

### **Restoring our hunger and our thirst for the Scriptures.**

Authentic Christianity has always been marked by an intense love and delight in the word of God. This is a recurring theme all throughout the Scriptures, but it is especially evident Psalm 119. Psalm 119:14, “In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.” Verse 16, “I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.” Verse 24, “Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.” Verse 35, “Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it. Verses 46-48, “I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame, for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.” In verses 69-70, “The insolent smear me with lies, but with my whole heart I keep your precepts; their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law.” Verse 77, “Let your mercy come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight.” Verse 92, “If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.” Verse 97, “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.” Verse 113, “I hate the double minded but I love your law.” Psalm 119:119, “All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross, therefore I love your testimonies.” Verse 127, “Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold.” Verse 140, “Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it.” Verse 143, “Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight.” Verse 159, “Consider how I love your precepts! Give me life according to your steadfast love.” Verses 162-163, “I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil. I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.” Verse 167, “My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly.” And verse 174, “I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight.”

King David loved the word of God; it was his meditation all the day. The testimonies, the statutes, the commandments, the precepts, and the law of God were his constant delight. To delight in something means that you feel great favor towards that something. It means that you are mindful of it; it means that you are attentive to it; it means that you take pleasure in it. The word, delight, is often used in the Scriptures to describe a man finding fulfillment in the woman that he loves. In these verses, the Psalmist makes it abundantly clear, the word of God –the testimonies, the statutes, the commandments, the precepts, the law, is to be our joy. The children of God are to exceedingly love and cherish the word of God –it is to be our pleasure; it is to be our treasure; it is to be our greatest and most fulfilling delight.

Do these truths reflect the sentiment of your hearts? Are these truths reflected in your actions throughout the day? How do you really feel about the word of God? For the child of God, the answer to every one of these questions is a resounding, yes. A child of God will love the word of God. A child of God will delight in the word of God. A child of God will value and treasure the word of God far above all else.

What if you do not? What if you do not really treasure or value the word of God? What if you do not delight in the word of God? What if you do not love the word of God? Maybe you did at some point, but what if you do not now? What if over the years your appetite for the word of God has significantly decreased? What if your daily devotional time no longer takes place every day, but every other day, every three days, every week, every other week, or every month? At some

point in life, every believer has found himself lacking in his intake of the word of God. The question is, how do we get it back? How do we revive our love and delight in the word of God? How do we restore our hunger and our thirst for the word of God?

Please turn with me to 1 Peter 2:1-3. Our passage this morning answers every one of these questions by directing us to remember, to remove, and to recognize. It is important to remember the context leading up to this passage. In light of our great salvation, Peter has given a series of exhortations to the elect exiles of the Dispersion. Peter has called his readers to live in hope, to walk in holiness, to conduct their lives in fear of God, and to earnestly and sincerely love the brethren. In 1 Peter 2:1-3, Peter continues this exhortation and gives us three principles that will restore our hunger and thirst for the word of God.

1 Peter 2:1-3. “So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation –if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

**Principle #1.** Our hunger and thirst for the word of God can be restored by remembering our rebirth.

What is the first word in 1 Peter 2:1? The first word is “so.” The word “so” can also be translated as accordingly, or consequently, or as therefore. Therefore, the word “so” is relating 1 Peter 2:1-3 with the previous passage of 1 Peter 1:22-25. So, on the basis of what has just been said (1 Peter 1:22-25), now comes the conclusion (1 Peter 2:1-3). And what had just been said in 1 Peter 1:22-25?

1 Peter 1:22-25. “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, [23] since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; [24] for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, [25] but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

What is the single greatest event that has transpired in your life? For the Christian, the most important, the most significant, and the most meaningful event in life is our regeneration –it is our conversion to the LORD Jesus Christ. It is your transformation from death to life; it is your transformation from a being child of the devil to becoming a child of God. It is your purification from your former manner of life, which is through the living and abiding word of God, which was preached to you and by which you were saved. So, how do we restore our hunger and thirst for the word of God? By remembering our rebirth, specifically by remembering the means by which we have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

You see, our spiritual life began with the word of God. The word of God is the great means of our salvation –“of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth” (James 1:18). The word of God is also our great sustainer. The word of God is the source of our spiritual transformation, it is the source of our continued spiritual transformation.

Psalm 19:7-11. “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.”

