Fully supported.
 - Partially supported.
 - Self supported.
 - What _____ kind _____ of work we do ...
 - Among the reached, we strengthen the church to make disciples.
 - Among the unreached, we plant the church by making disciples.

A Blank Check ...

- I will pray _____ however _____ You want me to pray ...

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Matthew 9:37-38

- I will give _____ whatever _____ You want me to give ...

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Psalms 67

- I will go _____ whenever _____ and _____ wherever _____ You want me to go ...

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every

city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
Acts 20:22-24

- No matter what it _____ **costs** _____ ...

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."
Luke 9:23-24

- Believing that You are my _____ **reward** _____.

... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death ...
Philippians 3:10

THE ULTIMATE HOPE FOR ALL

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Philippians 3:20-21

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Revelation 21:1-4

Contemplating the Hope of Heaven ...

- The eternal heaven is the _____ new earth _____ where God and His angels will dwell with His people in unhindered communion and unimaginable joy.

But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:13

- The ultimate hope of the gospel is not that we will go to heaven, but that heaven will _____ come _____ to us.

"Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago."

Acts 3:19-21

"God will make the new earth his dwelling place Heaven and earth will then no longer be separated as they are now, but they will be one. But to leave the new earth out of consideration when we think of the final state of believers is greatly to impoverish biblical teaching about the life to come."

Anthony Hoekema

- Heaven is not non-earth, but new earth.

"New creation is the goal or purpose of God's redemptive-historical plan; new creation is the logical main point of Scripture."

Greg Beale

- Heaven is not unfamiliar and otherworldly, but familiar and earthly.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Romans 8:19-21

"The gospel is far greater than most of us imagine. It isn't just good news for us—it's good news for animals, plants, stars, and planets. It's good news for the sky above and the earth below."

Randy Alcorn

- Heaven is not foreign, but _____ home _____.

"Heaven, as the eternal home of the divine Man and of all the redeemed members of the human race, must necessarily be thoroughly human in its structure, conditions, and activities. Its joys and activities must all be rational, moral, emotional, voluntary, and active. There must be the exercise of all the faculties, the gratification of all tastes, the development of all talent capacities, the realization of all ideals Heaven will prove the consummate flower and fruit of the whole creation and of all the history of the universe."

A.A. Hodge

- Heaven is not boring, but _____ fascinating _____.

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probably explanation is that I was made for another world."

C.S. Lewis

- Heaven is not a place where we have nothing to do but float on the clouds, but a new earth where we have everything to do: a God to worship, a kingdom to rule, a universe to explore, work to accomplish, and friends to enjoy.

*"Those hills," said Lucy, "the nice woody ones and the blue ones behind—aren't they very like the southern border of Narnia."
"Like!" cried Edmund after a moment's silence. "Why they're exactly like. Look, there's Mount Pire with his forked head, and there's the pass into Archenland and everything!"*

"And yet they're not like," said Lucy. "They're different. They have more colours on them and they look further away than I remembered and they're more ... more ... oh, I don't know"

"More like the real thing," said the Lord Digory softly.

Suddenly Farsight the Eagle spread his wings, soared thirty or forty feet up into the air, circled round and then alighted on the ground.

"Kings and Queens," he cried, "we have all been blind. We are only beginning to see where we are. From up there I have seen it all— Ettinsmuir, Beaversdam, the Great River, and Cair Paravel still shining on the edge of the Eastern Sea. Narnia is not dead. This is Narnia."

"But how can it be?" said Peter. "For Aslan told us older ones that we should never return to Narnia, and here we are."

"Yes," said Eustace. "And we saw it all destroyed and the sun put out." "And it's all so different," said Lucy.

"The Eagle is right," said the Lord Digory. "Listen, Peter. When Aslan said you could never go back to Narnia, he meant the Narnia you were thinking of. But that was not the real Narnia. That had a beginning and an end. It was only a shadow or a copy of the real Narnia, which has always been here and always will be here: just as our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in Aslan's real world. You need not mourn over Narnia, Lucy. All of the old Narnia that mattered, all the dear creatures, have been drawn into the real Narnia through the Door. And of course it is different; as different as a real thing is from a shadow or as a waking life is from a dream." ...

