

Developing Spiritual Hunger, Part 3

INTRODUCTION

Verse 14 is one of the most tremendous prayers ever prayed by a man inspired by the Holy Spirit. I encourage you to take this prayer and to take it seriously, to pray it for your own life and your own family. This prayer is loaded with revelation and truth.

Paul the apostle is talking to the Christians at Ephesus. “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in [your] inner man” (Eph. 3:14-16).

So Paul is praying that the believers would have the strength of God in their spirit that is equal to the riches of God’s glory; that the glory of God’s power would be released from their inner man through their lives, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge” (Eph. 3:17-19). Here’s the point of what Paul is praying: “. . . that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (v. 19b).

The prayer of Paul the apostle is this: that there would be a people who experience totally the fullness of God Himself; that they would walk in absolute understanding of God, that God would reveal Himself to each person individually; that they would be moving forth in a power that was equal to the glory of the resurrection. It’s staggering that we, as a people, might be filled to the fullness of what God has.

GOD SUMMONS US TO BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD

Now on Wednesday night I read to you Colossians 2:9, where Paul talks about the humanity and deity of Jesus, and it said that Jesus was filled up with the fullness of God. Now here God is telling us to be filled up with the fullness of God, that we’re to walk in the same dimension of life and knowledge of God that Jesus had; that we’re to have the same fragrant aroma of God being manifested through us that Jesus Christ brought to the earth. The intention of God is very, very high. Let me say that again. The intention of God, when He redeemed us, was great. God has tremendous desires for us. God is very generous in giving Himself to us. God is the One who said, “I want you to experience the fullness of everything that I am.” It’s not man who is eager for God and God who is reluctant to give Himself; rather, it’s a God who said, “Though you don’t know Me, though you’re not even interested in Me, I will pursue you. I will win you to My Son. And now I will allow you to experience the very fullness of all that I am, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of what God is”—in terms of the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His power, expressing the character of God and expressing His power through us.

Now we have a little doxology here. “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Eph. 3:20). Every one of you in this room who is born again is a recipient of the life of God. There’s a power that dwells in your spirit, in your inner man, that works mightily through you. There’s a power that God releases from our spirit through us. 2 Corinthians 4 talks about it as manifesting God’s life and power from us to other people: that when we go places God has so opened

Himself up to us that we're privileged to bring God's knowledge and His power through our very beings, that we would radiate the life and the power of God through us. To Him be the glory in the Church!

THE UNITY OF THE FAITH AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD

OK, now look at Ephesians 4:13. God gave us the fivefold ministry until we all attain to the unity of the faith, until we all attain to the knowledge, the consciousness of God. You know, God wants us to come into the knowledge of Himself. That's the greatest privilege that God has ever given man, that He would take of Himself and reveal it to the man who is hungry for Him. The goal of God is to bring a people into the conscious awareness of who God is as a person. How many of you would love to have your heart filled up to the fullness of the knowledge of God? You would like to feel so close to God that the revelation of God would fill your heart. Well, God said that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, under the anointing, are going to work in the Church until the Church comes to the knowledge of God I just described. We will come to God in that way. We will know God in that dimension. God's life will be expressed through us. We will be strengthened in our inner man by the power that raised Jesus from the dead according the riches of God's glory. We will be filled up to the knowledge of God. Those things God has determined and has already purposed for us.

Now in verse 13 Paul says, "Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). How much are we going to know God? What kind of power does God intend to manifest through the Church? To what degree can we expect God to manifest His life through us? God, what's the measuring rod? How well can I expect to know You? How willingly have You given Yourself to me? How wide open is heaven? How much of Your power will really be expressed through me if I seek You with all my heart in faith and obedience?

Jesus answers it. He says, "To the same measure that belongs to the fullness of Jesus Christ." God said: "Look at My Son. He's the measuring rod."

What was the stature of the Lord Jesus when He was on the earth? What did He accomplish? What did He achieve in His knowledge of God? He fully comprehended God as much as a man could. To what degree did Jesus walk upon the earth in terms of power? He manifested the life of God in a way that is hard to comprehend.

