

CRAVE: Developing the Right Appetite

Bible Study Notes - January 26, 2013



//Introduction

Definition of CRAVE:

- To ask for earnestly; strong or inward desire; to yearn for
- Synonyms: Desire – Yearn – Hanker – Long – Lust – Wish – Beg – Demand

WHAT we crave:

- food (sweet, salty, caffeinated, and carbonated), drugs, alcohol, sex, reality shows, attention, fame, new things, gambling, power, success, authority

WHY we crave:

- because it tastes/feels good, because we enjoy it, because we like how it makes us feel (calm, full, proud, entertained), to fill a void, stress, pregnancy

“The only way to satisfy your craving is to receive what you truly hunger for.”

//Lead In

The **body** is not self-sustaining; a physical appetite is normal and indicates health. If someone isn't eating, we wonder whether or not they are sick.

Likewise, the **soul** is not self-sustaining; a spiritual appetite is an indication of spiritual health.

Are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Do you CRAVE anything spiritually? Or are you good without anything?

//Outline

I. We should crave GOD.

a. Psalm 42:1-2 (God the Father)

(NKJV) As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

b. John 6:35 (God the Son)

(NKJV) And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

- #### c. Illustration:
- The story is told of a young student who went to his spiritual teacher and asked the question, “Master, how can I truly find God?” The teacher asked the student to accompany him to the river that ran by the village and invited him to go into the water. When they got to the middle of the stream, the teacher said, “Please immerse yourself in the water.” The student did as he was instructed, whereupon the teacher put his hands on the young man's head and held him under the water. The student began to struggle. The master held him under still. A few moments passed and the student was thrashing and beating the water and air with his arms. Still, the master held him under the water. Finally, the student was released and shot up from the water, lungs aching and gasping for air. The teacher waited for a few moments and then said, “**When you desire God as truly as you desired to breathe the air you just breathed -- then you shall find God.**”¹*

II. We should crave RIGHTEOUSNESS.

a. Matthew 5:6

*(NKJV) Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.***

- **Righteousness:** condition acceptable to God; state of being approved by God; integrity, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling and acting.
- **For they shall be filled:** to feed or satisfy; fatten; fulfill the desire of any one; stuffed

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- *This has been called the most demanding beatitude, and at the same time, the most encouraging beatitude.*
 - **Demanding – Because God wants us to crave complete righteousness, not just enough to soothe our guilty conscience.**² *This is not a hunger that can be satisfied by a snack, or a thirst can be quenched with a glass of water. This is a longing that endures, and can't be fulfilled this side of heaven.² If you are truly hungry and truly thirsty, you want it all! That's the kind of craving God wants us to develop...where we fully and completely desire to think/feel/act righteously.*
 - **Encouraging – Because God has sympathy for our struggle.** *Notice that it is not the one that attains righteousness that is blessed, but the one who hungers and thirsts for it. God knows the REAL you! He sees the mixed motives behind your good deeds; but he also sees the longing for righteousness behind your sins. It is a great comfort to know that God meets us at the point of our aspiration, not our achievement. No matter how far short you fall from perfect righteousness, God will reward your hunger and thirst for it.*³

b. I Peter 2:2-3 (The Word)

*(NLT) Like newborn babies, you must **crave** pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, now that you have **had a taste** of the Lord's kindness.*

III. We should crave GUIDANCE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

a. Galatians 5:16-24

*(NLT) 16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you **won't be doing what your sinful nature craves**. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. 18 But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.*

*19 When you follow the **desires of your sinful nature**, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.

- *Trying to feed your SOUL on things that satisfy the FLESH is a diet for spiritual malnutrition!*³

**People crave the things of the flesh because they're easy to get and quick to (temporarily) satisfy.
People don't normally crave the TRUTH of the Word because it requires change and accountability,
and may NEVER fully be satisfied.**

– Pastor Lorenzo Ewing, The Fellowship of Love Church

IV. We should crave God, His Righteousness, and His Spirit NOW.

a. Luke 6:21

*(NKJV) Blessed are you who **hunger now**, For you shall be filled.*

b. Amos 8:11-13

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(NLT) *"The time is surely coming," says the Sovereign Lord, "when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the Lord. People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from border to border searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. Beautiful girls and strong young men will grow faint in that day, thirsting for the Lord's word.*

c. 2 Timothy 4:3-4

(NLT) *For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths.*

"Actually, spiritual hunger should never be satisfied. It should be stimulated."

-Wayne Bedwell, Church of God Most High

//Summary

You don't have to continue looking and searching for that "something" to satisfy your cravings. God is extending an invitation for you to come to Him!

Isaiah 55:1-3 (NLT)

"Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink— even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk— it's all free! Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food.

"Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.

Ultimately, God wants us to crave HIM, His RIGHTEOUSNESS, and GUIDANCE FROM HIS SPIRIT – NOW, so that we can be abundantly filled with His goodness. You see, a "God Crave" is unique – it both satisfies us fully, yet keeps us longing for more.² If we would begin to CRAVE God, eagerly seek Him, long for Him, yearn for Him and desperately demand ourselves to live a life pleasing to God, then His blessings would overtake us, and He would satisfy our desires.

//Prayer

Father, you are such a loving God. We bless you and honor you for making your goodness available to us. Lord, we NEED you! In you is life, peace, strength, deliverance, healing – everything we need! You are our beginning and our end, our all and all. Forgive us for craving the wrong things Lord. We repent now for trying to fill the spiritual voids in our lives with the things of the world and the lust of our flesh. Help us to walk according to your spirit, desire the things of the spirit, and fulfill your purpose for our lives. Give us a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Mature us God, so that we desire the meat of your word, and not just the blessings. Father, we recognize that times are changing, and people are less likely to want Your Truth and the accountability that it brings. Thank you God, that as we begin to CRAVE You, you will fill us and satisfy us, and yet keep us wanting more. Today, we recommit every area of our lives back to you. May we live faith-filled lives of integrity, purity and strength. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Resources:

1. "Spiritual Thirst." 26 Jan 2013. <<http://www.biblecenter.com/sermons/spiritualthirst.htm>>
2. Guzik, David. "Study Guide for Matthew 5." Enduring Word. Blue Letter Bible. 7 Jul 2006. 2013. 26 Jan 2013. <[http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm? AuthorID=2&contentID=7869&commInfo=31&topic=Matthew& ar=Mat_5_6](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7869&commInfo=31&topic=Matthew&ar=Mat_5_6)>
3. Breyer, David. "The Wholly Holy Hunger." Christians.org. 21 Jul 2001. 26 Jan 2013. <<http://www.christians.org/happy/happy04.html>>