The difference between the old Narnia and the new Narnia was like that. The new one was a deeper country: every rock and flower and blade of grass looked as if it meant more. I can't describe it any better than that: if you ever get there, you will know what I mean.

It was the Unicorn who summed up what everyone was feeling. He stamped his right forehoof on the ground and neighed and then cried: "I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this."

The Last Battle, C.S. Lewis

Envisioning the Hope of Heaven ...

- Heaven is a place of full _____ reconciliation _____ with God.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

Revelation 21:3

- We will be with Him.

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

John 14:1-3

- As priests in the temple.

The inner sanctuary he prepared in the innermost part of the house, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high, and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid an altar of cedar.

1 Kings 6:19-20

And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel’s measurement. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

Revelation 21:15-22

- As a _____ bride _____ with a husband.

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Revelation 19:6-8

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:2

- As children of a Father.

*"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."
Luke 12:32*

- As _____ heirs _____ of a King.

*"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"
Matthew 25:34*

- As participants in a banquet.

*And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."
Revelation 19:9*

- We will _____ behold _____ Him.

*For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!
Job 19:25-27*

*They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.
Revelation 22:4*

*"The seeing of God in the glorified body of Christ is the most perfect way of seeing God with the bodily eyes that can be; for in seeing a real body that one of the persons of the Trinity has assumed to be his body, and that he dwells in for ever as his own in which the divine majesty and excellency appears as much as 'tis possible for it to appear in outward form or shape."
Jonathan Edwards*

*"Not only will we see his face and live, but we will likely wonder if we ever lived before we saw his face!"
Randy Alcorn*

- We will _____ worship _____ Him.

*No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.
Revelation 22:3*

"No legitimate activity of life—whether in marriage, family, business, play, friendship, education, politics, etc.—escapes the claims of Christ's kingship. ... Certainly those

who live and reign with Christ forever will find the diversity and complexity of their worship of God not less, but richer, in the life to come. Every legitimate activity of new creaturely life will be included within the life of worship of God's people."

Cornelius Venema

- We will serve Him.

"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence."

Revelation 7:15

"The eternal state is hardly inactivity for the redeemed but instead work—work that is joyously freed from the frustration of a cursed earth. The new earth is not simply a restoration of Eden but a glorious civilization with a city, and the glory of the nations redeemed and brought into it. One can expect that the new earth would be abuzz with culture—music, painting, literature, architecture, commerce, agriculture, and everything that expresses the creativity of human beings as the image of God."

Russell Moore

- We will be served by Him.

"Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them."

Luke 12:37

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

Isaiah 25:6

- We will reign with Him.

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 5:9-10

"God's intention for humans was that we would occupy the whole Earth and reign over it. This dominion would produce God-exalting societies in which we would exercise the creativity, imagination, intellect, and skills befitting beings created in God's image, thereby manifesting his attributes."

Randy Alcorn

- We will rest in Him.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"
Revelation 14:13

"To come to Thee is to come home from exile, to come to land out of the raging storm, to come to rest after long labor, to come to the goal of my desires and the summit of my wishes."
Charles Spurgeon

- Heaven is a place of final _____ **resurrection** _____
for our bodies.

There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.
1 Corinthians 15:40-44

- Spiritually ...
 - We will be completely free from _____ **sin** _____.

But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.
Revelation 21:27

- Robed in righteousness.

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
Revelation 7:13-14

- Untouched by temptation.

... and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
Revelation 20:10

- We will be utterly free to _____ **obey** _____.

"The freedom of heaven, then, is the freedom from sin; not that the believer just happens to be free from sin, but that he is so constituted or reconstituted that he cannot sin. He doesn't want to sin, and he does not want to want to sin."

Paul Helm

- Sin will literally be unthinkable to us.
- Sin will ultimately be undesirable to us.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 8:24-25

- Physically ...

"If the blueprints for our glorified bodies are in the DNA, then it would stand to reason that our bodies will be resurrected at the optimal stage of development determined by our DNA."