Well, God said, "I will bring the Church to the measure that belongs to the stature of Jesus." That's mind-blowing. I don't want anyone to try; just think for a second. The measuring rod by which we measure Jesus is the amount of knowledge and power God is going to give His people in the last days. The knowledge that Jesus had and the power that He moved in, the power that was demonstrated and manifested through Him, is the size of the cup that we offer up to God. When I read the life of Jesus in the gospels, God is only telling me His intention through His people. I read that and I say, "God, it's staggering. God I can hardly believe that the measure of the stature that belongs to Jesus is the desire in Your heart to manifest Yourself to us and through us."

God says, "Well, that's the gospel of the glory of God." Any gospel that doesn't inform you that God has given you the same power He gave His Son, any gospel that doesn't tell you that you'll possess the knowledge of God and that you'll express the knowledge of God to the world in the way that Jesus did; any gospel that doesn't tell

you those two things is not a gospel that's according to the glory of God. It's a gospel that's short of what Jesus preached.

HUNGER IS THE ESCORT TO THE DEEPER THINGS OF GOD

Well, how do we get this? Faith and obedience. And how do we develop faith and obedience? There's a law of God I've been talking about last Sunday and last Wednesday. It's the law of hunger, the hunger of God in a man. There are several passages in the New Testament that reinforce this. There's a law of God that says, when a man gets hungry and desperate for God, God will rise from His throne and reward Him with the faith and obedience that will cause the knowledge and power of God to be expressed through Him. God is waiting for a people who will get desperately hungry for God, and He's going to manifest His life through those people. God won't manifest Himself through people who are passive and indifferent and careless in terms of their relationship with God. How many of you know that? God has said many, many, many times that He'll give Himself to the hungry. He doesn't say it in just those words every time, but that's the law of God right through the Old and New Testament.

GOD IS NOT LACKING IN GENEROSITY TOWARDS THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY

On Wednesday night we looked at Isaiah 64:7. God was talking to the Church in the Dark Ages. He said, "There's no one who arouses himself to take hold of God" (Isa. 64:7, paraphrased). In this day God is calling us to be a people. We arouse ourselves; we stir ourselves up and we lay hold of God. Now God has made Himself available to the human race. How available? As available as He made Himself to His Son. He says it many times. God has made Himself and His power available. He wants to reveal Himself to the human race. God is not lacking in generosity, not even a little. God isn't unwilling at all. He has made the provision. The holy place has been made wide open and available to man.

God says, "Who among you will stir yourself up and arouse yourself until you take hold of God?" That's what it comes down to. We have a glorious gospel of the glory of God. We have men who are powerless, men who are in darkness, men who are in great need. The heavens have been separated, and the holy place is available for us to enter in.

WE CAN ONLY BE HUNGRY TO THE DEGREE THAT WE LET GOD FILL US

Now why isn't man entering into the power and the knowledge of God that He has made available through His Son? It's because man doesn't stir himself up. He doesn't arouse himself to take hold of the God who has made Himself available to us.

"Well, what do you mean?"

God says, "If you'll fill yourself up, if you'll put yourself in a position where His Spirit can operate freely in your life, He'll produce a great hunger in your heart."

I went into detail on that Wednesday, that we don't have the ability to produce hunger in our hearts for God. How many of you know that? You can't just well up hunger for God. If the Spirit of God doesn't put it there, it won't be put there. What God is saying is this: you've got to put yourself in a position where God by His Spirit is totally free to change the desires of your heart so that He can put a hunger in your heart.

I remember one time when it dawned on me that I wasn't as hungry for God as I needed to be. I said: "God, I feel dead inside. I feel dark. I feel powerless." I was preaching the gospel, telling people about the Lord, but I said, "I don't know You, God, and something in me is almost content where I am."

I was passive. And by the standards of most people I wasn't passive. Many people, when I've been in that position, have told me, "Well, you're one of the most zealous Christians I've ever met." God forbid. I was passive. Compared to what God had made available in His Son, I was doing nothing. It's probably nothing to speak of; not even respectable as far as I'm concerned.

I said, "God, I don't find any drives in my heart for these things." I was just praying; I said, "I don't sense my heart warming up to You in a way that it should when I read these things."

God spoke to my heart and said, "Put yourself in a position where I can put a new hunger in your heart."

I said, "What am I to do?"

He said: "Fill your mind with things to which I can respond and put hunger in your heart. Begin to give your mind to the Word of God. Begin to give your mind to the teaching of the Word. Begin to give yourself to prayer. Give yourself to fasting. Give yourself to worship. Begin to testify to people."