Notice the format of these verses. There are six statements and each statement contains three elements (a title, a characteristic, and a benefit of Scripture). As you go through these six statements, one at a time, you begin to see just how authoritative, powerful, and sufficient is the word of God. The word of God revives the soul, it makes wise the simple, it rejoices the heart, it enlightens the eyes, it endures forever, and it is righteous all together.

Where do you go to find salvation? Where do you go to find encouragement? Where do you go to find wisdom? Where do you go to find joy? Where do you go to find peace? Where do you go to find a permanent resource that never changes? Where do you go to find the truth? Beloved, you go to the word of God.

Psalm 19:10-14. “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. Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”

There is no spiritual need that is not met in the Scriptures. There is no necessary resource that is not supplied in the Scriptures. There is no right teaching, reproof, correction, or training with regard to spiritual matters that is possible apart from the all sufficient word of God. Every spiritual blessing, everything pertaining to life, and godliness has been given to the child of God.

This is Peter’s point –the word of God is just as authoritative, it is just as powerful, it is just as sufficient, it is just as transforming today, as it was when you first believed. Your hunger and thirst for the word of God can be fully restored by remembering your rebirth, and the means by which we were reborn –the living and abiding word of God.

**Principle #2**, Our hunger and thirst for the word of God can be restored by removing our sin.

1 Peter 2:1. “So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.”

So, in light of the previous passage, since we have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, we must remove our sin. The phrase put away means to lay aside, or to cast off. The term was often used to describe someone removing dirty clothes; the process of taking off a soiled or filthy garment. The intent of this phrase, put away, is clear. Just as you would rid yourself of dirty, stinky clothes, you must rid yourself of sin. You must cast sin off. You must lay sin aside. You must put away your sin –eliminating it, mortifying it, and removing it from your life, just as you would remove a dirty and stinky garment of clothing.

It is very difficult to desire the word of God and to desire the sins of the flesh. In fact, it is more than difficult, it is impossible. You cannot long for spiritual milk and long for the milk of the world. Oil does not mix with water, nor does that which is holy mix with sin. Your desire will

either be for the one, or it will be for the other, but it will not be for both.

Matthew 6:24. “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.”

You cannot serve God and the flesh. You cannot serve God and yourself. You cannot serve God and your sin. What is the first commandment? Exodus 20:3, “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall have no other gods before my face. You shall have no other gods in my sight. Nothing is to be placed before the LORD our God –no person, no thing, no ideology, nor purpose. You cannot serve the LORD God and serve something else. It is either one, or the other; it is all, or it is nothing.

Those who find satisfaction in the things of the world will not have an appetite left for the things of God. And conversely, those who find satisfaction in the things of God, will not have an appetite left for the things of the world. If your desire is for the word of God, then you must destroy your yearning for other things –the things that get in the way, the things that compete for your attention, the things that distract and weigh you down in your devotion to the LORD God.

Hebrews 12:1-2. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] 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.”

In order to run this race we must lay aside every weight, we must lay aside every sin, and we must run the race that is set before us with endurance. What is the difference between the terms weight and sin? What do you think he means by using the term, weight –let us lay aside every weight? The word translated, weight, refers to a bulk, a burden, or a mass. It refers to anything that slows you down; it refers to anything that hinders your ability to run the race; anything that diverts your attention; anything that drains you of your energy. A weight is an encumbrance; it is something that trips you up; it is something that slows you down and renders your running ineffective. The term, weight, is not necessarily a negative term, but nor is it positive; rather, it is a neutral term.

Good things can weight you down, just as easily as bad things. Take, for example, money. Money is neither good, nor is it bad. Money can be used for good, or money can be used for bad. Money can assist you in your race, or money can hinder you in your race –it all depends on the hold that money has in your heart. Some of the best things in life, are the things that can hinder us in our walk with God.

But not only does added weight hinder our performance in running, so does sin. The term, sin, refers to a falling away, or missing the mark of perfection. It refers to the slightest departure from absolute obedience to God. If perfection is the bullseye, then sin is everything but the bullseye. Sin easily entangles us –it literally ambushes us, it encircles us; and it entraps us.

In order to run the race that is set before you, you must deal with your sin; you must deal with all your sin, even the seemingly insignificant ones. The sooner that you turn from your sin, and turn

to God, the sooner you can start running.