Hank Hanegraaff

- We will eat and drink.

"I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Matthew 26:29

- We will sing and shout.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 7:9-10

- Our _____ personality _____ will be preserved.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

Job 19:25-27

"We can banish all fear of being absorbed into the 'All' which Buddhism holds before us, or reincarnated in some other life form as in the post-mortem prospect of Hinduism The self with which we were endowed by the Creator in his gift of

life to us, the self whose worth was secured forever in the self-substitution of God for us on the cross, that self will endure into eternity. Death cannot destroy us."

Bruce Milne

- Our humanity will be _____ pure _____.

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

1 John 3:2-3

"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Matthew 13:43

- Our bodies will be pleasing to the Lord.
- Our bodies will be pleasing to ourselves.
- Our bodies will be pleasing to others.
- Mentally ...
 - Our knowledge of God ...

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:8-12

*"First Corinthians 13:12 does not say that we will be omniscient or know everything (Paul could have said we will know all things, **ta panta**, if he had wished to do so), but rightly translated, simply says that we will know in a fuller or more intensive way, 'even as we have been known,' that is, without any error or misconceptions in our knowledge."*

Wayne Grudem

- Will always be true.
- Will never be _____ complete _____.

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

Psalm 145:3

"When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his eternity without any flux Time is fluid, but eternity is stable; and after many ages, the joys will be as savory and satisfying as if they had been but that moment first tasted by our hungry appetites. When the glory of the Lord shall rise upon you, it shall be so far from

ever setting, that after millions of years are expired, as numerous as the sands on the seashore, the sun, in the light of whose countenance you shall live, shall be as bright as at the first appearance; he will be so far from ceasing to flow, that he will flow as strong, as full, as at the first communication of himself in glory to the creature. God is always vigorous and flourishing; a pure act of life, sparkling new and fresh rays of life and light to the creature, flourishing with a perpetual spring, and contenting the most capacious desire; forming your interest, pleasure, and satisfaction; with an infinite variety, without any change or succession; he will have variety to increase delights, and eternity to perpetuate them; this will be the fruit of the enjoyment of an infinite and eternal God."

Stephen Charnock, Discourse on the Eternity of God

- Our knowledge of the world ...
 - Will continually expand.
 - As we perpetually _____ explore _____.
- Emotionally ...

Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

- Our feelings will be entirely enjoyable.

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Revelation 21:4

- Our cravings will be completely _____ satisfied _____.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

John 6:35

- Hunger and thirst will not be ultimately quieted.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 7:16-17

- Hunger and thirst will be unfailingly quenched.

And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."
Revelation 21:6

- Our desires will be totally fulfilled.

*"When Christ calls me Home I shall go with the gladness
of a boy bounding away from school."
Adoniram Judson*

- The goal of Buddhism: The elimination of all desire.
- The goal of Christianity: The _____ gratification _____
of all desire.

*The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who
hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the
one who desires take the water of life without price.
Revelation 22:17*

- Our wants will be fully _____ trustworthy _____.

*"One of the greatest things about Heaven is that we'll no longer have to battle
our desires. They'll always be pure, attending to their proper objects. We'll
enjoy food without gluttony and eating disorders. We'll express admiration and
affection without lust, fornication, or betrayal. Those simply won't exist."
Randy Alcorn*

*"I've a feeling we've got to the country where everything is allowed."
Lucy, The Last Battle, C.S. Lewis*

*"Love God and do as you please."
Augustine*

- Heaven is a place of future _____ reunion _____ with the church.

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly
Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of
the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the
spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant,
and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
Hebrews 12:22-24*

- We will _____ recognize _____ one another.

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.
Matthew 17:1-8

"I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven ..."
Matthew 8:11

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.
1 Thessalonians 4:14-18

"There would be no point in these words of consolation if they did not imply the mutual recognition of saints. The hope with which he cheers wearied Christians is the hope of meeting their beloved friends again But in the moment that we who are saved shall meet our several friends in heaven, we shall at once know them, and they will at once know us."
J.C. Ryle

"Shall we know one another in Heaven? Shall we love and remember? I do not think anyone need wonder about this or doubt for a single moment. We are never told we shall, because, I expect, it was not necessary to say anything about this which our own hearts tell us. We do not need words. For if we think for a minute, we know. Would you be yourself if you did not love and remember? We are told that we shall be like our Lord Jesus. Surely this does not mean in holiness only, but in everything; and does not He know and love and remember? He would not be Himself if He did not, and we should be ourselves if we did not."
Amy Carmichael

- We will _____ love _____ one another.

