

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PRAYER ATLANTA
PURSUING GOD, PT. 2
JANUARY 8TH, 2017 – BILLY HUMPHREY

I. We want to Live in Passionate Pursuit

A. Passionate means that we want to love him fervently – with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength (Mat 12:30, Luke 10:27). We don't want to settle for a mediocre, mild, ultimately lukewarm, relationship with the Lord. We desire to live zealously, fervently, and passionately for Jesus.

B. Focused means we realize that spiritual discipline isn't a bad word, it's a means to get what we want. In other words, our heart's desire is to be fiery in love with Jesus and to know Him deeply. The way that we get there is not by running to every conference in hopes that every big name minister lays hands on us. The way we get there is through a focused approach to fasting and prayer, study of the scriptures, sharing our faith, and fellowship with other believers. If we plan these disciplines into our lives we will fast, pray, study, share and fellowship far more than we would have had we not planned them. Focused also means that we know who we want to be in our relationship with God and so we make the necessary changes in our lives to pursue Him in order to become the person with God that we want to be.

C. Authentic means we want the real thing. We don't want to settle for hype. We want the real activity of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts that ultimately conforms us to the image of Christ. Whatever the Bible says we can have, we want it. At the same time we refuse to hype it or stir up the flesh and/or emotions in place of authentic spiritual encounter. We don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water, but the point is we want the real baby, i.e. the real thing.

II. God, You are My God, Early will I Seek You

Psa 63:1-11 *A Psalm of David When He Was in the Wilderness of Judah.* 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. 2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. 3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. 4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. 6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. 7 Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. 8 My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. 9 But those who seek my life, to destroy it, Shall go into the lower parts of the earth. 10 They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals. 11 But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

III. Cultivating Spiritual Hunger

A. Physically speaking, in order to be hungry you have to go without eating for a while. When your stomach is empty it begins to send a signal to your brain that you are in need of sustenance.

B. The thing that's interesting about hunger is if you eat healthily, you will actually crave healthy things. If you eat unhealthily, you will crave unhealthy things.

C. Spiritually speaking, to cultivate hunger, you have to have a recognition that you are in need, that you don't have everything that you could have.

D. A season of declension is what preempts and presupposes our need for revival. The decline isn't what causes revival; it brings recognition of need.

1. When you realize that there is more available or that in times past you were richer in your relationship with God than what you're experiencing now, it begets hunger in your soul. The recognition that you are made for more than what you're currently experiencing is critical to spiritual hunger.

2. You have to ask yourself, "Am I where I want to be (where I used to be) with God?" An important principle of human desire: You won't go without what you truly desire.

E. Once you recognize your need, the challenge is feeding on the right things spiritually in order to cultivate hunger. Recognition of need isn't enough. Many people realize something is wrong, yet, for some, that realization leads them to criticism or cynicism. There's nothing worse than being a specialist at what the problem is without being able to offer the answer or being willing to find out what the answer is. It's easy to identify a problem, what's harder is finding the answer, and what's harder than that is actually doing the answer.

F. Just as with your natural appetite, when you realize your need and then fill your need with the wrong "food" you will crave that food. If the answer to your spiritual hunger is to fill it with fleshly pursuits and desires, you will crave those things. The problem is those pursuits will never satisfy.

Isa 55:2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

Isa 55:1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

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G. Spiritual hunger begins to grow when we recognize our need, determine not to feast of fleshly things, and pursue God through fasting, prayer, studying and meditating on the scripture.

H. The more you “eat” spiritual things to satisfy the longing in your soul, the more your soul will crave spiritual things.

I. The challenge is determining over the long haul to limit fleshly pursuits to satisfy your spiritual longings. The more you feed spiritual hunger with spiritual things the hungrier you will get for spiritual things. The more you feed spiritual hunger with fleshly things the less you will be hungry for spiritual things.

J. Fasting is a powerful way to cultivate spiritual hunger. Not only do we humble ourselves through prayer and fasting (Psalm 35:13), we put ourselves in a place of voluntary weakness so that we can experience God’s power in our lives.

2Co 12:9-10 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

K. Ten things you can fast

1. Food (Sweets, Meats, Coffee)
2. Talking
3. Complaining
4. Worrying
5. Shopping (Non-essential)
6. Hobbies
7. Movies & TV Shows
8. Social Media
9. Digital Devices & Screens
10. Make-Up & Stylish clothes