What happened is that I began to do that, and I did it with a measure of depth. You know what I'm talking about. I did it. I said, "Father." I began to worship; I began to pray.

Nothing was happening, and God said to me, "If you'll continue to keep yourself in that position, you'll find a new hunger spring forth in your heart. That's what I mean in My Word when I say, 'Arouse yourself and take hold of God.'"

IF WE WILL STIR OURSELVES UP, GOD WILL BE FAITHFUL TO MEET US

You just put yourself in a position. You schedule time to meet with God. You begin to give yourself to meditation on the Word, and I tell you, like everything, it began small and it didn't have a great degree of grace and life in it. But I kept doing it and doing it. You know what? God was faithful to meet my heart with hunger. There's a hunger that fills my heart for God, and I find praying to be very, very easy. I'm saying that as an encouragement for many of you. I'm just magnifying the grace of God. I'm not saying this because it sounds good; God as my witness, the prayer that used to be so boring is now the most exciting, enjoyable thing that I know in life, to spend four or five hours before God in prayer. There's nothing that I would rather do in this age than that because it brings life to me. It brings me the knowledge of God. I find myself weeping sometimes for an hour at a time; sometimes I find myself rejoicing. I find the knowledge of God coming to me and there's no person, there's no experience, there's no achievement that can ever begin to compare to the knowledge of God that I find sometimes when I'm praying. The entire world becomes lifeless and boring and I wonder with great amazement what was tempting me all those years. I look at it and I say: "Father God, what in the world was I tempted by? It's lifeless and it's dead. The world has nothing to offer me."

Now the reason I said that is because some of you, as I've been sharing this stuff, are saying, "Oh man." You feel so dead inside. You spend ten, twenty seconds in praying, "Dear Lord," over the dinner table. "Thank You, oh..."

You know, I used to hate praying. I used to hate reading the Word. I don't know if I hated it, but I certainly didn't like it. I used to read it and think, "Man, there's nothing in this thing. It isn't life to me."

And God said, "Arouse yourself, O man, and stir yourself up, and I will be faithful to meet you with My grace and put a whole new desire in you. When that desire grips you, I'll take you to new heights and intensity in pursuing Me. When you do that, I will begin to mature your faithful obedience and then My glory will be manifest through you."

The whole process begins with step one. These men and women who are walking in the glory of God, the few who mark a generation, didn't just get there one day. They've pursued God. They've stayed before God. They laid hold of Him. How did they do that? Well, they started when the Spirit of God first told them to do it. And they said, "Lord, I don't feel like doing it."

No one naturally feels like doing that stuff; it has to be cultivated by the Spirit of God, but I tell you as sure as I'm standing here, if I begin to give my time and my mind and my energy to other things, that zeal in my heart would get quenched so fast. I've done it many times. I've been at a place of tremendous intensity, and I began to give my time to many other things; I began to give my mind to many other things; I began to give my energy to many other things. A month later, I looked at the zeal that had been in my heart and thought, "God, I don't even desire You like I did. The Word is no longer alive like it was." I mean, I didn't totally backslide, but I said, "I've lost something."

God says: "Put yourself in a position again. Stir yourself up and I'll meet you like I always have."

GOD POSSESSES A POWER THAT'S MUCH, MUCH STRONGER THAN YOUR DEADNESS

I want you to imagine this. Imagine the statement I said about four or five minutes ago which some of you thought I was exaggerating. Imagine being able to say truthfully that spending four or five hours in prayer was the greatest delight your soul knows. Imagine if that could really be true. I mean, really; not a preacher story; not the kind of thing you say so you can look good. What if that could really be true? The most glorious thing in this age for you would be to spend four or five hours before God in prayer, where you long for that. You long to finish with your things because the desire of your soul is to go do that. Would Christianity be easier? Wouldn't it be something if God really fulfilled you like that?

Well, I'm suggesting to you that that's what God desires: to bring every one of us, not necessarily to a place where we could do that every day; but I'm saying that the Lord is prepared to give Himself, and I've got very good news for a lot of you. When the grace of God touches that dead heart that some of you have—and man, I've had a dead heart many times, so I'm not condemning anyone—when the grace of God touches it, that deadness is going to have to be pushed out of the way with the same force that the deadness in Jesus' body was pushed out of the way when God raised Him from the dead. God possesses a power that's much, much stronger than your deadness. I don't care how dead you are; there was no one who was deader than I. I guarantee that. The same power that pushed my deadness out of my heart is the power that pushed the deadness from the heart of every man of God. It's the same power that will overcome the deadness in your own heart. There's a grace that's available that can change the most lifeless person in this room.