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."
Matthew 22:34-40

- We will be a family before our Father.

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."
Mark 10:29-30

- We will be a bride with our Savior.

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.
Matthew 22:30

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
Ephesians 5:31-32

- We will be a people from every nation.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."
Acts 2:5-13

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 7:9-10

- We will be an ancestry from every _____ **generation** _____.

"Every Christian friend that goes before us from this world is a ransomed spirit waiting to welcome us in heaven. There will be the infant of days that we have lost below, through grace to be found above. There the Christian father, and mother, and wife, and child, and friend, with whom we shall renew the holy fellowship of the saints, which was interrupted by death here, but shall be commenced again in the upper sanctuary, and then shall never end. There we shall have companionship with the patriarchs and fathers and saints of the Old and New Testaments, and those of whom the world was not worthy.... And there, above all, we shall enjoy and dwell with God the Father, whom we have loved with all our hearts on earth; and with Jesus Christ, our beloved Savior, who has always been to us the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely; and with the Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier, and Giver, and Comforter; and shall be filled with all the fullness of the Godhead forever!"

Jonathan Edwards

- Heaven is a place of complete restoration of creation.
 - A place of _____ **physical** _____ reality.

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:8-9

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 22:1-2

- A place of visual _____ **beauty** _____.

The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Revelation 21:18-21

“Look at God’s track record in creating natural wonders in this universe. On Mars, the volcano Olympus Mons rises 79,000 feet, nearly three times higher than Mount Everest. The base of Olympus Mons is 370 miles across and would cover the entire state of Nebraska. The Valles Marineris is a vast canyon that stretches one-sixth of the way around Mars. It’s 2,800 miles long, 370 miles wide, and 4.5 miles deep. Hundreds of our Grand Canyons could fit inside it. [And] the New Earth may have far more spectacular features than these.”

Randy Alcorn

- A place of natural harmony.

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

Revelation 22:3

- A place of continual worship.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

Psalms 19:1-3

- Heaven is a place of comprehensive _____ redemption _____ of culture.

- Music and the arts ...

And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Revelation 5:9-10

- Writing and storytelling ...

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to

you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
Psalm 145:4-13

Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.
John 21:25

“We remember the great delight with which he recounted the course, the counsels, the perils and escapes of the prophets, and the learning with which he discoursed on all the ages of the Church, thereby showing that he was inflamed by no ordinary passion for these wonderful men. Now he embraces them and rejoices to hear them speak and to speak to them in turn. Now they hail him gladly as a companion, and thank God with him for having gathered and preserved the Church.”
Philip Melancthon, on Martin Luther

◦ Drama and entertainment ...

“And there was greeting and kissing and handshaking and old jokes revived (you’ve no idea how good an old joke sounds after you take it out again after a rest of five or six hundred years).”
C.S. Lewis, on the great reunion in the New Narnia

◦ Inventing and building ...

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel’s measurement. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth

amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
Revelation 21:10-21

- Trade and business ...

By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.
Revelation 21:24-25

- Sports and recreation ...

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.
1 Corinthians 9:24-27

“He made me fast, and when I run I feel God’s pleasure To give up running would be to hold him in contempt.”
Chariots of Fire, story of Eric Liddell

- Travel and exploration ...

“Skydiving without a parachute? Maybe, maybe not. Scuba diving without an air tank? I hope so. Will we be able to tolerate diving to depths of hundreds of feet without special equipment? We know that our resurrection bodies will be superior. Won’t it be fantastic to test their limits and to invent new technologies that extend our ability to explore and enjoy God in the mighty realms he makes? Those who know God and believe his promise of bodily resurrection can dream great dreams. One day we will live those dreams.”
Randy Alcorn

Living in Light of the Hope of Heaven ...

