

HUNGRY FOR GOD - COME DINE WITH ME

INTRODUCTION

As we speak about being hungry for God, we need to realise that God wants us to be hungry for Him, hungry for relationship with Him, hungry for His word, hungry for fellowship time with Him, hungry for fellowship time with His people, hungry to worship Him.

God however didn't create us to simply serve Him like robots, designed with programming that does not give them a choice to do anything but serve. God created us with a natural hunger and desire for something more than just food and water. He created us with a hole in our spirit that only He can properly fit and when He is there, we will know we are complete and we will live a life that feels fulfilled. But then He backed off and said, "I will love mankind, I will bless him and I will be there for Him, but I will also give Him a free will. I will do all I can to draw him to me, but he will have the choice whether He will do so or not".

Today I want to focus on our free will choice. Can we answer these questions:

- "Am I choosing to respond to God's invitation to fellowship?"
- "Am I hungry for continual fellowship with God?"
- "Is it possible for me to focus on God every minute of the day?"

MESSAGE

LET'S HAVE A MEAL TOGETHER

Revelation 3:20 (NKJV) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

There are beautiful pictures that have been painted regarding this verse, it's a wonderful picture of God's hunger for fellowship with us.

Just think of this, when someone comes to visit, they knock at the entrance one way or another. In today's security society, it's quite possible that they will phone you from your closed gate so that you can open up for them.

When they come into your home, if you are a good host, you will offer them something to drink and to eat. Sometimes it's coffee and biscuits or tea and cake. Often, as South Africans, we will congregate around a braai fire and have a wonderful meat, pap and salad feast together.

Whatever we eat and drink, the visit implies fellowship, and even with our imperfect human nature, a visit like that normally means that our relationship with our visitors grows.

In the same way, Jesus, speaking to the church in Revelation, comes to the door and knocks.

- He wants to come in and have a meal and the implied fellowship with us.
- He knows that as we spend time fellowshiping with Him, our relationship will grow.
- He doesn't just walk in! There is no security system in this universe that can keep Jesus out! We know that He can walk through walls, but instead of forcing His visit on us, He stands at the door and knocks and waits for us to open!

Isn't it sad that Jesus is standing at the door and knocking? Isn't it sad that He isn't already inside, having a meal with us? If we were truly hungry for God, Jesus wouldn't be outside knocking!

- **Psalm 23:5** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.
- If we are hungry for God than Jesus will be inside, seated at the table that He has set for us!
- **This is a place of continual feasting. We will be totally satisfied and our cup will never run dry!**

The interesting thing about doors and gates is that when someone arrives at ours we have a choice whether we will open or not. Have you ever arrived at someone's home, having made an appointment with them and when you knock, phone and even, they simply don't open to let you in? How do you think you would feel if it happened to you? Would you go home feeling disappointment, even a sense of rejection?

Why is it that we allow our visitors in, but sometimes we don't want to open the door to Jesus?

- ***Are we hungry enough for God that we want to continually feast and fellowship with Him.***
- ***Have we heard Him knocking but kept the door closed?***
- ***Do we need to open the door and ask Jesus to come and stay with us?***

A CONTINUAL HUNGER

Think of something you really love to eat. Can you ever get enough of it?

For me it's chocolate. It's not often that there is not chocolate of one form or another in our house, and then having had one piece, it's hard to stop eating until it's all gone.

God is good!

Psalm 34:8 (NLT) Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him!

Of God's laws we read:

Psalm 19:9b-10 (NLT) The laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair. 10 They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb.

Of being in God's presence David writes:

Psalm 84:10 (NLT) A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked.

These statements of the Psalmist were made from a position of being spiritually hungry, hungry for God.

- They tasted fellowship with God.
- They experienced His goodness.
- They desired being with Him more than any other thing!

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul longs after God! He promises us a cup that runs over and feasting in His presence.

But we need to be continually hungry like the Psalmist!

The song we sing says:

More love, more power, more of You in my life...

We need to ask ourselves these questions today:

- ***"Do I want more and more of God, more of His goodness and the sweetness of His word, more of His amazing presence or am I happy as I am?"***
- ***"Do I desire being with God more than anything else, or are there other things in my life that are more important?"***

THE GAME WITH MINUTES IN IT

Frank Charles Laubach (1884 – 1970) was a Christian missionary. He was known as "The Apostle to the Illiterates." In 1915, while working among Muslims at a remote location in the Philippines, he developed the "Each One Teach One" literacy program. It has been used to teach about 60 million people to read in their own language.

He wrote this on January 26, 1930:

For the past few days I have been experimenting in a more complete surrender than ever before. I am taking by deliberate act of will, enough time from each hour to give God much thought. Yesterday and today I have made a new adventure, which is not easy to express. I am feeling God in each

movement, by an act of will—willing that He shall direct these fingers that now strike this typewriter—willing that He shall pour through my steps as I walk—willing that He shall direct my words as I speak, and my very jaws as I eat!

One of his most widely influential devotional works was a pamphlet entitled "The Game with Minutes." In it, Laubach urged Christians to attempt keeping God in mind **for at least one second of every minute of the day**. In this way Christians can attempt the attitude of constant prayer spoken of in **Colossians 4:2**: "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving", The pamphlet spoke of the virtues of a life lived with unceasing focus on God.

It's obvious that this was a man hungry for God!

The title of his pamphlet, "The game with minutes in it is very appropriate when we start to understand that we have each been gifted with days of life from God...

Psalm 139:16 (ESV) Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, **the days that were formed for me**, when as yet there was none of them.

One day may just seem like another day, but this scripture says that **God has specific days formed for each one of us as unique individuals**. The word, "formed" can also be translated, "fashioned" or "ordained". God gave us a free will to choose how we would use those days. The question is, what will we do with the days formed for us?

Psalm 23:6 (NKJV) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

When we choose to live the days formed for us in fellowship with God, we are assured that God's goodness and mercy will be a big part of those days and then we will receive an eternal home with God once our days on earth are completed. Let's make that choice today!

Imagine what will happen in our lives when we turn each of our God-given, God ordained days into a "game with minutes in it". The title is unfortunate because our lives are not a game, they are a precious gift from God, but is there possibly a better way to express our hunger for God than by learning to think of God at least once every minute?

- ***It may take a long time to train ourselves to think of God at least once every minute.***
- ***But what if we started by training ourselves to think of God at least once every waking hour?***
- ***What are we going to do with our God-gifted days? Are we going to waste them with endless pursuit of our own plans and purposes***

and pleasures, or are we going to choose to spend them being hungry for God and feasting from the table set for us?

CONCLUSION

Jesus doesn't only want us to be hungry for Him, He is knocking on the door of our heart wanting to come in and have a meal with us.

- Let us invite Him in on a continual basis.
- Let us taste and see that the Lord is Good, and hunger for more and more of Him.
- Let us develop a continual hunger for God until we reach the point of thinking of God every minute of our lives and praying constantly - **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** (ESV) Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

As we develop a hunger for constant fellowship with God, our lives, and the lives of those around us will change. We will move to a new level of faith and relationship with God and we will never be the same!

I cannot think of a more appropriate way to celebrate our hunger for God than by sharing the Lord's supper together now.