THERE'S A LAW OF LIFE THAT'S MORE POWERFUL THAN THE LAW OF DEATH

I, by nature, don't love God. I, by nature, love sin and darkness and death. I'm exactly like you, and every man that has gone before me is exactly like me. None of us cared two hoots for God in and of ourselves. But I'm telling you fantastic news: that you can win. Every one of you can be changed and transformed. Every person in this room can come to a place and an experience of God where you'll love the things that you don't like very much right now—and some of those things are the things of God. What if you could just go take a vacation and spend time reading the Word and praying before God, and that was your vacation? Wouldn't that be a nice way to be?

You think, "That sounds pretty boring to me." But I tell you, I tell you, God could so touch your dead, little heart that you can have a fire in your soul that you don't comprehend, because the power that brings that kind of life is greater than the power of death inside of you right now. There's a law of life that's more powerful than the law of death. If you're not in this, if you're not born again and you're sitting in this room today, you're thinking, "I don't really comprehend what that man is even talking about. He's nuts!" I'm telling you that the lack of interest you have in God can be overcome in you like it was in me. Oh, I have biographies and testimonies of men who have done this, and I believe them. Some of them I don't; some of them are glory stories. I can read through them, you know. Don't believe every glory story you ever read. You can believe them if you have a witness in your heart that they're true.

"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS"

I'm telling you, God will meet you. He can bring you to that place. I want to go further. I want more of God. Sometimes I still look at myself and think, "Oh, God. There's so much more of God. If the glory You described is really mine, why do I have desire for anything? Why do I care to give myself? Why am I tempted by anything, Father, if this is really true? If You really are the God of glory, if You really are the eternal life, if You really are the light of men, if You really do have the power and the glory of Your character, if it really is available to me, what in the world have I been doing with my life on the earth?"

God says, "Arouse yourself; take hold of Me." I guarantee you, God will fill the hungry heart (Mt. 5:6).

MONEY IS POWER, BUT TIME IS LIFE

God has to put the hunger in you first, but you have to schedule time with God. You give God this much time and God will meet you that much. Time is life. I've said that many, many times. You know, a lot of people talk about money being important. When you have money, you have power, but something much, much greater than money and power is time because time is life. I wouldn't change my time for any amount of wealth, because my time is my life. I can get millions of dollars, and I wouldn't mind if someone gave me a million dollars; I'm not against that, if any of you feel so led; just follow the Spirit. Don't quench the Lord. But time is life. Time is life. I want you to get hold of that. Your time is your life. Time is life.

"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERS VIOLENCE, AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE"

Jesus said, "If you'll hunger for Me, you'll get Me." He said, "If you keep knocking, I will come with a full manifestation of Myself and My power, and you'll see it and express it" (Mt. 7:7-8, paraphrased). We went through all of these on Wednesday. He said, "If you become violent in your desire for God, if the primary desire of your heart is for God and His kingdom, the heavens will move and you'll have the thing that you're violently pursuing" (Mt. 11:12, paraphrased).

I'm telling you, He delights to give Himself to hungry people. It's the law of God. He gives Himself to the hungry. He doesn't give Himself to the passive person. I don't know if any of you are doing this, but just in case, I share stuff like this. The natural reaction in some people's hearts is condemnation. I'm not trying to condemn anyone; I'm trying to tell you and convince you that glory awaits you, that God is not lacking in generosity. Glory is awaiting you. I don't mind what you do; I'm not looking at you and evaluating your life. That's between you and God. It's not my interest to compare who is doing what or who is praying the most. I have no interest in that. I would never do that. So I'm not looking at you and thinking, "Ah, this man is making it and this man isn't." My mind has a totally different mentality than that. That never crosses my little peanut brain. I'm thinking something totally different.