- We long for a new earth ...
 - Where we will _____ exalt _____ God’s glory continually.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31

- As we _____ enjoy _____ God’s gifts eternally.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
James 1:17

“God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows. But the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.”
Jonathan Edwards

“Hearts on earth may say in the course of a joyful experience, ‘I don’t want this ever to end.’ But invariably it does. The hearts of those in heaven say, ‘I want this to go on forever.’ And it will. There is no better news than this.”
J.I. Packer

- We live on this earth ...

“Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to act as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of heaven, and hell torments.”
Jonathan Edwards

- With a height of _____ confidence _____ in the Word before us.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.
Isaiah 40:8

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.
Matthew 24:35

- With a breadth of _____ compassion _____ for the world around us.

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.
Romans 9:1-3

- With a depth of _____ commitment _____ to the Christ above us.

“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Revelation 2:9-10

- May loyalty to Christ be more important to us than life itself.

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."

Revelation 12:10-11

- Hear the testimony of Old Testament saints ...

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Hebrews 11:13-16

Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Hebrews 11:35-40

- Hear the testimony of New Testament apostles ...

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:29

... and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

Acts 5:40-42

But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Acts 14:20-22

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:22-24

Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Acts 21:13

Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

2 Corinthians 11:23-27

- Hear the testimony of martyrs throughout history ...

"Matthew suffered martyrdom by being slain with a sword at a distant city of Ethiopia. Mark expired at Alexandria, after being cruelly dragged through the streets of that city. Luke was hanged upon an olive tree in the classic land of Greece. John was put in a cauldron of boiling oil, but escaped death in a miraculous manner, and was afterward banished to Patmos. Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downward. James, the Greater, was beheaded at Jerusalem. James, the Less, was thrown from a lofty pinnacle of the temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club. Bartholomew was flayed alive. Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors until he died. Thomas was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel in the East Indies. Jude was shot to death with arrows. Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded. Barnabas

of the Gentiles was stoned to death at Salonica. Paul, after various tortures and persecutions, was at length beheaded at Rome by the Emperor Nero."

Author Unknown

"No one makes us afraid or leads us into captivity as we have set our faith on Jesus. For though we are beheaded, and crucified, and exposed to beasts and chains and fire and all other forms of torture, it is plain that we do not forsake the confession of our faith, but the more things of this kind which happen to us the more are there others who become believers ... through the name of Jesus."

Justin Martyr

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Tertullian

"Never did the church so much prosper and so truly thrive as when she was baptized in the blood. The ship of the church never sails so gloriously along as when the bloody spray of her martyrs falls on her deck. We must suffer and we must die, if we are ever to conquer this world for Christ."

Charles Spurgeon

"We do not know the value of Christ, if we will not cleave to Him unto death!"

Robert Murray McCheyne

- Hear the words of Jesus ...

"So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

Matthew 10:26-28

- See with an eternal _____ perspective _____.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-4

- Speak with a holy _____ boldness _____.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1:8

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.
2 Timothy 1:8-12

- Sacrifice with reckless abandonment.

“And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”
Matthew 10:38-39

- May mission in the world be more important to us than maintenance in our churches.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:18-20

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”
Matthew 24:9-14

“When you know the truth about what happens to you after you die, and you believe it, and you are satisfied with all that God will be for you in the ages to come, that truth makes you free indeed. Free from the short, shallow, suicidal pleasures of sin, and free for the sacrifices of mission and ministry that cause people to give glory to our Father in heaven.”
John Piper

- Let’s proclaim the gospel of Christ.
 - Praying passionately.

Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

Revelation 8:2-6

- Our cries go up.
- His kingdom comes down.

"What are the real master-powers behind the world and what are the deeper secrets of our destiny? Here is the astonishing answer: the prayers of the saints and the fire of God. That means that more potent, more powerful than all the dark and mighty powers let loose in [this] world, more powerful than anything else, is the power of prayer set ablaze by the fire of God and cast upon the earth."

