


HUNGERING & THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS!



Pastoral Leadership Academy

E-mail: pastoral.leadershipinstitute@gmail.com

www.pl-academy.org

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a dark hoodie and sunglasses, sits on a large, light-colored rock formation. She is looking out over a vast coastal landscape. In the distance, a large harbor with several ships is visible, surrounded by a city with dense buildings. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO
HUNGER AND **THIRST** FOR
RIGHTEOUSNESS,

FOR THEY WILL BE
SATISFIED.

(MT. 5:6)

Isa 55:1-2

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk, Without money and without price.

2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. NKJV

Blessed from “μακάριος” *makários* = *supremely blest, fortunate, well off*

- Many modern translations translate this word “happy!”
 - Mt 5:6 Happy are those whose heart's desire is for righteousness: for they will have their desire. (BBE)
 - Mt 5:6 Happy they who hunger and thirst for righteousness; for they shall be satisfied! (Oracl)
 - Mt 5:6 Happy those hungering and thirsting for righteousness--because they shall be filled. (YLT)

Have you ever really wondered what it is like to be hungry?

- Now, I know most of us say everyday “I am hungry” but I wonder if we would use the word so lightly if we really understood what being hungry was like? (See. Mt. 4)
 - Imagine what hunger would mean to you if you had to go 4 days without eating, now imagine that times 10 = 40 days without food
 - I believe we would stop using the words hungry after 4 hours if we really understand what it means! It is a matter of life & death!

Hunger & Thirst After Righteousness!

- Hunger = a feeling or discomfort or weakness caused by lack of food, coupled with the desire to eat; a very strong desire (Oxford).
- Thirst = a feeling of needing or wanting to drink; lack of liquid needed to sustain life; a strong desire for (Oxford)
- As seen in both of these hunger & thirst has to do with our desires! They are also both needed to survive!

THREE KINDS OF SPIRITUAL THIRST

1. Thirst of the Empty Soul

- The natural, i.e. unconverted man or woman has an empty soul. Devoid of God, he is constantly in pursuit of that which will fill his emptiness.
- The range of his mad scramble may include money, sex, power, houses, lands, sports, hobbies, entertainment, transcendence, significance, education, etc., while basically "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (Ephesians 2:3).



2. Thirst of the Dry Soul



- The difference between the empty soul and the dry soul is that one has never experienced "rivers of living water" (John 7:38) while the other has and knows what he is missing.
- How is it then that a true believer in Christ can become a dry soul when Jesus promised that "whoever drinks of the water I shall give him will never thirst" (John 4:14)?

- A Christian soul becomes arid in one of three ways.
 - A. The most common is by drinking too much from the desiccating fountains of the world and
 - B. too little from "the river of God" (Psalm 65:9).
 - C. If you drink the wrong thing it can make you even more thirsty.



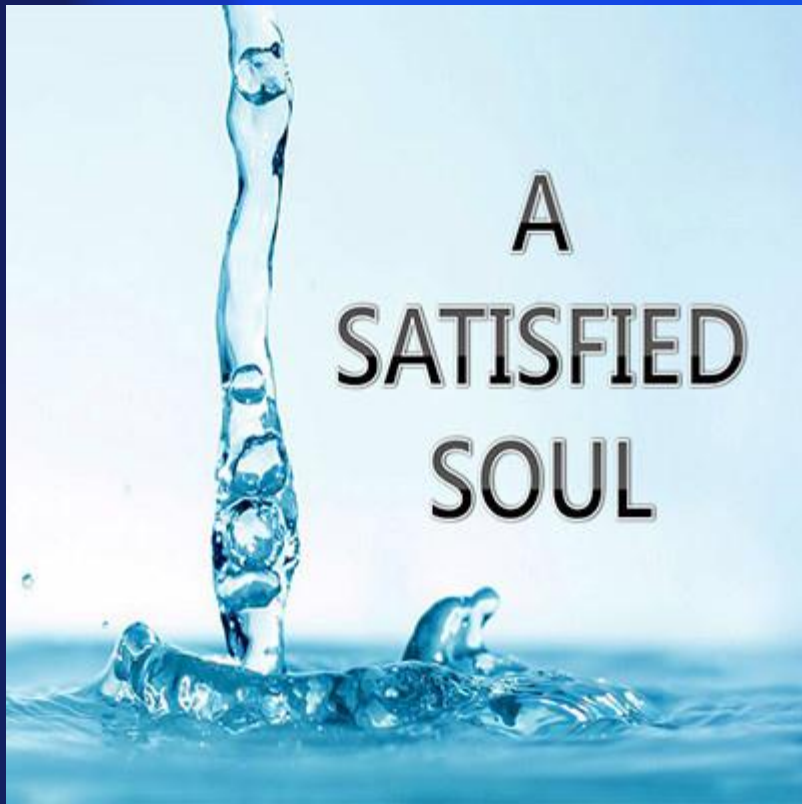


- Another cause of spiritual dryness in the child of God is what the Puritans used to call "God's desertions." While there are times God floods our souls with a sense of His presence, at other times we dehydrate by a sense of His absence. Let me quickly say that His desertion of us is merely our perception, for the reality is just as Jesus promised: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).
- For reasons not always made clear to us, the Lord does sometimes withdraw a conscious sense of His nearness.

