Thirsting for God
Philippians 4:4-7

Why do some people pursue life with hope and zeal, while others muddle through life ________? Today, we’re going to explore how to ________ our passion for life. The Word of God has the _______ instructions for life here and the _______ instructions for life hereafter.

I love the inspired words of David, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my _______ pants for you, O God. My soul ________ for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (Psalm 42:1-2). David knew how much he ________ God and how lost and alone he felt without God. Are there times in your life when you feel empty and alone? Perhaps the _________ for this emptiness is that you’re not as close to God as you once were.

Some people live their Christian life to the _________, while others just drift aimlessly. Some are passionate about their ________, while others are apathetic. Some come out of church _______ of hope and zeal, while others who were in the same worship service come out _________. Why the difference? Could it be that many have _______ their passion for God? Some folks have never been _______ to God; they don’t know what they’ve missed. My friend, I pray that you’ll look _______ into your soul and ask yourself if you have a close and loving relationship with God? Would you like one?

Our reading today comes from Paul’s letter to the Philippians 4:4-7.

Have you ever been thirsty, really thirsty? Have you ever had the kind of thirst that __________ a drink of water now? I’ve been out hunting and walking through the forest loaded down and desperately needing a drink of water. Or, I’ve been out mowing the lawn in the summer, and my face is red, and I’m so thirsty I could drink from a garden hose. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who ________ and ________ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). Jesus used two familiar things, hunger and thirst, to teach us how God looks at righteousness. God _________ the person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, and God will give him satisfaction.

Much of Judea is a _______ country. The people who live there know what it’s like to have ________ water available. The hills of Judea contain numerous cisterns to ________ rain water for the times when the dry seasons come along. They knew water was essential to ________, and they must have it. God, too, my friend, is essential to your life.

When was the last time you were _________ thirsty for God? When did you last _________ to be close to God? When did you last hunger to _______, to praise Him, and to thank Him? When was the last time reading the ________ or hearing a _________ from God’s Word was an immediate demand? It’s so easy to _________ what you need to be healthy and right with God.

Some people take for _________ that God is always there, always cares, and is always available when they need Him. They have _______ in their lives for God when they hurt and they
need Him, but they _______ God until some real need arises. Their relationship with God is really part-time. Their lives say to God, “I want you when you can _______ me, but don’t get used to being a part of my life.” They aren’t really close to God.

Part-time Christians don’t want to be close unless they want something from God. They have a _______ relationship. Let me ask you, would you like to be _______ to someone who only wanted you when he or she needed you but didn’t care other times? Christianity is a heartfelt, daily relationship with the Lord. We must not let our love for God grow _______.

If you want a relationship with God that is vibrant and living and full of love and joy, you must _______ beyond having God around only when you need Him. The Lord Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 when he was _______ by the devil. He said in Matthew 4:4, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every _______ that comes from the mouth of God.”

Many people _______ themselves out of a real life by focusing on everything that is around them, but God. They listen to the talk shows; they go to the movies; they know their soap operas; they read newspapers and magazines; they know every sports figure; but they haven’t read a single book of the Bible in years. No wonder their lives are _______ with doubts and confusion and misunderstanding. When they push the Bible away, they’re pushing _______ and _______ away.

The Bible is no ordinary book; it is God’s book and God’s way of teaching and training us how to _______. It teaches us how to _______, how to forgive and to be forgiven, how to react to suffering, how to _______ on the inside in spirit, how to discipline ourselves, how to live without hurting other people, and how to make the _______ of our lives. The Bible gives us hope and promise; it gives us joy and peace; it uplifts; it comforts; it corrects; it trains; and it makes us _______. The Word of God is what gives us new life and causes us to be born again.

Read an amazing promise in 1 Peter 1:22-25. God’s Word is the _______ to being “born again.” No other book can _______ your past and give you the promise and hope of living forever! The more you read the Bible, the more you will come to _______ and to be _______ to God. The more you read the Bible, the more you will come to have the abundant life found in Christ Jesus!

So, start paying attention to God and to His Word. Our passion and feelings for God _______ when we remove ourselves from God. People don’t _______ to get away from God; they simply _______ away unconsciously. The Bible says, “Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we _______ away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we _______ such a great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:1-3). A person can slowly stop _______ the Word of God, stop _______ , and stop going to _______. Before long, he’s drifted away from the God who loves him.