John Piper

- _____ **Giving** _____ sacrificially.
- _____ **Going** _____ confidently.
 - To everyone we know.
 - To the ends of the earth.
- _____ **Dying** _____ willingly.

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 1:9

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

Revelation 6:9

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Revelation 12:17

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4

- Let's _____ hasten _____ the coming of Christ.

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 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 twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
 2 Peter 3:1-18

- God, give us unwavering _____ holiness _____ in this culture ...

"Believing that further delay would be sinful, some of God's insignificants and nobodies in particular, but trusting in our Omnipotent God, have decided on

certain simple lines, according to the Book of God, to make a definite attempt to render the evangelization of the world an accomplished fact Too long have we been waiting for one another to begin! The time for waiting is past! The hour of God has struck! In God's holy name let us arise and build! We will not build on the sand, but on the bedrock sayings of Christ, and the gates and minions of hell shall not prevail against us. Should such men as we fear? Before the whole world, aye, before the sleepy, lukewarm, faithless, namby-pamby Christian world, we will dare to trust our God, we will venture our all for Him, we will live and we will die for Him, and we will do it with His joy unspeakable singing aloud in our hearts. We will a thousand times sooner die trusting only in our God than live trusting in man. And when we come to this position the battle is already won, and the end of the glorious campaign in sight. We will have the real Holiness of God, not the sickly stuff of talk and dainty words and pretty thoughts; we will have [real] Holiness, one of daring faith and works for Jesus Christ."

C.T. Studd

- o With unshakeable _____ hope _____ in our country to come.

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Hebrews 11:13-16

"The things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before."

C.S. Lewis

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Revelation 22:20-21

Recommended Reading

If you are interested in exploring specific topics from our Secret Church gathering further, the following resources are recommended. Many of these resources were foundational for the truths we explored in our study. Please note, however, that though these books are recommended, Dr. Platt does not necessarily agree with everything written in every one of them. We urge you to read and learn from these books, but at the same time, to filter them through the truth of God's Word.

OVERALL ...

- Marvin Olasky, ed., *Turning Point Christian Worldview Series*
- Michael Horton, *Where in the World is the Church?*
- David Wells, *No Place For Truth*
- Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*
- Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

ABORTION ...

- Gregory Koukl, *Abortion and Human Rights*
- Randy Alcorn, *Pro-Life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments*

ORPHANS AND WIDOWS ...

- Russell Moore, *Adopted for Life*
- Tony Merida and Rick Morton, *Orphanology*
- Carol Comish, *The Undistracted Widow*

POVERTY ...

- Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*
- Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty Nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions*
- Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: Alleviating Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...And Ourselves*

SLAVERY ...

- Gary Haugen, *The Locust Effect*
- William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of Christianity*

SEXUALITY ...

- Andreas Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*
- John Piper and Wayne Grudem, ed., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*
- Daniel R. Heimbach, *True Sexual Morality*
- Sam Allberry, *Is God Anti-Gay*
- Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow? Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate*
- Tim Challies, *Sexual Detox: A Guide for Guys Who Are Sick of Porn*

ETHNICITY AND IMMIGRATION ...

- J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race*
- Michael Emerson, *Divided by Faith*

LIBERTY AND PERSECUTION ...

- Stephen Carter, *God's Name in Vain*
- Nik Ripken, *The Insanity of God*

THE UNREACHED ...

- John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*
- Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*

Pray for Vietnam

To describe Vietnam in a few simple words would be a monumental task. Though roughly the size of New Mexico, Vietnam has a population of at least 90 million with more than 115 distinct people groups scattered throughout the country. Vietnam is known for its great diversity and rich cultural heritage that differs from north to south and among its many people groups.

Vietnam has a long history of war and conquest. From the 1800s until the end of World War II, France controlled Vietnam and much of the Indo-China peninsula. The French finally lost power after a defeat by communists under the command of Ho Chi MINH in 1954, leading to the division of the country into the communist North and anti-communist South. During the 60s and 70s, the United States offered military aid to the South but ultimately withdrew after a cease-fire agreement in 1973. Two years later, North Vietnam conquered the South, and the country was united under communist rule.