- A third cause of spiritual aridity in a Christian is prolonged mental or physical fatigue. Regardless of the cause, the dry Christian soul is like the believer of Psalm 42:1-2, thirsting for God "As a deer pants for the water brooks." When you are in this condition, nothing else but the living water of God Himself will do.



3. Thirst of the Satisfied Soul



- Unlike the dry soul, the satisfied soul thirsts for God precisely because he is satisfied with God. He has "taste[d] and see[n] that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8), and the taste is so uniquely satisfying that he craves more. The Apostle Paul personifies this in his famous exclamation, "that I may know Him" (Philippians 3:10).

“Spiritual good is of a satisfying nature; and for that very reason, the soul that tastes, and knows its nature, will thirst after it, and a fullness of it, that it may be satisfied. And the more he experiences, and the more he knows this excellent, unparalleled, exquisite, and satisfying sweetness, the more earnestly he will hunger and thirst for more,” – Jonathan Edwards





SOME LAWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- The Kingdom of God has Laws, and those who deals with God and hopes to please Him must observe these Laws.

- The Laws are inflexible and of general in application.



Spiritual Law 1

**The JUST shall live by
FAITH**

- Hab.2:14, Rom.1:17, Gal.3:11, Heb.10:38, 11:6

Spiritual Law 2

**MAN shall not live by
BREAD alone...**

- Deut.8:3, Matt.4:4

Spiritual Law 3

**You shall not TEMPT
the LORD your God**

- Deut.6:16, Matt.4:7

Spiritual Law 4

**YOU shall WORSHIP the
LORD your GOD and Him
only you shall SERVE**

- Deut.6:13, Matt.4:10,

Spiritual Law 5

**GOD is a Rewarder of
those who diligently SEEK
Him**

- Heb.11:6

Spiritual Law 6

**No One can SERVE two
MASTERS... You cannot
SERVE GOD and Mammon**

- Matt.6:24

Spiritual Law 7

**Without HOLINESS no
man shall see the Lord...**

- Heb.12:14

Spiritual Law 8

**Love the LORD GOD with
all your heart....Love your
Neighbour as yourself...**

- Matt.22:38-39,

First Point

The hunger and thirst for righteousness is more basically a hunger and thirst for God Himself.

Psalm 42

**¹ As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.**

**² My soul thirsts for God, for the living
God. When shall I come and appear
before God?**

Psalm 63:1

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Paul was Thirsty too!

- Apostle Paul must be thirsty in his day. Despite all his maturity in Christ, all he had seen and experienced, late in life (in Philippians 3:10), Paul wrote of the passion that propelled him: "that I may know Him."
- What is he talking about? Didn't he already know Jesus more closely than perhaps anyone else ever will? Of course he did. But the more he knew Jesus, the more he wanted to know Him. The more Paul progressed in spiritual strength, the more thirsty for God He became.



What is Righteousness?

1. Righteousness is about a relationship:
Being right with God.



Rick Warren

What is Righteousness?

**2. Righteousness is a
Lifestyle:**

Living right as God intends.



Rick Warren

Righteousness is Possible

A. Righteousness is a lifestyle that distinguishes us as true Christians and invites opposition from the world: Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness" (Matt. 5:10).

Righteousness is Possible

B. Righteousness starts in the heart and changes a person from the inside out:
Jesus said in Matt.5:20, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven".

Righteousness is Possible

C. Righteousness doesn't need to be seen by others, but only by God: Jesus said: "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people, to be seen by them. Otherwise, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven" (Matt. 6:1).

Righteousness is Possible

D. Righteousness causes us to seek God's approval above everything else: Most of us already know the fourth occurrence by heart: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you" (Matthew 6:33).

Righteousness is Possible

- Putting these four passages [Matt. 5:10, 20, 6:1,33] together and what do you have? We are to hunger and thirst after: **“A truly Christian lifestyle ... that changes us from the inside out ... so that we no longer seek the praise of men ... but causes us to seek God's approval above everything else.”**

Hunger is a sign of life



Charles Spurgeon

“For, mark you, to hunger after righteousness is a sign of spiritual life. Nobody who was spiritually dead ever did this.”

Hunger is a gift.



