

Seeking My King & His Kingdom

#31 Spiritual Dryness - The Silent Killer

John 7:38 Jesus said, "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

As Christians, our life, our witness and our service to others should be empowered by the Holy Spirit within us. However we do not always maintain that vital connection to God.

Ravenhill: "You can have all of your doctrines right, yet still not have the presence of God.

All of us experience seasons when we feel spiritually dry. Why is spiritual dryness so common?

The great evangelist D L Moody was asked why he placed so much emphasis upon being filled with the Holy Spirit. He wisely said, 'Because I leak.'

Hunger and thirst are natural expressions of the basic human DESIRE and NEED for food and water. A clear indicator that something is wrong physically is when we Lose Our Appetite.

When there is no hunger for God, it indicates a spiritual problem.

At the core of our being is a vacuum that only God can fill. This hunger is so basic to human nature, it often finds fulfillment in other areas rather than in seeking God.

It may be in human relationships, quest for power or money, or escape to physical pleasure.

The saddest examples, however, are of *Christians* who allow their appetite for God to be dulled by other things . . . even religious things. Our churches are filled with believers who are so satiated by activities, programs and projects that they no longer have a hunger for God.

"No amount of Christian activity compensates for an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ."

The human body, according to some estimates, is 80 percent fluid.

Apart from brains, bones, and a few organs, we're walking "water balloons." Your eyes need fluid to cry; your mouth needs moisture to swallow; your glands need sweat to keep your body cool; your cells need blood to carry them; your joints need fluid to lubricate them.

God wired you with thirst- a "low-fluid indicator." Let your fluid level grow low, and watch the signals flare. Dry mouth Thick tongue Achy head Weak knees

Physical Dehydration Causes

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Spiritual Dehydration Comparison

1. Atrophy of Muscles	Weakens us spiritually
2. Mouth Becomes Dry	Lack of ability to speak; i.e. to encourage, to witness, to speak truth; to share the Gospel
3. Sluggishness	Apathy; slow to get rid of waste [confess sin]
4. Cells dry up from the inside	Eventually cannot get rid of waste at all
5. Skin begins to peel/blister	Skin protects us from disease which is often an idiom of a sin that grows.
6. Inability or difficulty absorbing nutrients	Cannot absorb Word of God

7. Makes Digestion Difficult	Inability To Understand the Word of God
8. Can Make You sleepy, fatigued	Grow weary in serving the Lord; lack of devotion
9. Headache	Frustration in circumstances, irritation with others, overly sensitive
10. Dizziness	Aimlessness, turned around, unstable
11. Few or No tear production	Cold-hearted
12. Muscle Cramps	Serving the Lord/daily walk is much harder; Service may become very painful

Severe Physical Dehydration

Compare Severe Spiritual Dehydration

1. Confusion	May misinterpret the Word & go off course or go after false doctrines/teachings
*2. Sunken Eyes	Inability to see or discern truth or to recognize the needs of others
*3. "Dry Skin that doesn't bounce back when you pinch it."	We lack elasticity and don't bounce back when chastened.
4. Low Blood Pressure	Not getting enough oxygen = breath = Holy Spirit
5. Rapid Heartbeat; Breathing	Body is getting desperate. It is stressed, anxious, worried, feels hopeless, guilty and in desperate need of oxygen = Holy Spirit
*6. No tears when crying	Complete insensitivity both to others & to sin; loneliness
7. Fever	Anger, resentment, snaps easily, irrational thinking

*2 Luke 11:34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single [clear], thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. When we stop looking upward, we look perilously inward and downward. Sunken and downcast hearts forget the abundant goodness and faithfulness of God.

Ps.42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

*3 There is little relief from pain when we try to self-protect. We construct emotional and physical walls that often make wounds into scars. When hardship comes, we must press into the only endless source of comfort and strength. Paul explains that when Christ is our strength, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:8-9).

That marked courage and resilience comes only from a mature and intimate relationship with Jesus. His comforts and mercies are new for us each day.

*6 Decreased Output of Liquid: A decreased output of spiritual fruit is a result of a decreased input of the Holy Spirit and Word of God.

1. Infants are more vulnerable to dehydration. Compare to New or Immature Christians

a. Immediate attention must be given to them if you detect the following:

1. Sunken Soft Spot [fontanelle] on their head	Weak mind, unsure in their thinking
2. Few or no tears	Insensitivity to others & to their sin
3. Dry Mouth	Lack of water intake [Living Water]
4. Few Wet Diapers	Not getting rid of sin - not much waste
5. Drowsiness	Fatigue; weariness; burn out; tired of going to church; tired of trying to be a Christian
6. Fast Breathing	Stress; anxiety

Consider the personal testimony of Solomon:

1. He tried drinking from the polluted wells of this world to find satisfaction.

2. Read from his diary in Ecclesiastes 2:

a. Wildness: 2:1-2 "I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself. But that also proved to be vanity. [emptiness, futility] "Laughter," I said, "is foolish.

What does pleasure accomplish?" [what use is it?]

The party-boy of all play and no work was not satisfying.

b. Wine: 2:3 "I tried cheering myself with wine, and the embracing folly--my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives." He found out, like the alcoholic, wine doesn't work.

c. Wealth: 2:7-8 "I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man"

But he found out, as the Bible says, "the eyes of man are never satisfied."

d. Women: 2:10 "I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. "

He had 700 wives and 300 concubines, but this, also, didn't work.