J. C. Ryle comments, “Sinful habits have long roots. Sin, once allowed to nestle in your bosom, will not be turned out at your bidding. Habits are like stones rolling downhill – the further they roll, the faster and more ungovernable is their course. Habits, like trees, are strengthened by age. A boy may bend an oak, when it is a sapling – a hundred man cannot root it up, when it is a full-grown tree. Custom is the nurse of sin.”

Do not take your sin lightly; do not take your little sins lightly, because your little sins, if allowed, will slowly and most assuredly become bigger sins, which are not easily turned out. Late repentance is seldom true, so do not develop a peaceful coexistence with your sin –it will restrict your running in the race, and it will put you at odds with the LORD God.

In 1 Peter 2:1 Peter mentions five specific sins that must be put away: malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander.

What is malice? Malice means wickedness. It describes a vicious intention, a feeling of hostility and strong dislike which comes from within a person. It refers to wickedness of every kind, but especially of having it in for someone. Malice often breeds further evil in and of itself; it is pleased with another’s harm (both by words and deeds). Charles Spurgeon comments, “Be careful! Do not count your natural resolve to accomplish the supernatural –your old self might even voice words like “I forgive” and “I will forget,” but the seeds of malice still lurk within because they were not as it were “pulled up by the roots!” Surrender to the Spirit. Allow Him to enable you to walk by the Spirit and you will absolutely not carry out the desire of the flesh! There is simply no other way for victory over malice, a victory that supernaturally enables one to freely forgive and wholly forget!”

The second sin that must be put off, deceit. Deceit literally means to bait the hook. It refers to a fishhook, or a trap, or a trick. Deceit is a deliberate attempt to mislead, trick, snare, or bait other people by telling them lies. You bait the trap in an attempt to catch the victim by flattery, false promises, suggestive talk, off-color suggestions, enticing words, and outright lying. Deceit is a desire to gain advantage or to preserve your position by deceiving others, to get the better of them by cunning and deception.

The third sin that must be put off, hypocrisy. The word hypocrisy comes from the Greek word for theater. Originally the word referred to putting on a mask and playing a part on stage. It was a positive word that described the actor’s artistic abilities. In the New Testament the word is used with a negative connotation. Hypocrisy refers to someone who is insincere, someone who hides behind a mask, someone who hides under a false pretense, someone who disguises their thoughts and feelings in an attempt to mislead others. A hypocrite is a phony, is not real, is not genuine, is a pretender. It is someone who is play acting, someone whose gives the impression of having certain purposes or motives, while in reality having quite different ones. How does your behavior on Sunday compare with your behavior Monday through Saturday? If you are inconsistent between how you behave at church and how you behave at home, work, school, etc, then you are guilty of the sin of hypocrisy.

The fourth sin that must be put off, envy. Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by

witnessing or hearing of the advantages and prosperity of others. The term actually describes the pain felt at the sight of someone else's affluence or happiness. It means not just wanting what another person has, but also resenting that person for having it. Envy is an attitude of ill-will and jealousy that leads to division and strife and even murder. The envious cannot bear to see the prosperity of others, because they are so discontent and dissatisfied with their own lot. Envy begins with desire to possess what another has, but often merges into resentful discontent. Matthew Henry comments "that malice and envy are both roots of bitterness, whence many evils spring: evil thoughts and speeches, tongues set on fire of hell, detracting from and impairing the just and due praises of others. Their words are swords, wherewith they slay the good name and honor of their neighbor. This was the sin of Satan, and of Cain who was of that evil one, and slew his brother; for why did he slay him, but of this envy and malice, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous? These were some of the sins in which we lived in our natural state..."

The fifth sin that we are to put away is slander. Slander means evil speaking, evil speech, or an evil report. Slander refers to back-biting, lies, defamation, and disparagement. It means speaking about others in such a way as to belittle them and to defame their character. Metaphorically speaking, slander may be expressed as shooting people down with words, or harming others by whispering, or spoiling someone's honor with evil words. Again, Spurgeon comments, "Guard with careful diligence that dangerous member, the tongue, lest it utter evil, for that evil will recoil upon thee, and mar the enjoyment of thy life. Men cannot spit forth poison without feeling some of the venom burning their own flesh. Deceit must be very earnestly avoided by the man who desires happiness. A crafty schemer lives like a spy in the enemy's camp, in constant fear of exposure and execution. Clean and honest conversation, by keeping the conscience at ease, promotes happiness, but lying and wicked talk stuffs our pillow with thorns, and makes life a constant whirl of fear and shame."