- Spiritual hunger is not something that you can make up or take credit for. It is a gift not of ourselves, but of God, as He draws us near to Himself. **It all starts with Him.** (John 6:44)

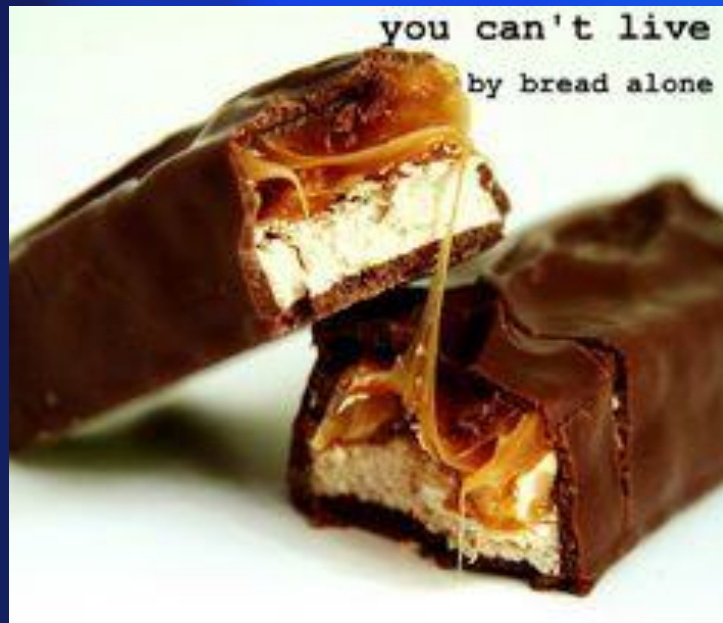
Hunger must be acted upon or it will fade.

- An identifiable desire for God is the work of the Holy Spirit drawing you closer to heaven's banqueting table, to deeper relationship with God. (Song of Sol. 2:4)
- **It's an invitation** to feast on the things that truly satisfy the heart. (Isaiah 55:2) He's stirring a hunger and awareness of your need so that you will come to Him to be filled



If there is no action on our part in response to that hunger, it usually fades. It's a pretty simple spiritual law: If you feed the hunger, it will grow. If you ignore the hunger, it will fade

Hunger begets hunger



- The experts say that sleep begets sleep for the little ones. The more sleep they get, the more sleep they will continue to have. The same is true with spiritual hunger.
-
- The more you get, the more you will continue to have. The more you taste, the more you want. (Psalm 34:8). It's a cycle of spiritual life and growth.

The opposite is true as well. The less spiritually hungry we are, the less we will desire of God, the less we will be filled. That is a cycle, not of spiritual growth, but of spiritual apathy.

Second Point

The hunger and thirst for God has an odd property opposite that of the hunger and thirst for food and water.

Upside Down Hunger and Thirst

“Spiritual hunger works just opposite from physical hunger. When we are physically hungry, we eat and satisfy our appetites and cease to be hungry.

Upside Down Hunger and Thirst

But when we are spiritually undernourished and are then given a feast of good spiritual food, it makes us hungrier than ever.

Upside Down Hunger and Thirst

**Thus the more we learn about
God's love, the more we want to
know; we can't get enough."**

Upside Down Hunger and Thirst

“When we are physically hungry and miss a meal, our appetite becomes ravenous.

Upside Down Hunger and Thirst

But if time passes and we receive no spiritual food, we may lose our appetite for it. Malnutrition sets in and we cease to care.”

STEPS TO SPIRITUAL HUNGER & THIRST


I. Proper Appetite!

- As we have seen in the definition of these two words, they both have to do with our “desires!” Strong desires or one might just say our “appetite!”
 - Appetite = a natural desire to satisfy a bodily need, especially for food, a liking or inclination (Oxford)
 - 1 Pet 2:2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,
 - There is also a danger in poor appetite! Heb. 5:12-14



It is not enough to hunger & thirst, we must be doing so for the right things!

We need a “healthy appetite!”



“Just because you say you will eat does not mean that you will be full; it is only when you [actually] eat that you are full.

This is what the time of fulfillment is about.”

- Many develop an appetite for the wrong things!
 - 2 Tim. 4:10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica...
- We need to have an appetite for God’s Word and for righteousness!
 - 1 Tim. 4:6-8 “nourished in the words of faith...exercise yourself toward godliness”

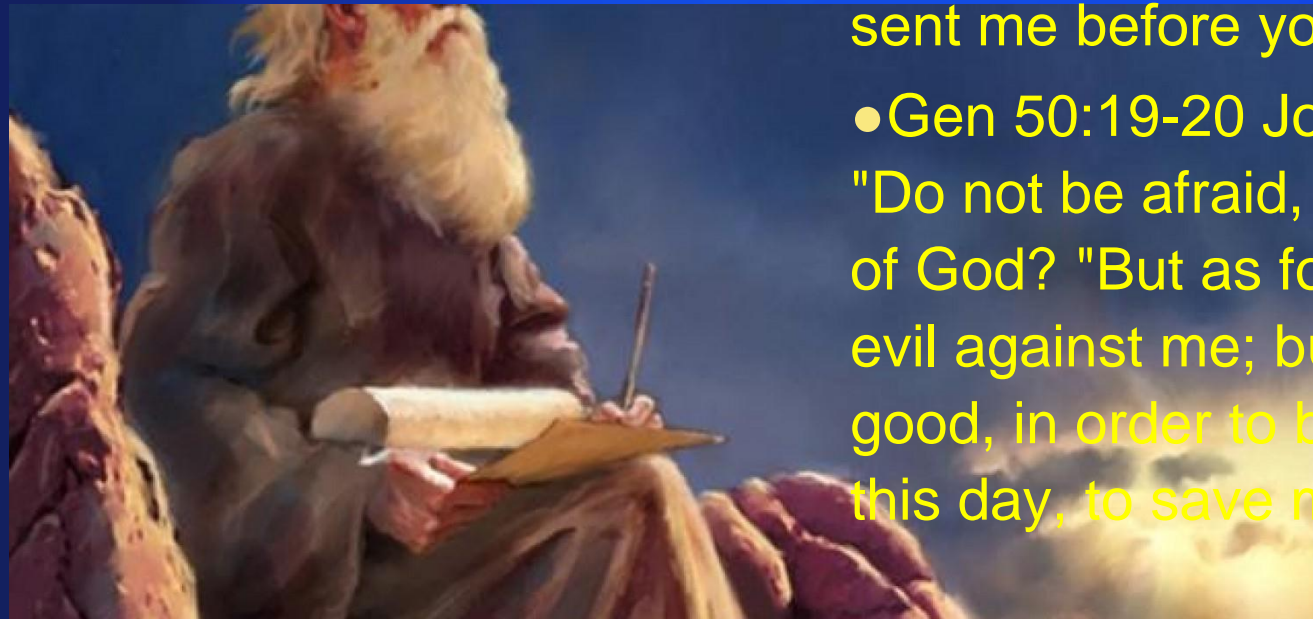
II. Proper Attitude!

