

Culture of Hunger - Pt 1

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I. Introduction

A. We are going to take three weeks to talk about spiritual hunger and what it looks like as a spiritual family to live in a culture of spiritual hunger.

B. Spiritual hunger is an essential edge in your Christian walk. With spiritual hunger you will persevere through trials, stay faithful in mundaneness, seek God in dry times, and press-in in seasons when He is moving.

C. Without spiritual hunger you will pursue other things above God, atrophy in your walk, lose vision, and cast-off discipline.

D. I have found that spiritual hunger trumps giftedness every time. What I mean is that if you are spiritually hungry, that internal longing and desire for God and His ways will take you further than any giftedness will take you.

E. That's the beauty of spiritual hunger; it has absolutely nothing to do with your abilities or gifts. It's not about achieving or performing. Spiritual hunger is for everyone. Anyone can be spiritually hungry.

F. I like to say Hunger is currency in the Kingdom of God. God moves toward desire. He fills the hungry (Luke 1:53)

II. Key Biblical Figures Who Exhibited Spiritual Hunger

A. **Moses** – Exodus 33:15 “If your presence doesn't go with us, do not bring us up from here” 18 “Please show me your glory”

B. **David** – Psalm 63:1 “O God, You are my God; Early 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.

C. **Paul** – Phil 3:7, 10 “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ, Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ. 10 That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...

D. ***Notice that spiritual hunger inevitably expresses itself in pursuit.*** If you want an easy gauge on your spiritual hunger, take note of how much you pursue Him. Not how much you serve Him; how much you seek Him. And if you want to refine it a little more – how much do you seek Him, for Him and not for something He can give you? I can tell how much I am hungering for God by what my schedule looks like.

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

—Jer 29:13

Drawn near to God and He will draw near to you.

—James 4:8

III. Barriers to Spiritual Hunger

A. We are already full (Proverbs 27:7)

1. We live in an age where everything is constantly vying for our attention, but it's not just our attention, it's our affections. Entertainment, Media, Sports, Politics, take our affections and we give it our allegiance. When we are full of the pursuits for other things our souls will not long for God.
2. I never fault people who have great passion and desire. I never fault addicts. Addiction is misdirected hunger. The reason is their souls are made for God, and they are literally filling their soul with every other desire except Him.
3. The truth is that anything that we delight in and pursue more than God is an idol.

B. We see God as a program and not a person

1. When we think of Christianity as a system of belief instead of a living relationship with our Creator, we will treat our relationship with God like vitamins that we take rather than a love that we cultivate.
2. Event based Christianity breeds shallow Christians easily susceptible to distraction and compromise. If God is an event, i.e. a church service, I will be spiritual when I am there and unspiritual when I leave.
3. My relationship status with God should not change when I leave the building. I should not be more spiritual at church on Sunday than I am at home on Monday.

C. We have gotten too busy (Rev 2:1-7)

1. The sin of the Church of Ephesus was that they had left their first love. They were diligent in labor and persevering in trials, yet they had left the intimacy that they first knew with the Lord.
2. The pathway to return is by doing the "first works". What were the first works that you practiced when you first came to the Lord. Has the flame waned?

D. We have been lulled to sleep (Eph 5:14)

1. When subtle sins begin to become normalized in our lives, we end up falling asleep. Selfishness, pride, greed, judgment, anger, gossip, slander, malice, sins in the heart steal our desire for God.
2. We must turn from sin and turn to Jesus. Hunger for God begins with hunger for righteousness. (Mat 5:6)

IV. Stirring up Spiritual Hunger

A. Get Empty – Allow your soul to feel the ache of longing again by not filling it with every possible attraction or distraction. Digital reset, Silence, Shut down social media and Netflix.

B. Remember what God has done (2 Peter 1:13) -

Remembering seasons where God moved in power or where your heart was stirred in love will cause your heart to begin to long for Him again.

C. Pray for Revelation (Eph 1:17-21)- The more we see Him the more we will long for Him. Revelation of Him begets desire for Him.

D. Take a season to Fast (Mat 4:4, Deut 8:3) - Jesus said we are to live not only by natural food but by the word of God. He tied the concept of fasting physically to hungering spiritually.