



Spiritual Hunger

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Hunger after righteousness.

Spiritual Hunger

[1 Peter 2:2](#)

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

One characteristic all children share is that they want to grow up—to be like big brother or sister or like their parents. When we are born again, we become spiritual newborn babies. If we are healthy, we will yearn to grow. How sad it is that some people never grow up. The need for milk is a natural instinct for a baby, and it signals the desire for nourishment that will lead to growth. Once we see our need for God's Word and begin to find nourishment in Christ, our spiritual appetite will increase, and we will start to mature. How strong is your desire for God's Word?

Open your mouth and God will fill it.

[Psalm 81:10](#)

"I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.

God remains faithful in our relationship with him ([2 Timothy 2:11-13](#)), patiently waiting for our response so he can pour out his blessings. Conduct an inventory of your spiritual life right now.

Feed on God's manna.

Deuteronomy 8:3

"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

Jesus quoted this verse when the devil tempted him to turn stones into bread ([Matthew 4:4](#)).

Many people think that life is based on satisfying their appetites. If they can earn enough money to dress, eat, and play in high style, they think they are living "the good life."

But such things do not satisfy our deepest longings. In the end they leave us empty and dissatisfied. Real life, according to Moses, comes from total commitment to God and living by every word that comes from him.

How can we live by his word?

- (1) Recognize our need for it.
- (2) Agree that God alone can truly satisfy us.
- (3) Pray for God's presence, wisdom, and direction as we read.
- (4) Savor the relationship you have with him through Christ.
- (5) Practice what he teaches you.

All who thirst, may drink without money or cost.

[Isaiah 55:1](#)

"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Food costs money, lasts only a short time, and meets only physical needs. But God offers us free nourishment that feeds our soul. How do we get it? We are to come ([55:1](#)), listen ([55:2](#)), seek, and call on God ([55:6](#)). God's salvation is freely offered, but to nourish our souls we must eagerly receive it. We will starve spiritually without this food as surely as we will starve physically without our daily bread.

God fills your hunger for righteousness.

[Matthew 5:6](#)

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

Jesus began his sermon with words that seem to contradict each other. But God's way of living usually contradicts the worlds.

If you want to live for God, you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse.

By giving up your own rights in order to serve others, you will one day receive everything God has in store for you.

The Beatitudes can be understood in at least four ways:

(1) They are a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers.

(2) They contrast Kingdom values (what is eternal) with worldly values (what is temporary).

(3) They contrast the superficial "faith" of the Pharisees with the real faith that Christ demands.

(4) They show how the Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in the new Kingdom.

These Beatitudes are not multiple choice—pick what you like and leave the rest. They must be taken as a whole. They describe what we should be like as Christ's followers.

Each beatitude tells how to be *blessed* by God. *Blessed* means more than happiness.

It implies the fortunate or enviable state of those who are in God's Kingdom.

The Beatitudes don't promise laughter, pleasure, or earthly prosperity. Being "blessed" by God means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances.

To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus no matter what the cost.

He who comes the Lord, need not hunger

[John 6:33-35](#)

"For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; **he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst.**

People eat bread to satisfy physical hunger and to sustain physical life. We can satisfy spiritual hunger and sustain spiritual life only by a right

relationship with Jesus Christ. No wonder he called himself the bread of life. But bread must be eaten to sustain life, and Christ must be invited into our daily walk to sustain spiritual life.

My soul thirst for God in a dry and thirsty land.

Psalm 63:1

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

Those who drink of the water of life will never thirst again.

John 4:13-14

Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

Many spiritual functions parallel physical functions. As our bodies hunger and thirst, so do our souls. But our souls need *spiritual* food and water.

The woman confused the two kinds of water, perhaps because no one had ever talked with her about her spiritual hunger and thirst before.

We would not think of depriving our bodies of food and water when they hunger or thirst. Why then should we deprive our souls? The living Word, Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Bible, can satisfy our hungry and thirsty souls.

Jesus is the bread of life.

[John 6:35](#)

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If anyone is thirsty, let him to Christ and drink.

[John 7:37](#)

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

Jesus used the term *living water* in [4:10](#) to indicate eternal life. Here he uses the term to refer to the Holy Spirit. The two go together: Wherever the Holy Spirit is accepted, he brings eternal life. Jesus teaches more about the Holy Spirit in [chapters 14-16](#). The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers at Pentecost ([Acts 2](#)) and has since been available to all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

The Fountain of Living water is given to those who thirst.

[Revelation 21:6](#)

And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

The water of life is a symbol of eternal life. Jesus used this same image with the Samaritan woman ([John 4:7-14](#)). It pictures the fullness of life with God and the eternal blessings that come when we believe in him and allow him to satisfy our spiritual thirst (see [22:17](#)).

This tree of life is like the tree of life in the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 2:9](#)). After Adam and Eve sinned, they were forbidden to eat from the tree of life because they could not have eternal life as long as they were under sin's control.

But because of the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus, there will be no evil or sin in this city. We will be able to eat freely from the tree of life when sin's control over us is destroyed and our eternity with God is secure.

All who are thirsty, may come and drink.

[Revelation 22:17](#)

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come" And let the one who hears say, "Come" And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Both the Holy Spirit and the bride, the church, extend the invitation to all the world to come to Jesus and experience the joys of salvation in Christ.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, he told her of the living water that he could supply ([John 4:10-15](#)). This image is used again as Christ invites anyone to come and drink of the water of life.

The Good News is unlimited in scope—all people everywhere may come. Salvation cannot be earned, but God gives it freely. We live in a world desperately thirsty for living water, and many are dying of thirst. But it's still not too late. Let us invite everyone to come and drink.

ILLUSTRATION

Are we hungry for God?

Speaker Mike Benson tells how one night, as his family was finishing dinner, his eight-year-old daughter left six green beans on her plate. She normally ate her veggies, and Mike did not usually allow this sort of thing to bother him, but this night he was irked and said to her, "Eat your green beans."

She replied, "Dad, I'm full to the top."

"You won't pop," he responded.

"Yes, I will pop!" she said.

"Risk it!" he said. "It will be okay."

"Dad, I could not eat another bite."

Mike knew that night they were having her favorite dessert, pumpkin pie squares. So he asked, "How would you like a double helping of pumpkin pie squares with two dollops of whipped cream on top?"

"That sounds great!" she responded as she pushed her plate back, ready for dessert.

"How can you have room for a double helping of pumpkin pie squares with two dollops of whipped cream, and not have room for six measly green beans?"

She stood up tall out of her chair and pointing to her belly said, "This is my vegetable stomach. This is my meat stomach. They are both full. Here is my dessert stomach. It is empty. I am ready for dessert!"

What we eat reveals what we hunger for.

Illustration:

You have begun to hunger.

Author Frederica Mathewes-Green addresses people who hunger for God's presence but rarely feel it—at least not in dramatic ways. She writes:

My hunch is that you are already sensing something of God's presence, or you wouldn't care.

Picture yourself walking around a shopping mall, looking at people and the window displays. Suddenly, you get a whiff of cinnamon. You weren't even hungry, but now you really crave a cinnamon roll.

This craving isn't something you made up. There you were, minding your own business, when some drifting molecules of sugar, butter, and spice collided with a susceptible patch inside your nose.

You had a real encounter with cinnamon—not a mental delusion, not an emotional projection, but the real thing.

And what was the effect? You want more, *now*. And if you hunger to know the presence of God, it's because ... you have already begun to scent [God's] compelling delight.

Believers are the salt of the earth.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print