People come up to me sometimes and try to prove that they love God. I'm no one; don't prove anything to me. Who am I? I'm trying to convince you that God's glory and life is for you, even you who are dead right now. His life and His glory that He gave to His Son, the measure that equals the stature of Jesus Christ, is available to you people, and it's available to me. You have decisions to make, just as I do. We have seventy years on the earth. We have twenty-four hours a day. We have certain God-given responsibilities we have to fulfill. We've all got a certain amount of free time and we all make decisions with that time and we're stirring ourselves up to this thing, that thing, or the other thing.

If you'll stir yourself up to God, He'll stand up on His throne and He'll give Himself to you in such a way that you have no more desires; you're totally satisfied. I'm not there yet, but I tell you, the revelation is in my heart. I know that I can get God. I know that I can get God the way the Lord Jesus got Him. I know that I can get a revelation of God like Paul had it because I'm a man of flesh and blood like him. The Scripture is true and God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). He'll give Himself to the hungry; He won't give Himself to the passive.

You sit back and you say, "This is legalism." I want to tell you this. I'm not condemning anyone; I've done this before. I have no stones to throw. I really mean this; I hope you understand that. I'm not trying to put anything heavy on anyone; I'm trying to tickle something in you to get you going. You think, "Oh, Father," and you start probing yourself. You get that thing going inside of you. I'm trying to make you aware of the glory that's awaiting you.

GOD WILL TAKE THE DEADEST AMONG US AND SET THEM ON FIRE

You know there are times in my life—this is pathetic, though not in a condemning way—when I say, "O God, what was I doing?" I wasn't spending daily time with God in the Word.

I've known pastors and men who teach the Word, and they say, "If you have to spend time daily in the Word, it's legalism." That's a lie straight from hell. It's like saying, "If you have to eat every day, you're legalistic. You ate two days ago! What are you, legalistic or something?"

I'm telling you this. I don't want you condemned; I really mean it. I want every one of you to be provoked to go forward. Stop where you're at. Just stop. God takes the dearest. I'm not exaggerating when I tell you, I was as dead as they come.

Some of you think, "Nah, you're just saying that to make us feel good."

No I'm not. I've raised my heart to God and said: "Dear God, I hate praying, and I'm a born-again believer. I'm even filled with the Spirit. I can speak in tongues if I want, but I'm bored, God. I don't like praying."

That was the truth of my heart. Anyone ever feel that way, ever? Good, I'm talking to the right crowd. No, I mean it though. I mean it. I'm not just telling you that. But I've had times in my life where I wasn't spending time with the Lord daily. As a matter of fact, I didn't even do it weekly. You know what? If that's the condition of your life, mark my words, you don't have reality with God. You don't enjoy worship very much, the Word is dead, you border on depression many times, at least in your private life, and you're empty and frustrated inside. Mark my word, if that's a description of you: you can sit back there and talk about how legalistic it is; you can say, "I won't do that; that's not right." You know what? You'll stay depressed. You'll stay lifeless. You'll stay dead and barren. I decided that I'm not going to do that. Many people in this room have made the decision that we're going on with God no matter what it costs us.

HE SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL

You know, would you turn to Matthew 15? There's no cost. I've been thinking about the silliness of this whole concept of "paying the price." What, how can you call it a price when you're giving God your time as He's giving you His life and His glory? I mean who paid the price? Did I pay the price or did He pay the price? You only talk about paying the price to people who are spiritually blind. Those are the only people you ever encourage to pay the price. When you finally realize the intention of God and what He's given in His son, price is never an object. As it began to hit my heart what God had for me, I began to say, "Count the cost? Get serious, Bickle! You give a small amount of your time to God; He has given you His life and His power. He has made available His own kingdom to you. What do you mean count the cost?" I felt it insulted God when I thought, "God, I'm counting the cost."

He said, "That's really big of you, you know. I've crucified My Son, I've given My life, I've given you the position that the devil tried to steal from Me, and he got cast into hell. Every angel in heaven would long to be where you are, and you're talking about counting the cost and paying the price."

"You've missed it, people"—that's what God would say to us. You've missed it, but God is so generous and so compassionate and so full of mercy, and His movement is slow, and all this time I've been counting the cost. God is up in heaven smiling, thinking, "When it dawns on you, you'll never say that to yourself again."

It's dawning on me a little. I don't have any big full revelation of anything, but I know one thing: counting the cost is no longer an issue. How many of you know what I'm talking about? I mean, really, who had to count the cost? I think the Lord Jesus Christ counted the cost. I'm not trying to be sentimental and emotional, but that was the cost that had to be counted.