These five sins: malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander –each one of these must be put away; each one of these must be taken off (removed like a filthy garment and tossed away); these sins must be utterly destroyed in our lives. If not, make no mistake, these sins will wreak havoc in your relationships, and they will destroy your sensitivity to the word of God. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:22, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart." It is impossible to obey this command to love, with a heart of malice, with a heart of deceit, a heart of hypocrisy, envy and slander. Obedience to the command, to love one another earnestly, must come from a pure heart. So put away all of these things –remove your sin.

**Principle #3**, Our hunger and thirst for the word of God can be restored by recognizing our great need.

1 Peter 2:1-2. "So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation."

The primary admonition of this passage is for believers to long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation. The term translated, to long, is describing an intense yearning for something; it describes an intense desire for something. It is to long for or to intensely crave something with the implication that the one longing recognizes their lack and their need. Using

figurative language, Peter paints us a great picture comparing the longings of a newborn infant to the longings of a Christian. Anyone who has been around a newborn baby knows how vocally and how ardently they express their desires, especially their desire for food. Newborn infants recognize their need for nourishment, and that need can only be fulfilled and satisfied by milk, there is no other substitute. If a hungry newborn infant does not get milk quickly they will get as violent as a little life can get. But the moment that baby is placed upon its mother's breast, what happens? The need is met, the baby is satisfied, and the baby is at peace.

The point is very simple, yet very profound. A newborn infant's desire for milk should characterize your desire for the word of God. It should characterize your longing for the word of God. It should characterize your craving for the word of God. Recognize that just as a newborn infant needs milk to survive, so do you need God's word to survive; it is your greatest need, it is your most profound need. There is nothing that can take the place of the pure spiritual milk of the word of God.

One of the biggest problems in the church today is substitution. The church is filled with weak and malnourished Christians because many churches have substituted diluted, watered down milk, for the pure spiritual milk of the word of God. Rather than going to the word of God and diligently taking the time to think, pray, study, and meditate upon the word of God for answers, many travel the path of least resistance; they look for a quick fix, or a quick solution. There are no shortcuts to godliness. There are no shortcuts to your spiritual growth. You will not grow spiritually by periodically sampling the word of God; a verse on love here, a verse on comfort there, maybe a couple of verses on victory. You need the whole counsel of God to grow; from Genesis to Revelation; every single paragraph, every single sentence, every single word. There is no growth apart from the steady intake of the pure spiritual milk, of the word of God. The word of God must be heard, it must be read, it must be reread, it must be studied, it must be memorized, and it must be meditated upon for there to be spiritual growth in your life.

In my experience, hearing and reading the word of God are fairly common amongst those in the church. Slightly less common, because it takes more time and effort, is studying and memorizing the word of God. I think the least common discipline of bible intake is meditation. It is the least common, but it is the most beneficial.

Psalm 1:1-2. "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 delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."

The man, who walks in the path of righteousness, the man who is blessed, is the one who delights in the law of the Lord –it is the man who delights in the word of God. Again, to delight in something, is to feel great favor toward something. It means to be mindful of it, or to be attentive to it. The word, delight, is often used in the Bible to describe a man finding fulfillment in the woman that he loves. The blessed man is the man who is mindful of, or attentive to, the word of God. The object of the blessed man's pleasure, the object of his delight is God's Word. We see this in the fact that day and night, continually, constantly, the blessed man is meditating upon it.

Donald S. Whitney in his book, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, defines meditation as deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in the Scriptures for the purpose of

understanding, application, and prayer. He uses a helpful analogy to describe the benefits of meditation. The analogy is of a cup of tea. You are the cup of hot water and the intake of Scripture is the tea bag. Hearing God's word is like one dip of the tea bag in the cup. Now with one dip of the tea bag, some of the tea's flavor is going to be absorbed by the water, but not a whole lot. It is going to be a pretty weak cup of tea. Reading God's Word, studying God's Word, and memorizing God's word are all additional dips of the teabag into the cup. Meditation is different. Meditation is not just a few dips of the tea bag in the cup; it is completely submerging the tea bag in the cup and letting it sit over time, so that all the flavor is extracted from the tea bag. Have you ever spent time reading or studying the word of God and come away feeling cold? You were able to check off your reading for the day, but you did not really get much out of it. Thomas Watson, remarked, "The reason we come away so cold from reading the word is, because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation."

