

Chapter 05

Why You Have No Hunger For God's Word

Spiritual hunger works just the opposite of natural hunger.

A "Christian" without Bible knowledge is like a "driver" who has never seen a car!

Here 's what committed Christians are declaring to God: *“Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts.”* (Jeremiah 15:16)

Having God's Word become the joy of your life is truly a worthy goal, wouldn't you agree?

But nobody starts life hungry for the Word of God.

We start life physically hungry--but spiritually indifferent!

Every parent will agree with this: every newborn baby knows instinctively what to do to get fed!

But spiritually, there's nothing in us that causes us to seek spiritual things such as biblical principles and Scripture memory.

If God had built an instinct into us that compelled us to do Scripture memory, for example, wouldn't that contradict our free will?

As I began writing this article, I intended to begin by saying that we are clueless about Scripture memory and biblical principles at first. But then I realized: there actually are clues. Consider:

When God interacted directly with His people in biblical times, He allowed them to go through incredibly difficult circumstances. Through their trials and victories, He patiently instructed them, corrected them, warned them and rebuked them.

Then He supernaturally caused other men (prophets) to write the stories about His people. Today, those writings are in the Old Testament section of the Bible.

With that in place, God caused His New Testament scribes to write letters that help us to understand.

Thus, Paul wrote: *"These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us."* (1 Corinthians 10:11)

Genius, yes? So, we're not clueless! We have many clues available to us! Our assignment is to discover the clues, and begin learning the principles they point to. Then, with the power of God's Grace, God wants us to begin learning to live according to His principles.

He calls that process "sanctification".

I have to be honest and admit: I knew none of this, well into my adult years. Worse, I stubbornly resisted doing things like Scripture memory and learning the Bible.

Back then, you might say: I didn't know... But... I didn't know that I didn't know!

Do you understand what I mean there? Just as teenagers seem to "know it all", I used to think I knew all the spiritual "facts" I needed to know. Now I realize that all I had then was a bit of religious "head knowledge". I was giving mental assent to a set of data. It made no difference in my life.

Can you imagine handing the keys to your car over to a teenager who has had no driver training and no knowledge of traffic laws?

Or can you imagine putting someone into a soldier's uniform, handing them a weapon, and dropping them into fierce combat--without any training?

If you understand how ridiculous those things would be, then you'll understand how ill-equipped I was to travel the roads of life and fight the spiritual battles of life.

And Satan loved it! And he hates that I'm writing these things now!

So, question: what do I mean by "clues" from the Bible? Here's an example:

Here's one: an important "clue" from Deuteronomy

God has told us that what natural food is to our bodies, His Word is to our spiritual beings.

“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:3)

Just as the food we eat nourishes our bodies, the Word of God nourishes our souls.

That being true, why do so few people do Scripture memory and apply biblical principles?

I found a reference that explains why most of us do not start out with a thirst for Scripture memory.

In his book, "A Thirst For God" (Zondervan, 1980) author Sherwood Eliot Wirt relates the words of a preacher he had heard years earlier:

“Spiritual hunger works just opposite from physical hunger. When we are physically hungry, we eat and satisfy our appetites and cease to be hungry. But when we are spiritually undernourished and are then given a feast of good spiritual food, it makes us hungrier than ever. Thus the more we learn about God's love, the more we want to know; we can't get enough.”

The reverse, Wirt said, is also true. Quoting the same pastor, he writes:

"When we are physically hungry and miss a meal, our appetite becomes ravenous. But if time passes and we receive no spiritual food, we may lose our appetite for it. Malnutrition sets in and we cease to care."

Let's examine these

1) Physical hunger: you eat, and even the most gluttonous over eater eventually cannot eat another bite.

2) Spiritual hunger: you feast on the Word of God, and become hungrier than ever!

As the author put it, "the more we learn about God's love [that's scripture memory] the more we want to know; we can't get enough."

Also: Physical hunger: If we miss a meal, we become ravenously hungry.

If we receive no spiritual food, three things happen:

We lose any appetite for Scripture memory that we might have had.

Malnutrition sets in...

We cease to care!!

I can see myself--the way I once was. I grew up thinking that all God asked of me was to sit in a pew in a Catholic church for an hour every Sunday. Biblically, I was indifferent to God. He made no difference in my life.

Scripture memory? Spiritual hunger? What are they???

That is how I used to be!

Now, I know too many people who are just like that!!

It's easy to just ride comfortably along on the "conveyor belt of life", never realizing that we were supposed to be drawing near to God through His Word.

So, what can we do?

Here's what I'm attempting to do right now, by way of writing these things:

...save others by snatching them out of the fire (Jude 23)

Here are two important truths:

1)The Word of God is demon repellent. The more Scripture memory you do, the more power you have with which to stand firm against the devil.

2) Don't decide whether or not to do Scripture memory based upon what your feelings are telling you. If you feel no hunger for the Word of God and your inclination is to not do it, realize this: those thoughts and feelings are from the devil! By faith, choose to begin force-feeding yourself on the Word of God!

“...but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.” (Daniel 11:23)