The communist government formally recognizes six religions including Buddhism, Catholicism, Hoa Hao (Vietnamese variant of Buddhism), Cao Dai (indigenous religion), Protestant Christianity, and Islam. Buddhists make up about 50 percent of the population. Most records show that only 1.8 percent of the peoples of Vietnam are considered evangelical Christians, though some conservative studies estimate that to be less than 1 percent.

Although many Vietnamese people would claim to be Buddhist and others would claim no religion at all, any visitor to the country would quickly see that ancestral worship and reverence to spirits prevails as the leading religious practice. A short walk down a busy street lined with shops would be filled with the aroma of burning incense at small altars decked out with food and drink offerings. Each day, Vietnamese people offer prayers and requests at these miniature altars to the dead.

Persecution is not a new thing for Christians in Vietnam. As a communist nation, the government has strict control over religious freedom and has traditionally seen Christianity as a Western influence. New policies have outlawed most house churches and only allowed churches to operate if they are officially registered. Leaders of registered churches and house churches are constantly watched and routinely called in for questioning.

Christians in rural areas often face great persecution and pressure as others view their religion as an outside threat. They are no strangers to intimidation tactics such as destruction of their properties, detentions, and severe beatings. Some beatings have even resulted in death. Christians' names are broadcasted over

loudspeakers and printed in publications to warn others not to associate with these enemies of the state.

Following Jesus can also cost Vietnamese Christians their families. Parents, siblings, and even spouses can become very angry over their family member leaving a life of ancestor worship and choosing to become a Christian. Some believers have been thrown out of their families and left without community or livelihood.

Despite these hardships, Vietnam has seen an increase in religious freedom in recent years. Registered churches, especially in major cities, have had more opportunities to train new leaders and plant more churches. House church leaders continue to be trained and sent out to the minority groups that live in hard-to-reach areas.

One of the most encouraging movements in the Vietnamese church is beginning outside of the country. All over the world “overseas Vietnamese” are coming to faith in Christ. Many have felt God’s call to go back to their home country to spread the good news of the gospel in places that are still very restricted.

As we gather together, let us pray for our brothers and sisters who face severe persecution for their faith in Vietnam. Let us ask the Father to continue to grow the church in Vietnam and strengthen their faith to make them bold witnesses to Vietnamese people who have yet to hear the gospel.

**Sources include: Operation World, The Joshua Project, Reaching Vietnam, Voice of the Martyrs, and Open Doors International*

How to Pray for the Peoples of Vietnam

- Persecution is almost immediate for new believers in Vietnam, some within 24 hours.
 - **Pray** for these new brothers and sisters to remain true to their new faith and to stand strong during persecution.
 - **Ask** the Father to send them other believers to help them during this crucial time.
 - **Pray** against the enemy as he tries to attack new believers at some of their weakest moments.
- Churches continue to grow in Vietnam despite persecution; however, training church leaders remains one of the biggest challenges for both registered and house churches.
 - **Pray** for more freedom to create sustainable and effective ways to train new church leaders.
 - **Ask** for rural church leaders to have more opportunities to receive training and connect to a network of Christian support.
 - **Pray** the Father to raise up more leaders to continue to spread the gospel in Vietnam.
- Though they face persecution, Christians desire to work with the government and live in harmony with them.
 - **Pray** for the government to see how Christianity can benefit Vietnamese society.
 - **Ask** that church leaders would have favor with the government and have opportunities to share the gospel with government leaders.
 - **Pray** for government leaders to find true freedom through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Vietnam has over 115 distinct people groups with their own culture and languages, and over 50 percent of these groups are considered unreached with the gospel.
 - **Pray** for God to send someone to each people group to bring the good news of the Gospel to them.
 - **Pray** for Vietnamese believers from these people groups as they seek to take the gospel back to their villages.
 - **Ask** for churches to form and multiply among these unreached people groups.
- Over 3 million Vietnamese people live outside of Vietnam, and many have begun returning to their home country with a burden for their people.
 - **Pray** for people in Vietnam to train these returning new believers so that they can be effective witnesses to their people.
 - **Ask** for God to strengthen them as they face persecution upon their return.
 - **Pray** for more “overseas Vietnamese” to come to faith in Christ and return to Vietnam to spread the Gospel. There are an estimated 1.7 million in the United States alone.
- One Vietnamese Christian brother said, “Don’t ask for our persecution to go away. Ask God to break down barriers despite the persecution.”
 - **Join** our Vietnamese brothers and sisters in asking God to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable” in Vietnam so that believers will not grow complacent in sharing the good news.
 - **Pray** for them to continue to be bold witnesses for Christ.
 - **Ask** God to strengthen them in the midst of persecution.