Note: Solomon & The "I" Factor: I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine.

I enlarged my words: I built houses for myself. I planted vineyards for myself. I made gardens and parks for myself. I collected for myself silver and gold. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men and all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them.

I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure.

e. Wisdom: 2:12-13 "Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done? I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness."

The more he learned, the less he knew, and what he did know showed him:

Everything is futile and foolish without God.

3. In the last chapter of his diary, he wrote these words:

Ecc. 12:13 "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man"

Solomon finally found the true source and secret of satisfaction...God...a relationship with God. D. Martyn Lloyd Jones: Just like Solomon, "The world is seeking for happiness. They are trying to find happiness, they are making it their goal; their one objective. But they do not find it because, whenever you put happiness before righteousness, you will be doomed to misery. It is vital that we understand this distinction: Happiness must be a by-product that comes from a Pursuit Of Righteousness first and foremost.

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, [21st day of 7th month; Hag. 2:1-9, Haggai made a prediction about the Temple; quoted in Heb. 12:26-29, applied to return of the Lord]

Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

1. We know from verse 2 that Jesus was speaking during the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. Thousands upon thousands of people came together to remember and celebrate God's deliverance from Egypt and His provision during the wilderness journey. It also looked forward to the promised kingdom of the Messiah. They all lived in temporary shelters or booths as part of the requirements of the feast. During the 8 day period, so many sacrifices were made that it required all twenty-four divisions of priests to be present to assist in the sacrificial duties.
2. This feast involved a special rite of water-pouring.
3. Lenski: Each morning during the seven days of the feast, at the time of the sacrifice, a priest proceeded to the fountain of Siloam with a golden pitcher and filled it with water from the pool. This reminded the Jews of the miraculous provision of water from the Rock in the wilderness. Accompanied by a solemn procession, the priest bore it to the altar of burnt sacrifice. There he poured the water, together with the contents of a pitcher of wine from the drink offering, into two perforated flat bowls. The Levites would blow the trumpets and the people sang Isa. 12:3 "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

There would be leaping, dancing, shouting and singing.

On the last day of the feast, the priests would march 7 times around the altar while chanting: Ps. 118:25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

4. It was right at this climax of this great holiday that the Lord Jesus stood up in that crowd, and with that royal voice, cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." The water was a picture of the Spirit of God. Believers would not only drink the living water, they would become channels of living water to bless a thirsty world.

Note: They were attending a religious feast, following tradition but missed the Messiah. They were reenacting a tradition that could NEVER satisfy the heart.

5. Jesus realized they were drinking from the river of ritual...that after this day was over they would go back to the same old fears, old faults, old failures, and the same old frustrations.
6. They were drawing water from the wrong well.

Jer. 2:11-13 Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But my people have changed their glory for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; Be very desolate, says the Lord. For My people have committed two evils.

They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn for themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water.

7. We try to quench our thirst in all the wrong places.

We drink from the worldly well instead from the well of life which is found in Christ.

C.S. Lewis: "We are half hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea, we are far too easily pleased."

Thirst is one of the most powerful spiritual symbols in all of Scripture. As dehydration draws the whole of our physical being to a longing for water, so a spiritual void will draw our spirits into a search for deeper meaning for our lives.

Jesus' Invitation: "If Anyone is Thirsty, let him come to me and drink."

Consider: Prerequisite = Thirst For God

Ps. 42:1-2 "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."

Ps. 143:6 "I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land."

Ps. 63:1 God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water"

Spurgeon: There is nothing in the world that is more real than hunger and thirst. The truly blessed man has such a real passion, desire and craving after righteousness that it can only be, likened to hunger and thirst. He must have his sins pardoned, he must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ, he must be sanctified. He feels that it will break his heart if he cannot get rid of sin. He pines, he longs, he prays to be made holy; he cannot be satisfied without this righteousness and his hungering and thirsting for it is a very real thing.

Hungering and thirsting for God is an all-consuming passion that should drive every aspect of my life. Intimacy with God is consistent, purposeful and genuine and you cannot attain happiness without seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness - only then will it be added unto you. [Matt. 6:33] Therefore to reach a point of satisfaction in your life, which is promised to the man who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, you must cast aside happiness as your goal in life and pursue, true intimate communion with Jesus Christ.

Seeking God with all of our heart, mind, and soul is a mark of the surrendered life.

The surrendered life is not an option like a choice in a buffet line; it is the mark of someone who is genuinely filled with the Spirit of God.

"The Spirit of Jesus threads down the throat of your soul, flushing fears, dislodging regrets.

He does for your soul what water does for your body. You don't have to give Him directions."

Before swallowing, do you look at water and say, "Ten drops of you go to my spleen.

I need fifty on cardiovascular detail. The rest of you head north to my scalp."

Water knows where to go. Jesus doesn't need your directions; He needs your permission.

This is not partial obedience, it is full surrender. It's not trying to squeeze God in.

It's about allowing Him to fully saturate every aspect of our lives.

Like water, Jesus won't come in unless swallowed. We must willingly surrender to His Lordship.