How do we warm ourselves at the fire of meditation? How do you actually meditate on the word of God? Let me give you some practical suggestions. Here are four helps to assist you in the mediation of Scripture.

**1. Repeat the passage in different ways (1 Peter 2:2).**

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You see how that works? The purpose is not to just vainly repeat each word, but to deeply think about each word, or phrase, as it is emphasized, and pray through what that means in its context.

**2. Another suggestion is to try to rewrite the passage in your own words.** Now, do not just rearrange the word order, but really think through what the passage is saying and then reword it appropriately. For example:



1 Peter 2:2. “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”

In my own words –if you want to mature your knowledge of God, if you want to strengthen your relationship with God, then you must intensely desire and consume the word of God, just like a newborn infant desires and consumes milk.

Rewriting the passage in your own words will give you greater understanding of the passage, and I also find that it helps me remember the passage much more clearly.

**3. Pray through the text.** Go line by line through the passage and offer up a prayer to God using the words and phrases of Scripture.

“Heavenly Father, You are good. You are the highest good, you are the greatest good, and you do good. Thank you for revealing yourself in the Scriptures. Thank you for giving your Holy Spirit to help understand the Scriptures. LORD God, I confess my malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. Help me to put away all of these things. Help me to hate them, as you hate them. LORD God, help me to long for the pure spiritual milk of the word of God. Help me to increase my love for the word of God. Help me to increase my desire for the word of God. Help me to greatly desire and consume the word of God as a newborn infant desires and consumes milk. Help me to give priority to the hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating of the word of God. LORD God, keep my understanding of the Scriptures pure. To your praise, glory and honor. Amen.”

Praying through Scripture is a great way to meditate because it always involves two people – the one meditating upon it, and the Holy Spirit. Praying over a passage of Scripture is an invitation for the Holy Spirit to illuminate your study, and to show you what cannot be seen without him. Always remember, the Holy Spirit is your resident truth teacher –to study the Scriptures without Him is without any advantage.

**4. Apply the passage to your life.** Ask questions. How should I respond to this passage? Is there a sin I need to confess? Is there an example to follow? Does malice characterize my life? Does deceit? Is there an area of my life that is hypocritical? Am I envious of other people, or other people’s things? Do I participate in slander? Do I long for the word of God? Do I long for the word of God like a newborn infant longs for milk? If I do not, then what is it that I tend to long for? What is it that competes with my longing for the word of God? And how do I eradicate these things from my life?

Mediation is never complete until there is specific personal application. Like chewing food without swallowing, meditation is incomplete without specific personal application. I think that one of the main reasons why mediation has fallen by the wayside amongst Christians today is because it is a discipline. Meditation is really hard. It is hard to take the time and think and reflect upon the word of God, especially when there are so many distractions around us. Mediation is not an optional discipline, especially if you want to restore your longing for the word of God. The more time, effort, and energy you spend on meditation, the more your longing for the word of God will increase.

If you want to grow in your knowledge of God, your knowledge of sin, your knowledge of self, your knowledge of the gospel, then you must long for the pure spiritual milk of word of God.

To long for the word of God you need to remember your regeneration, you need to remember the means by which you were born again, by the imperishable, living, and abiding word of God. To long for the word of God you need to remove your sin. You must put away all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. You need to lay aside all the sins that are hindering your walk with the LORD Jesus Christ. To long for the word of God you need to recognize your great need. You need to be nourished by the word of God –through hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on the word of God every day. You will not grow in your walk with God unless you remember, you remove, and you recognize these things.

So, 1 Peter 2:1-3, “Put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. [2] Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— [3] if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

Peter concludes this section by likening our present knowledge of salvation to tasting. To taste means to partake of something by mouth. Figuratively speaking it means to come to know or to experience something first hand. Those who belong to the LORD Jesus Christ have tasted the grace of God, first hand, in their new birth, in their regeneration. They have personally experienced that indeed the LORD God is good. The great reformer, Martin Luther said: “Whosoever has not tasted the word, to him it is not sweet, it has not reached the heart; but to them who have experienced it, who with the heart believe, ‘Christ has been sent for me and is become my own: my miseries are His, and His life mine,’ it tastes sweet.”

Psalms 34:8. “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

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thirst for the word of God? Remember your rebirth, remove your sin, and recognize your great need.