For more stories, information, and ways to pray for the peoples of Vietnam, visit PrayForVietnam.or

About The Teacher

Dr. David Platt, President of the IMB, is deeply devoted to Christ and His Word. David's first love in ministry is making disciples—sharing, showing, and teaching God's Word in everyday life. He has traveled extensively to serve alongside church leaders throughout the United States and around the world.

A lifelong learner, David has earned two undergraduate and three advanced degrees. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (A.B.J.) from the University of Georgia and a Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Master of Theology (Th.M.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He previously served at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary as Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Expository Preaching and Apologetics, Staff Evangelist at Edgewater Baptist Church in New Orleans, and eight years as the Senior Pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Alabama. David has written several books: *Radical*, *Radical Together*, *Follow Me*, and most recently *Counter Culture*.

David founded Radical (Radical.net), a ministry devoted to serving churches and disseminating disciple-making resources toward the end that the gospel might be made known in all nations. He also has a radio program on Moody Radio, *Radical with David Platt*, that can be heard around the world and features past sermons and teaching from David's ministry.

David and his wife Heather have four children, Caleb, Joshua, Mara Ruth, and Isaiah.

About Radical

Radical exists to serve the church in accomplishing the mission of Christ.

We long to see the church equipping followers of Christ to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples throughout the world—from neighbors across the street to unreached people groups across the globe—all for the glory of God.

As the resource ministry of teacher and author, David Platt, we serve alongside the local church by providing resources in multiple languages, organizing catalytic events like Secret Church, and facilitating opportunities through multiple avenues all with the aim to encourage followers of Christ in the global purpose God has designed for us as His people. Our prayer is that these resources will support disciple-making efforts in local churches around the world.

As followers of Christ, we are committed to obeying His commission. We believe the Scriptures are the inerrant and infallible Word of God, providing the foundation for all that we believe and do. Based upon His Word, we are driven by the following core values:

- Desperate Prayer
- Unconditional Devotion
- Humble Service
- Biblical Integrity
- Global Compassion
- Trusting and Teaching the Word
- Making Disciples through Local Churches
- Reaching the Unreached

To learn more about Radical, visit our website, Radical.net.

Additional Resources

PAST SECRET CHURCH RESOURCES

Past Secret Church resources (DVDs, CDs, and Study Guides) are available for purchase at Radical.net/Store.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Secret Church resources, including audio and video recordings of the teaching sessions, downloadable study guides, and links to additional information about the persecuted church, are available on the Secret Church web site (SecretChurch.org) and through the Radical website (Radical.net).

TRANSLATED RESOURCES

Secret Church resources and other message series have been translated into multiple languages. Audio recordings, transcripts, and study guides can be downloaded from the Radical website in the Resource Library (Radical.net/Resources). Current languages include Arabic, Spanish, Mandarin, Hindi, Indonesian, Russian, Farsi, French, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Thai. New resources and languages are continually being added.

BOOKS BY DAVID PLATT

David Platt is the author of several books: *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*, *Radical Together: Unleashing the People of God for the Purpose of God*, *Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live.*, and *Counter Culture*. These books are available through our online store at Radical (Radical.net).

For more information about the books, visit RadicalTheBook.com, RadicalTogether.com, FollowMeBook.org, and CounterCultureBook.com. All proceeds from book sales go toward promoting the glory of Christ in all nations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources such as sermons, Small Group Guides, Family Worship Guides, and more are available on the Radical website (Radical.net). Free, downloadable discipleship resources can also be found at MultiplyMovement.com.

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