- Have any of you ever heard someone say, “man he has an attitude?”
 - What do they mean by this? They mean a “bad” attitude!
- The way we respond to the difficulties we face in life has a great deal to do with our attitude!
- Do you remember the story of Joseph? What kind of attitude did he have and did this help him or hurt him?



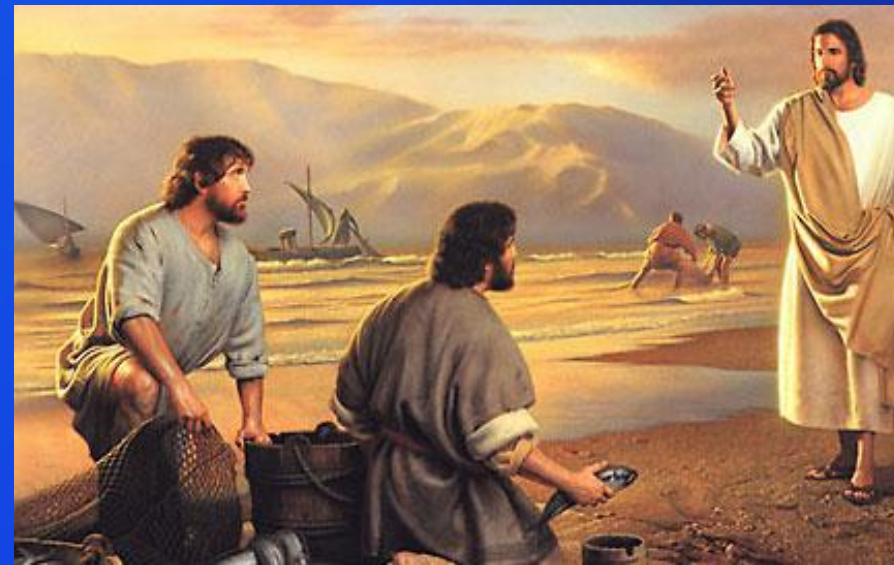
A God First Attitude!

- Joseph was always able to rise to the top because he had a “God first attitude!”
 - Gen 45:5 "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."
 - Gen 50:19-20 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.



What about the early church?

- Why could Peter and the apostles go right back to preaching after being arrested? (Act. 4:1-4 cf. 23-37)
 - Act 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge."
- Then arrested again and beaten (Act. 5:17-32 cf. 41-42)
 - Ac 5:29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."



III. Proper Acquaintances!

- I have often wondered just how many Christians take passage on this too lightly!



- Jas 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- 1 Jn 2:15 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.

The “Need” to be Different!

- Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.
- 2 Cor 6:17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."
- We are called to be “holy” to be different!
 - 1 Pet. 1:15-16 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."



We are “in” the world, but we are not to be “of” the world!

- Far too many have become so comfortable with sinners, that they have forgotten their need to show them the Saviour!
- Are we simply trying to be every bodies friend or are we seeking to help them become a friend of God?
- “If you play in the pig pin, then expect to get dirty!”