Desperate situations sometimes _______ us up and _______ us back to God; and we finally realize that we have no one else. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I’ve been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go.” It’s reassuring to _______ that God can do things that men cannot do. There is really only one _______ God
who can hear and answer prayer; and that’s the God of the Bible! Oh, I know it’s not politically
correct to say things like that, but political correctness is not the measure of _______. Political
correctness is often the world’s way of putting God to __________. When people ________ to the
world and ________ God, they end up ruining their lives. Every social ill in America comes from
people ignoring the _______ of God. We need God. We need His hope, His promises, and His laws
to live good and peaceful lives. There is simply no other way.

We can draw close to God by making Him a __________ in our lives every single day. Every
day make _______ for God. Spend time in Bible _______ and _______. Don’t simply read the
Word of God; ________ it and meditate upon it. Psalm 1:1-3 says, “Blessed is the man who walks
not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but
his ________ is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree
planted by the streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all
that he does, he prospers.” God wants to _______ your spirit with his Word, the Bible, and to give
you the very insights you need to prosper in every area of your life.

God also wants you to draw close to Him by opening your _______ to Him in prayer. First
Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.” God is not saying pray 24 hours a day, seven days
a week. No one could do that. Instead, God is telling us to stop quitting on prayer. Some folks stop
praying altogether. That’s what God doesn’t want you to do.

Some folks think they’re __________ God by praying, but God doesn’t feel that way. He
_________ us to pray, to ask, to seek, and to knock. He’s ready to __________, to give, and to help
us find what we’re seeking. Prayer was God’s ________, so let’s rid ourselves of the notion that
God is too busy for us or gets bothered by prayer. God loves you so much that He wants to hear
your prayers. He wants to hear your ________.

If you want to be closer to God, let me suggest that you do this one, simple ________ every
day. “What is it?” It’s this: _______ your blessings. Remember the ________ blessings that God
has given to you. Remember, God saved you from ________, delivered you from the domain of
darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son. Remember the ________, the love that Jesus
showed by suffering for you and me. Remember how God has __________ your prayers. Remember
how the Scriptures gave you _______ and __________. Remember the __________
that God has given you to deal with the challenges of life. He’s been blessing you through the
years. Just look how God has helped you and is helping you now.

Count your blessings, and when you do it’s so __________ for your spirit and your attitude. The
Bible teaches, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there
is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8).

When we concentrate only on the __________, we lose sight of God. When we concentrate on
the __________, we grow more thankful to God. Every day we need to _______ and _____ to
God, “thank you, thank you, thank you for all that You do for us.”

There’s one more thing about God’s blessings that we must remember. God has lovingly
prepared a _________ for us, one that gives us hope. **Read 1 Peter 1:3-5.** As Christians, we have the true and living _______ in the true and living _______. We have all the blessings of God in this life and we have __________, too! In Christ, we are of all people most blessed.

Is there anything in your life that ______ you from being close to God? Is there anything in your life that ______ you of energy and time so that you’re so overly tired that you don’t have time for God? Some people day after day shut the Lord out of their lives. Hebrews 12:1-2 says: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which so closely clings to us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

There may be many things in our lives that ________ us up. Some things are not sinful in and of themselves, but they so distract and rob us of _______ with God that we lose sight of the Lord who loves us. We also have to think about sin. Yes, sin, ALL sin __________ us from God. The Bible says, “Behold, the LORD’s _______ is not so short that it cannot save; nor His _____ so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid His _______ from you so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2). If you want to draw close to God, you have to _________ the sin out of your lives.

Several years ago, a middle school in Oregon faced a unique problem. A number of the girls began to use lipstick. They’d put it on in the restroom and then press their lips against the mirrors, leaving dozens of little lip prints. This went on for several days. Finally, the principal decided that she had to do something to stop this problem. So, she called the girls to the restroom with the custodian. She explained that lip prints caused a major problem for the custodian who had to clean the mirrors every single day. To demonstrate how difficult it was, she asked the custodian to clean one of the mirrors. He took out a long-handled brush; he d _______ it in the toilet; and then he scrubbed the mirror. Since that time, there weren’t any more lip prints on the mirrors. If we could see the _______ in sin, we wouldn’t be so attracted to it. God ______ sin. He calls it iniquity because it twists and ruins lives.

God loves you and wants something ________ than sin will give you. Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Our Father in heaven wants us to _______ with joy and purpose.

We can live abundantly when we give our hearts and our lives to the Lord. So put your trust in the Lord Jesus. Believe His Word. Turn away from the ugliness of sin. Sin may give you pleasure for a moment, but it will rob you of your soul. Out of love and faith, with a penitent heart, confess Christ as your Lord and the Son of God and be baptized or immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the time God forgives our sins. It’s also the time that we enter into a relationship with God and He adds us to the church. I hope you’ll do that today, that you’ll obey the gospel and be baptized.