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“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” Physically, people hunger and thirst for food and water, which are necessary to live. Similarly, our spiritual life depends on righteousness.

Like our body, our spirit also has appetites. God has provided the right spiritual food, and if we avoid it our spirit will become sickly and weak.

Christ has declared, *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”* (John 6:35) He told the Samaritan woman at the well that whoever drinks of the water He gives will never thirst (John 4:14).

The abilities to hunger and thirst are very important, and are signs of life and health. Without these, we would be unable to recognize our body’s needs to survive. Loss of appetite is a sign of sickness. Wrong appetites will lead to poor health.

You can learn a lot about a person if you know what their appetites are. In fact, if someone knows what someone else longs for and can provide their satisfaction, they can largely control that person. Manipulators, including dictators and propaganda specialists, understand this principle well.

To exercise self-control, one must control his appetites rather than be controlled by them. The person with only the sin nature will have an appetite for sin. They are compared to dogs eating their own vomit and pigs wallowing in a pigsty (2Peter 2:22).

But the believer is indwelt with two competing natures – the sin nature we are all born with, and the Holy Spirit that indwells believers at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:9, 2Cor 5:5). The Bible speaks of *yielding* to one or the other. Which nature we yield to will produce very different appetites.

The inner person has spiritual senses just as the physical body has physical senses. Scripture speaks of ‘the eyes of our hearts being enlightened’ (Eph. 1:18), ‘having (spiritual) ears to hear’ (Matt. 13:9), and ‘tasting that the Lord is good’ (Ps. 34:8, 1Peter 2:3). Hebrews 5:11-14 speaks of carnal, immature Christians ‘slow learning’ by neglecting spiritual senses.

Scripture describes the unsaved as spiritually dead, but Christ has come that we might have life (John 10:10). One who hungers and thirsts after righteousness gives evidence of both life and health. The carnal man will have an appetite for carnal, worldly things, not spiritual things.

Physical hunger and thirst are signs that the body needs something vital. Unfortunately, people often hunger and thirst for the wrong things. The prodigal son longed for riotous living and popularity. But they did not last, and soon he was starving both physically and spiritually.

The world cannot provide lasting satisfaction to a spiritual appetite. It seeks to fulfill *“the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life”*, but all those things are passing away (1John 2:16-17).

Many verses remind believers to love good and hate evil (Amos 5:15, Romans 10:9, et al). To be good is to be godly (like God). We should love what He loves and hate what He hates. The Lord Jesus said, *“My food... is to do the will of Him who sent Me,”* (John 4:34).

So the only way to true fulfillment is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. We should also understand that the Bible speaks of three kinds of righteousness. There is imputed righteousness (*justification*) whereby God declares us to be righteous when we are in Christ. Then there is the imparted righteousness (*sanctification*) as practicing right living becomes the character of our daily lives. Finally, there is eternal righteousness (*glorification*) that will occur when *“Christ appears and we will be like Him and see Him as He is,”* (1John 3:2). To desire righteousness is to desire God.

Being righteous includes being right with God, right with self, and right with others. Scripture says we can *“train to be godly”* (1Timothy 4:7), but only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A person that is satisfied with righteousness and holiness is increasingly dissatisfied with sin. He is developing a love for God and the mind of Christ. Psalm 97:10 says, *“Let those that love the Lord hate evil.”* Evil is sin, which God hates and we should hate it too.

Sin comes natural to a person, but we must develop a love for righteousness and holiness. Like a child, an immature believer will begin to seek righteousness to avoid pain. Then, he learns it brings positive reward. After that, he matures further and desires righteousness to please his Father. Ultimately, we should seek a holy life because we love God and want to bring Him glory. Our ultimate purpose in life is to bring glory to God, our Creator, our Father and our Savior.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,” (Matt. 6:33).

Matthew 5

The Sermon on the Mount

5 Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

The Beatitudes

2 And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you on My account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Memory Verse for the Week

*"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you."
(Matthew 6:33)*