Augustine's Confession

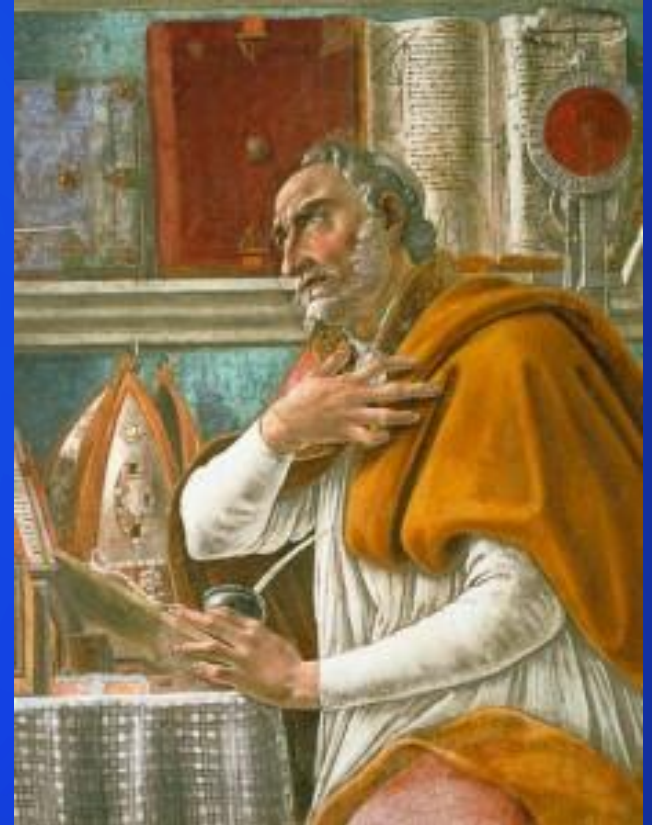


John MacArthur said:

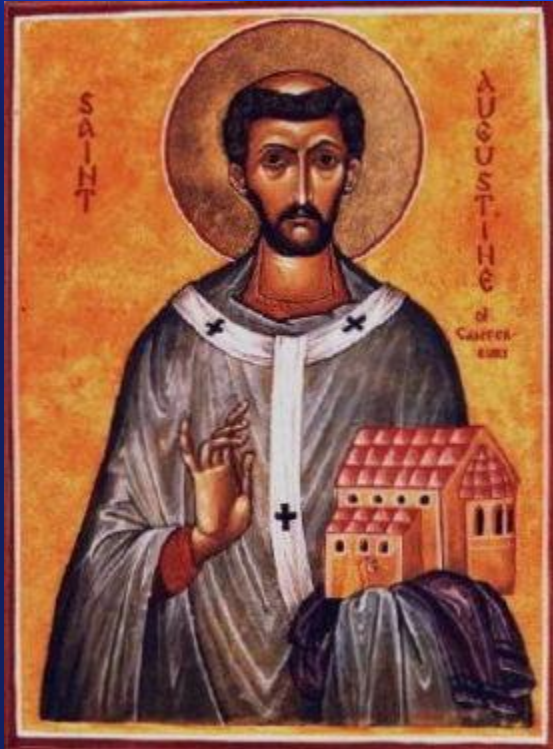
"If you claim a relationship with Christ but you aren't hungering and thirsting for righteousness, you need to honestly question whether you know Him."

Augustine's Confession

“I came to you late, O Beauty so ancient and so new; I came to love you late. You were within me and I was outside, while I rushed around wildly searching for you like some monster loose in your beautiful world. You were with me, but I was not with you. You called me, you shouted to me, you broke past my deafness.



Augustine's Confession



You gave out such a delightful fragrance, and I drew it in and came breathing hard after you. I tasted it and it made me hunger and thirst, you touched me and I burned to know your peace.”

Bernard of Clairvaux

1090-1153



**“We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still:
We drink of Thee, the Fountainhead
And thirst our souls from Thee to
fill.”**

Third Point

**There is no true satisfaction in the
Christian life for those whose
appetites are not ravenous for God.**

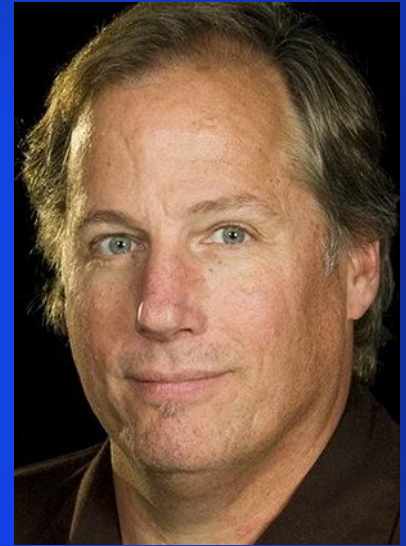
John 4:34

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

Amos 5:24

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

“We see Christians hungering for many things: power, authority, success, comfort, happiness - but how many hunger and thirst for righteousness?”



David Guzik



PRACTICAL STEPS FOR THIRSTING AFTER THE THIRST-SLAKER

How To Respond And Grow In Your Hunger.

