Hungering for Righteousness
Psalm 51:10-13

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

Each day we get hungry for _______. Have you ever hungered for righteousness? Matthew 4:1-4, says the Spirit led Jesus “into the wilderness to be __________ by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was ________. And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of ________.’ But He answered, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every _______ that comes from the mouth of God.’” We can fill our empty ________ by feeding them on every word that comes from the mouth of God. We find these words in the Bible.

The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who _______ and ________ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). Everyone gets hungry and thirsty. When we’re hungry or thirsty, our bodies _______ out for the food or water that we want and need. When we’re really hungry or thirsty, we can’t _______ of anything but food to eat and water to drink. That’s the kind of hunger that we need in our spiritual lives. Psalm 42:1 says, “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.” Man possesses a __________ hunger that only God can satisfy.

People _______ what they hunger for. Some seek power, some fame, some money, and some the things of the flesh. All these things are temporal and will _______. What are you seeking? What you seek and hunger for determines the __________ of your life. If you seek only the temporal and you miss the spiritual, you have missed the only thing that will satisfy you for __________. Without God, everything is in ________.

Our reading today comes from Psalm 51:10-13.

When we hear the word “righteous,” we often think of a person’s character, but the word actually describes a ___________. When people have a right relationship with the Lord, God considers them righteous. When people fail to have a right relationship with the Lord, God considers them as unrighteous. The righteous person _______ and _______ God, while the unrighteous person ignores God and feeds on his passions. God described Rehoboam, the son of Solomon and king of Judah, this way, “He did evil because he did not set his heart to _______ the LORD” (2 Chronicles 12:14). When people ignore the Lord and live according to their own desires, they fail to _______ into a right relationship with the Lord. When people seek the Lord, they _________ to live righteously.

How we ________ God determines how we choose to live. Seeking and loving the Lord _______ our character. The more we know and love the Lord, the more we want to be _______ Him. God is righteous, and we learn righteousness from Him. God is holy and righteous, and
He expects those who follow Him to ______ that way, too. The Lord God said, “be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44). Habakkuk 1:13 says of God that, “Your eyes are too ______ to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with ________.” God is utterly holy, and God wants us to live ______ lives. Hebrews 12:14 says, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will _____ the Lord.”

Sadly, some have come to believe that we have no responsibility to ______ up our lives, to leave the old man of sin behind and to conform to the ways of the Lord. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may ______ what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Christianity always goes __________ the ways of the world. Those who think they are more religious or more Christian because they try to fit their faith into the __________ have missed the mark. You can’t compromise what the Lord teaches about morals and salvation and at the same time become a stronger Christian.

The Bible never contemplates the idea of going back into an old life of sin in order to be a better Christian. Read what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:13-19.

The Lord Jesus paid the ultimate ______ so that we might be cleansed from all unrighteousness. He didn’t buy our _______ from sin with silver or gold. He paid for our freedom with His _______ because He didn’t want us to continue that way of life. He expected something ________ from us and for us. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the ______ of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would ________ in them.” God’s grace is abundant; but He saves us in order to __________ our lives. We must never cheapen God’s grace by taking it for granted.

Some intentionally ________ to sin against God, believing they can ask for forgiveness later. They presume the grace of God allows them to live as they please as long as they _______ for forgiveness afterward. Paul asked, “Are we to continue in _____ so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who ______ to sin still live in it?” (Romans 6:1-2). Christians must ________ that old way of life in order to fulfill God’s will for their lives. Read 2 Peter 2:20-21. Christians who return to a sinful way of life and are overcome by it are worse off than if they had never become Christians.

Many today do not want a Jesus who _________. They want a Jesus who will _______ of them no matter what they do, a Jesus who will not ask them to repent, and a Jesus who requires nothing of them. They want to rest in the comfortable grace of Jesus, a grace that approves of them as they are and never expects a __________. They presume the _______ of God will cover them no matter how they live, what they think, or with whom they have sex. The Jesus they seek, however, is imaginary; you can’t ______ a Jesus like that in Scripture. You can find Him full of grace, but not a grace that will leave you alone. The grace of Christ forgives but tells you
to “go and sin no more.” The Lord will not ______ you where He found you. He will transform your life to ___________ with the holiness and righteousness that He teaches.

