

Creating Spiritual Hunger

There are two main aspects/dimensions to create and increase the spiritual hunger:

1. Clearing whatever blocks the spiritual appetite
2. Stirring the spiritual appetite.

1. Clearing what blocks the spiritual appetite:

1) Worries:

“So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6: 34)

“For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”” (Hebrews 13: 5b, 6)

“...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1Peter 5: 7)

We need to remind ourselves that when we commit our worries to the Lord, we should not think of them again; it would be wrong to think of them after committing them to God.

Because of our weakness, worrying thoughts may repeatedly come to our mind; therefore, we may sometimes need to speak to these thoughts out loud and/or repeat verses from the bible out loud.

2) Feelings & emotions:

“And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2Corinthians 12: 9)

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2Timothy 2: 1)

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4: 16)

- Feelings can occupy one's mind and thoughts and distract the person.

- They bring a sense of guilt and possibly a sense of separation from God. They cause one to be drawn to them and not wanting to get rid of them.
- If possible, we should examine our emotions and search what is behind them and what they spring out of.
- Then, we need to crucify them and nail them on the cross or simply ignore/neglect them completely.
- In doing so, we should remind ourselves that emotions usually lag behind and hence one should work on his will and make the proper decisions depending on the sufficiency of God's Grace (see above references).
- One should learn to always "*press on*" and continue to carry out his tasks and responsibilities ignoring the cries of the emotions or any pressure from the feelings because these emotions can paralyse the person and eat up his time and days.

"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3: 13, 14)

3) Avoid whatever poisons the spiritual appetite:

The spiritual appetite is so much like the physical appetite that can be completely lost and blocked by the poisons of microbes.

- Examples of things that block the spiritual appetite are:

- Eating a lot
- Sleeping a lot (more than needed)
- Talking a lot (in an uncontrollable way)

All these are fleshly things that can block the spiritual appetite.

Hence, one needs to learn to fast, vigil and spend times of silence.

- Also, sins –which one has not repented of –poison the spiritual appetite and block it. One needs to repent to clear room and make more space for spiritual matters.

2. Learning to stir the spiritual appetite:

There are many measures that need to be considered in this respect:

1) The art of “losing” for the sake of Christ:

“He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 10: 39)

“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.” (Philippians 3: 7, 8)

2) The art of “self-denial”:

“Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” ” (Matthew 19: 27)

“Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” (Luke 9: 23)

The art of self-denial involves denying one’s rights, possessions, pleasures, and interests.

3) Renewing the Covenant:

We have entered in a Covenant with God. Sometimes, our way of life blocks the activity of the Covenant i.e. deactivates it. We need to repent and crucify the flesh daily in order to activate our Covenant.

God led the people of Israel, in different ways, to renew their covenant with Him. This was done through godly kings like Hezekiah & Josiah and also through the prophets like in the days of Nehemiah, Ezra, and Daniel. [Refer to 2 Chronicles 29 & 34; Ezra 9; Nehemiah 9; Daniel 9]

As the people of the New Testament, we similarly need to activate our already sure covenant. Jesus is the surety of our covenant. However, walking in the flesh blocks the blessings of the covenant.

4) The Word of God:

- The relation of the Word of God to the Covenant:

“Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you...” (Deuteronomy 31: 26)

So, covenant and word of God go together hand in hand. If the covenant relationship was deactivated for one reason or another then the word of God will be blocked [can't receive from it any revelation, or hear voice of God clearly...etc.]. On the other hand reading and obeying the word of God reactivate the covenant relationship

- Learning the art of eating the Word of God:

[Refer to Ezekiel 2: 8 – 3:3; Revelation 10: 8 – 10; Psalm 40: 8; Jeremiah 15: 16].

“But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.” Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe. Moreover He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.” So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.” (Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:3)

“Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.” So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.” And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.” Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.” (Revelation 10:8 – 10)

“I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.” (Psalm 40:8)

“Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15: 16)

5) Consistency in our spiritual walk with God:

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1Corinthians 9: 24 – 27)

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3: 13-14)

We are in a race and we must not lose the race.

6) Sanctifying the present moment:

“But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”... Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” (John 5: 17, 19)

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:15 – 17)

Hence, we change the time and currency of the present age into one related to the coming age!

Knowing God’s mind and doing His will, shall bless others, transform us, bring glory to God and bring renewal to His church.

7) Reviewing God’s ways in dealing with us (reviewing one’s diary):

God has provided His people, Israel, with 2 main books of scripture – Deuteronomy and Chronicles –that are mainly directed towards this goal which is: *“doing the review”* that awakens them and directs them to God, His goodness, faithfulness and purposes.

The book of Deuteronomy was given to them before entering the Land of Promise; it was a new start after the difficult time of the wilderness.

The books of Chronicles were given to them immediately after their return to their Land of Promise after the difficult time of the “exile”.

Notice that the “*wilderness*” and the “*exile*” were similar phases; these phases were not in God’s original plan for His people.

8) Reading the biographies of the Men of God:

Reading the biographies of the men of God –whether the saints of the desert or missionaries or others –help in stirring one’s spiritual appetite.

9) Having a burden for the Kingdom of God:

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6: 33)

10) The Check-up: the Lord’s prayer:

These are the check-ups that can restore our spiritual appetite:

- Hallowed be thy Name
- Thy Kingdom come
- Thy will be done

Let us, therefore, examine our hearts accordingly!

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