

Developing Spiritual Hunger



A. Prophecy from IHOPKC

'Sir, are you 42?' Someone asked me many years ago in IHOPKC, USA.

'Yes.'

'Sir, God gave me Ps 42 for you and He says that this is who you are.'

Ps 42:1-4, 'As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, 'Where is your God?' When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me...'

A dehydrated deer desperately looking for water in the wilderness would give off a particular odour from its body before it dies, if it does not get water soon. The psalmist is comparing the state of his soul to this deer dying of thirst in the wilderness. *Not of the physical thirst, but the spiritual thirst for God.*

B. King David's Cry

Ps 63:1-5, 'O God, You are my God;' early (earnestly) will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus, I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. [Then] My souls shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.'

C. The Crisis of Christianity in the Western World

is not about numbers nor is it due to the lack of churches, but that an increasing number of believers are content to have shallow faith and a shallow relationship with God. Why is this happening to us? Because we are losing the deep spiritual hunger and thirst to know the living God. Every Bible character who walked with God had a deep spiritual hunger and thirst to know God. They all had character flaws. But they all had deep hunger and thirst for God.

D. Spiritual Hunger Determines How Far One Will Go with God

We are the ones who determine the level of our hunger for God. How then can we develop and maintain deep spiritual hunger for God? By protecting the health of our souls. By watching what we fill our souls with. *'A satisfied soul (not stomach) loathes the honeycomb, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.'* (Prov 27:7) E.g. The Christmas buffet is glorious. But the second Christmas buffet 5 hours later is loathsome. Honeycomb – the sweetness of God's Word.

E. Laodicean Church Problem

Jesus is the *'faithful and true witness.'* (Rev 3:14) Jesus will tell us what we need to hear, not what we want to hear. *'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.'* (Rev 3:15-16).

This is a serious statement. This 'vomiting out of Jesus' mouth' is happening all over the world right now over issues such as LGBTQ+ that have crept into the church. But the root problem behind this moral decay is not sexual orientation. It is the spiritual lethargy and lack of real hunger and thirst to know the living God.

What causes this indifference? *'Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'* (Rev 3:17) What set them up for this utter failure was that their souls were already full to the point they did not hunger for God anymore. Was the Laodicean church's problem that they were rich? They had too much money? That is not true.

F. David was Wealthy, Yet He Hungered after God!

'Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant.' (1 Chr 22:14)

David left Solomon *'...4000 tons of gold, 40,000 tons of silver, and so much iron and bronze that it cannot be weighed.'* (NLT) Yet David hungered after God like no other man of his day. No wonder God said of David, *'a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'* (Acts 13:22)

What was different in David's soul? David knew having more money did not give fundamental satisfaction to his soul. In the heart of his heart, David hungered after God. David hungered and thirsted after God so much and God began giving him deep and powerful revelations. David became the only king, who was at the same time also a prophet of the Lord.

G. Bitter Irony

David said of himself, *'Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; for I am poor and needy.'* (Ps 86:1). Yet, David gave Solomon 4,000 tons of gold to build the house of God.

The Laodicean church on the other hand says, *'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.'* Yet, Jesus says, *'You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked and you do not know it.'*

Spiritual hunger has nothing to do with how much money you have, but what your soul hungers after. God speaks of Israelites after the rescuing them from slavery in Egypt. *'They soon forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel. But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request. But sent leanness into their soul.*' (Ps. 106:13-15)

A lot of Christians' faith is at this level.

H. I Encourage You to Develop Spiritual Hunger and Thirst for God

This determines how far you will go with God and *whether or not you will pursue intimacy with God*. If you feed on junk food, your body will cry for it. But if you feed your soul with the deep things of God, your soul will cry out for more of God.

Average American youth 17-25 spend 57.5 hours on screen each week.

'Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.' (Ps 42:7)

'If I were hungry I would not tell you. For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.' (Ps 50:12) I simply understood this as 'God is never hungry.' Or is God saying He is hungry for a deeper relationship with us?

I. Reflection

- i. What are the common spiritual traits of the biblical heroes of faith? How important is it to develop spiritual hunger?
- ii. What increases or decreases your spiritual hunger for God? What are the consequences?
- iii. Is there a difference between being hungry for God 'Himself' and for the 'things' of God?