**If you possess a true thirst for
God, you will long to long even
more.**

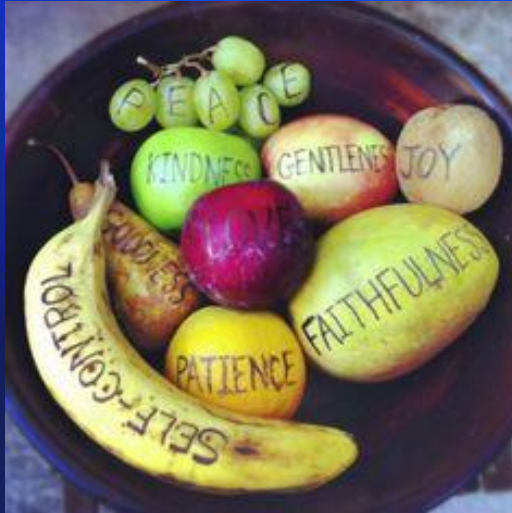
**“True and gracious longings after
holiness, are no idle ineffectual
desires.” - J. Edwards**

James 4:8-

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

- God draws near to us as we draw near to Him. (James 4:8) God is pursuing you for an **interactive relationship**, not dutiful religion.
- **It is all about relationship. Hunger, effective hunger is rooted in relationship with JESUS**

1. Eat Spiritual Food Well & Regularly:

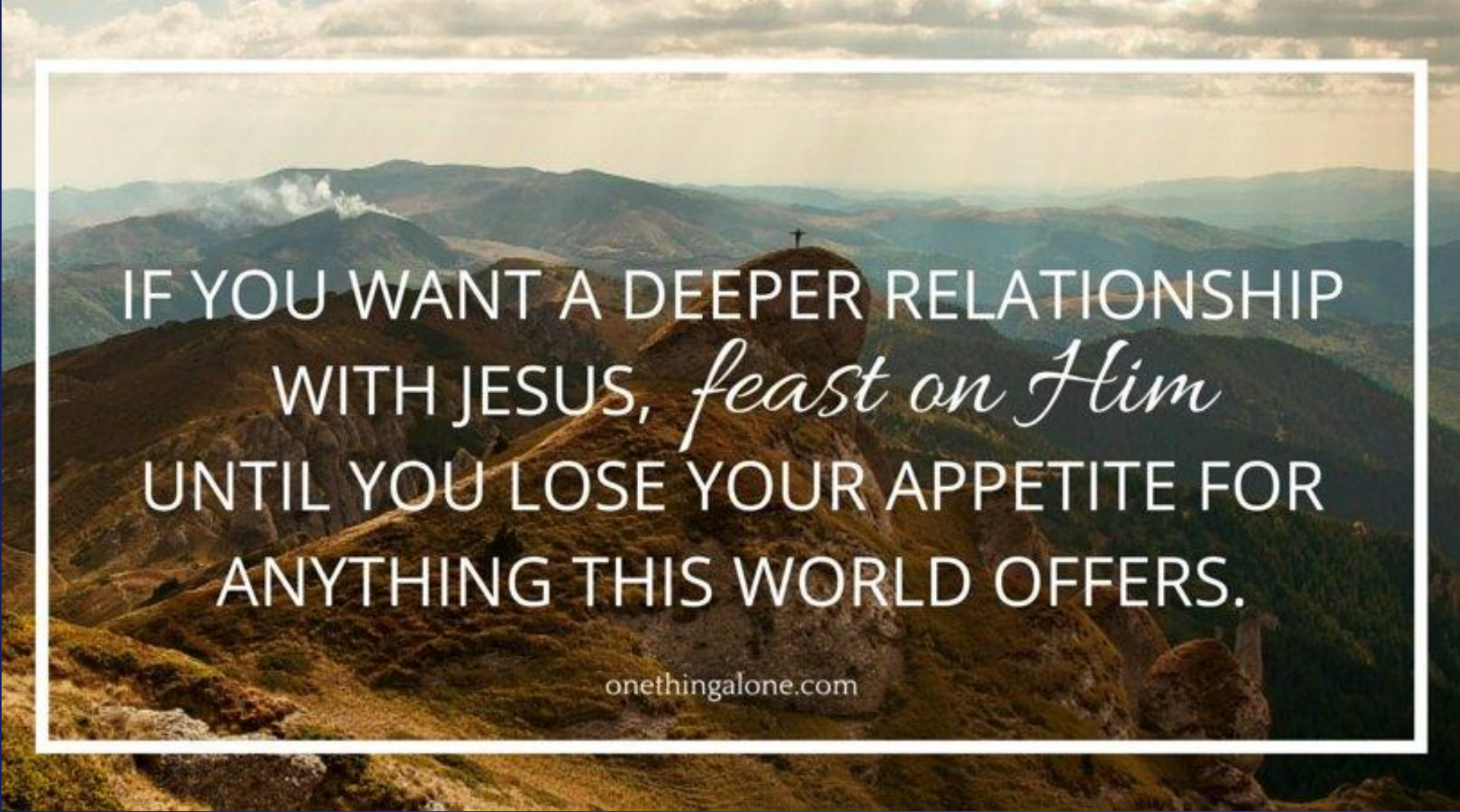


- Feed yourself, don't expect other's food to be enough for you. Learn to encourage yourself in your faith.

- While Christian community is necessary for encouragement, you cannot sustain true growth based on other people's experiences in God.

- We must learn to "taste and see that the Lord is good," as Psalm 34:8 encourages us to do.



A scenic view of a mountain range with a small cross on a peak, overlaid with a white border containing text.