The Bible calls Jesus the “righteous One” (1 John 2:2) and the “righteous judge” (2 Timothy 4:8). Paul told the pagan philosophers, “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should ________, because He has fixed a day in which He will ________ the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

Our postmodern culture is very much like Jerusalem in the seventh century before the time of the exile. The people were idolatrous and had _______ God out of their hearts and lives. In the past, they had honored God, but their ______ had turned away from Him. Zephaniah 3:2 charged Jerusalem with four great errors: “She heeded no __________, She accepted no instruction. She did not _____ in the LORD, She did not _______ _______ to her God.” Today our country will not listen to God’s instructions; they no longer want to hear the gospel of Scripture. People today want to _______ the gospel and take out the call to “repent.” They prefer to live by their own ______ and want God to accept their sinful lifestyles rather than conform to His will.

Righteousness includes _______ the commandments of God. Righteousness is the _______ of lawlessness. Paul told Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul instructed Timothy to handle God’s Word accurately. A reckless handling of God’s Word is a cause for ________. We must study God’s Word to know what it says and to _____ it correctly. Paul said “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16). To depart from the truth can cause a person to lose his soul.

It matters what we believe! Learn to _______ Biblically and to distinguish what the Scripture actually teaches from what is false and human. If the word of truth doesn’t contain the doctrine, don’t _______ it. If the word of truth doesn’t instruct the practice, then _______ it. You can’t follow God and follow man-made religion at the same time.

Some today have _______ trusting what God says in Scripture. They believe _______ of the narratives found in Scripture are myths or legends. They doubt Adam and Eve, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea. They think they’re the products of chance and evolution rather than created in God’s image. If you doubt God, you see no ______ to obey His moral teaching. Our coins say “in God we trust,” but we’ve thrown His Word out of our public schools. References to God these days come in the form of taking His name in vain. We’ve ignored what He says about the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage. One in seven Americans no longer believes in the concept of sin. However, even if billions of people doubt God, God is still God. Even if billions of people doubt His teaching, the Words of Jesus will judge us on the last day.

When people push God out of their hearts, they ______ a bitter harvest. Proverbs 10:16 simply says, “The wages of the righteous is life, The income of the wicked, punishment.” It
matters whether we follow God. Psalm 1 reveals the ______ of the righteous and the wicked. Read Psalm 1:3-6. Righteousness isn’t some strange fad or hobby; it’s the difference between eternal life and eternal death.

Why does God ______ us to live righteously? He does so because He _____ us and He wants what is _____ for us. Our faith makes a difference in every aspect of our lives. Christianity is not a once-a-week pastime; it’s a ______ walk with God. God’s way is the way of love, of truth, of kindness, of peace, and of integrity. God’s way gives us faith, hope, and love. It teaches us where we came from, why we’re here, and what will happen to us after we die. It gives us ______ to live, to serve, and to love. Christian righteousness lifts people out of harmful sins and behaviors and provides a new way of life that blesses everyone.

The fiber of our society and our families depends on our being ______ with God. Proverbs 14:34 says, “Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people.” When people forget God, they are far more willing to do things God will not allow. Love for God motivates us to live virtuous and noble lives. It helps us _____ above selfishness and pride. It helps us overcome destructive behaviors. When people follow Christ, they’re better citizens, better fathers and mothers, better husbands and wives, better parents, and better neighbors. Nothing today will improve our lives more than taking hold of the Christian life and pursuing it with all our hearts. Let’s set our hearts to desire God and to seek righteousness. Let’s take our faith seriously and take up our crosses daily and follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus said, “But seek ______ His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). The Lord has made righteousness and His kingdom a priority. He doesn’t merely say seek them; He says seek them “first.” We’re often so _____ making a living, raising our children, and pursuing our passions that we forget our souls. The Lord said, “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it ______ a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then ______ every man according to his deeds” (Matthew 16:25-27). Please take the Lord seriously. Get right with God, today!

You can’t earn a right standing with God by your own doing; it comes by the gift of God’s grace through the blood of Jesus. To enjoy God’s grace, you must meet God’s conditions. You must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; you must repent of your sins and determine to follow Jesus; you must confess Christ before others; and you must be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you’re baptized into Christ, you’re also baptized into His death according to Romans 6:3. Jesus shed His blood in His death. The Lord washes you in His blood when you’re united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection in baptism according to Romans 6:4-7. If you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, you’ll not wait to come to the Lord and serve Him.