IF YOU WANT A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP
WITH JESUS, *feast on Him*
UNTIL YOU LOSE YOUR APPETITE FOR
ANYTHING THIS WORLD OFFERS.

onethingalone.com



- You eat by Meditation only. Note "meditate," not merely read. Many languishing souls are assiduous Bible readers.

- Without the addition of meditation, warned the great man of prayer and faith, George Muller, "the simple reading of the Word of God" can become information that "only passes through our minds, just as water passes through a pipe."



Reading provide for believer information, while mediation leads to revelation. Without absorption of the water of God's Word, there's no quench of our spiritual thirst. Meditation is the means of absorption.

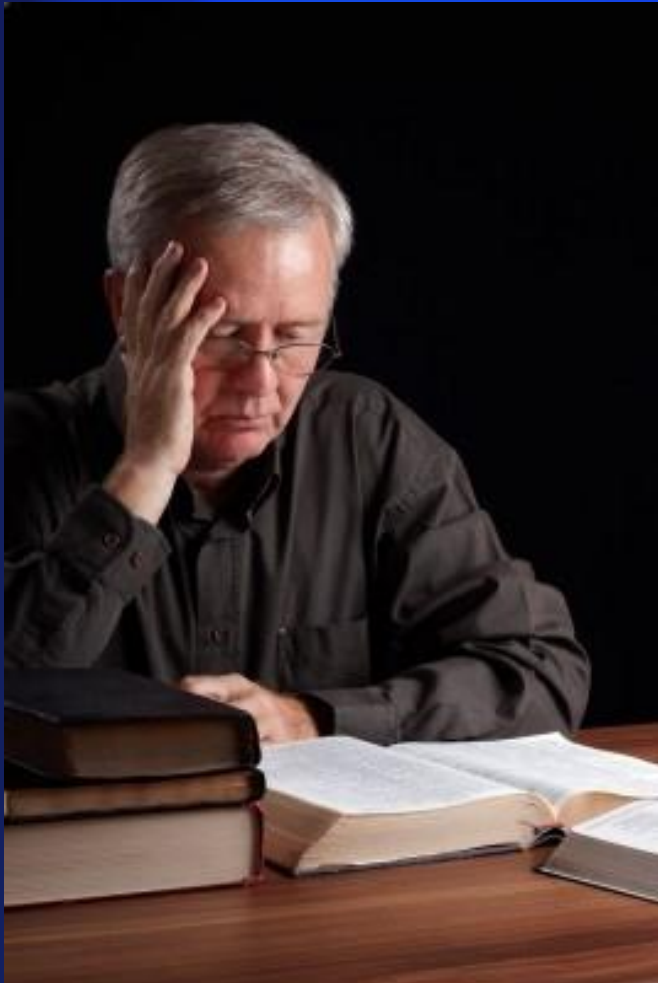
Spend twenty-five to fifty percent of your Bible intake time meditating on some verse, phrase, or word from your reading. Ask questions of it. Pray about it.



2. Pray, Pray through Scripture ...& Pray Daily

- After you read through a section of Scripture, pray through part of that same passage, and verse by verse, let the words of God become the wings of your words to Him.
- Pray and pray, whether you feel “hungry”, or not. You may not feel hungry for God all day, **But know your deep need for Him is real, whether you feel it or not, so pray and enter the Holy of holies daily!**



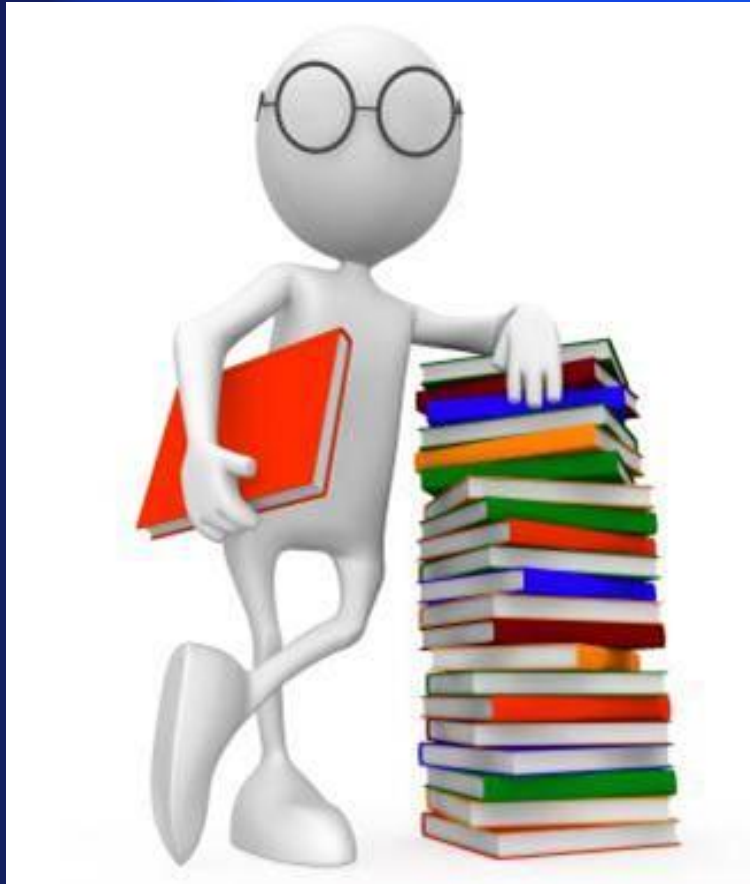


- We must realize that only God can satisfy us. No matter what else we try to substitute for Him, it will bring only passing pleasure.
- Regardless of where in the Bible you have done your reading, we suggest that you turn to one of the Psalms and pray your way through as much of it as you can.
- The book of Psalms was the God-inspired hymnbook of Israel. In addition, twice in the New Testament (see Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16) Christians are commanded to sing Psalms.

3. Read thirst-making writers

- After the God-breathed words of the Bible, read the time-tested works of those Christian writers with a thirst-making pen.
- If you can find the collection of Puritan prayers and devotions called *The Valley of Vision*, you will be blessed by reading it meditatively.
- Don't neglect John Bunyan's classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*.





- Read the more devotional pieces of Puritan writers such as John Owen, Richard Sibbes, Thomas Brooks, John Flavel, and Thomas Watson.
- Enjoy the books and sermons of Jonathan Edwards and Charles Spurgeon, for they will be treasured as long as the church is on the earth.
- For more recent publications, A.W. Tozer's small books are both convicting and exhilarating; John Piper's writings are a burning blend of spirit and truth.
- What of Watchman Nee, Witness Lee, Zac Poonen??

4. Demonstrate Love.



- Knowing God is not only about us, it is about pouring out what we have been given into the lives of others.
- You cannot worship extravagantly and not love extravagantly. **Loving others extravagantly is the way God created us to have more capacity to receive. (Luke 6:38).** It could be ministering to the physical, spiritual, or emotional needs of others.

How to Show Love to Others:

- Loving others can could look like many things:
 - Writing a note of encouragement
 - Calling someone who is lonely
 - Making eye contact and recognizing the server at your local restaurant
 - Praying for someone to be healed, comforted and transformed by God's love
 - Taking the time to genuinely thank your spouse for all they do for your family
 - Praying and walking in a campaign as an advocate for the victims of human sex trafficking
 - Stocking a shelf at a food pantry
 - Giving sacrificially to a development ministry so that children who have no hope can realize a brighter future.

- We were made for greatness. **Greatness begins with a hunger for something greater, for Someone Greater.**
- Pouring out the love we have been given makes room to receive more...and if we are really stepping out in faith to love and serve others, it makes us desperate for more.



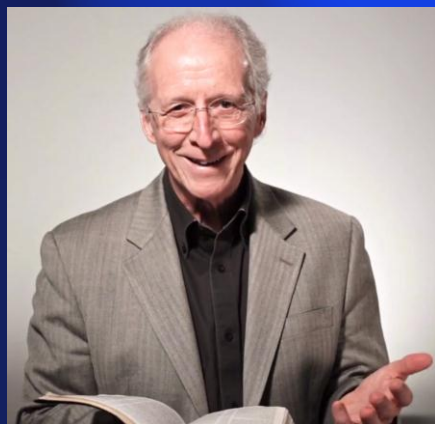


Colin Smith

**“Whatever you think will satisfy you
– that will become the consuming
passion of your life.”**

**“Choose the wrong thirsts
and you will never never be
satisfied.”**

DESPERATION DETERMINES DESTINATION



John Piper

- "God has...filled the human heart with longing. But we know not what we long for until we see the breathtaking God. This is the cause of universal restlessness. Hence the famous prayer of Saint Augustine: 'You made us for Yourself and our hearts find no peace till they rest in You.'" – John Piper in "The Dangerous Duty of Delight"

- “O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need for further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, ‘Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.’ Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long.”

The French philosopher Pascal said that there is a "God-shaped vacuum" inside every human heart. Since nature abhors a vacuum, if we don't fill it with God, we will fill it with something else. So many of us have filled our hearts with the junk food of the world.


**So, we have full stomachs
and empty hearts!**

Conclusion:

- Let us will think through these 3 questions!
 - What is our Appetite?
 - What is our Attitude?
 - Who are our Acquaintances?
- Are we truly “hungering & thirsting after righteousness?”
- What is the real state of your heart?

Let's Pray:

- Let my hunger for YOU abound.
- Father increase my awareness of YOU
- Oh Lord, overwhelm and consume my heart with spiritual hunger.
- Help me to seize the moment, and come to YOU and be filled, again and again and again.
- Generous Father, shower me your child with fullness of life NOW!



Dear Lord,

Lead me to make choices that bring You glory and allow me to experience the life You intended for me to live.

- Lord God, stir in my heart a desire for you daily.
- Give me a yearning for more of You.
- I was created to know You, to feel You, to walk with You, teach me to know you, feel and walk with you.
- Father Lord, I want more of You in my life, fill to overflow
- Lord, You said that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled, I am hunger, satisfy my hunger for MORE of YOU.
- Thank you because as I pray, you are filling me with faith and desire to know you more.