WORLDLY PLEASURE IS FUN FOR A MOMENT, BUT IT NEVER SATISFIES YOUR SOUL

I mean, how can you compare worldly pleasure? And I'm not against worldly pleasure; I've had a lot of it myself. All I can tell you is, it doesn't satisfy your soul. It's fun for an hour, but it doesn't satisfy your soul. It touches you for an hour, you tingle a little, and then it's all gone as fast as it came, and we get depressed. How can you put that in the balance and weigh and compare that to the glory of eternal life in God? How can you talk about counting cost when you put those two in the balance? I can't, not with a clear conscience. But I feel like I had better be the preacher: you know, "Count the cost, folks! Pay the price!" God is going to give you His life, His glory. You turn that television set off, and God will give you everything. Just count the cost. It's almost

redundant, isn't it? It's almost insulting. God crucified His Son, gave us His life, His glory, and we're talking about, "Can I? Click, I turned it off. I counted the cost. Oh God, here I am. I'm Your chosen servant. I laid the novel down. I put the dirty magazines away. I'm not going to the horrible movie that depresses me when I watch it. I've counted the cost, God. Now give me the glory and honor that I deserve, the honor that's due me."

You know, God in His humility still gives it to you. He says, "Well, when you see more clearly, your heart will be full of gratitude and there will be no cost to count."

"WHATEVER A MAN SOWS, THAT HE WILL ALSO REAP"

Well, do you have your finger in Matthew 15? Good; keep it there. Go to Galatians 6. No, keep it there; we're coming right back. I just feel like the Lord really wanted me to press into this concept of counting the cost. I don't want to be hard or lacking understanding or lacking the compassion of the Lord, but there's a time when we need to wake up and clearly spell things out. Don't you agree? I mean, I don't want to be a hard person because God isn't hard. And please, if you feel condemned, don't blame God for it. It's just the earthen vessel that I am. It's not God's life that's condemning you; it's just my own brashness and immaturity if you're being condemned. I'm trying to share something with you, that there's glory awaiting the hungry soul and it's for every one of you, no matter how dead you are.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). That's not a negative verse. I've heard people preach that and say, "If you live in sin, you're going to get it!" Forget the sin part. If you sow to the Spirit, if you give yourself to God, you will reap the blessing of God. The greatest blessing God could ever give you is a revelation of Himself and an expression of His life through you. Man, I tell you, you'll be satisfied. You'll be walking on the heights of the earth when that happens.

"HE WHO SOWS TO THE SPIRIT WILL OF THE SPIRIT REAP EVERLASTING LIFE"

"Don't be deceived, God isn't mocked; whatever a man sows, whatever he plants, he will harvest." Then he goes on to say, "For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Gal. 6:8).

Sow to the spirit; give yourself to God and begin to do those things. Begin to spend time in prayer. I don't care how dead it is today. I really mean it. It doesn't make any difference where you start off. Give yourself to meditation, give yourself to worship, give yourself to fasting. Give yourself to testifying of the things of God to people. Jesus says you will overcome by your testimony (Rev. 12:10-11). Begin to speak the Word of God amongst people when they talk to you. You know how people in the world make statements, and you're so afraid to respond in a godly way. Make that response and God will begin to reveal Himself to you.

"IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP IF WE DO NOT LOSE HEART"

Look at verse 9; this is the verse. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9). In due time, life will come. God will bring a revelation of Himself in due time if. Oh, if that *if* wasn't there! If you don't grow weary and give up; if you don't grow weary and give up.

GOD GIVES MORE GRACE TO THE MAN WHO KNOWS THAT HE NEEDS GOD

I know you're still in Matthew 15; but go to James 4. It's a still a little different here. "In due season." I want you to take that verse; I want you to take Galatians 6:7-9, the passage I just read, and I want you to mark it and take it home, and I want you to feed on that thing; because it will encourage you like few other verses.

James 4. Oh Father, I'm so thankful for this. God gives a greater grace (Js. 4:6). Did you know that there's more grace than the grace that gets your sins forgiven? That's only the introduction into the grace in which we stand. Getting your sins forgiven and going to the eternal city when your physical body decays and goes into the ground is only the introduction into the grace in which we stand. But God gives a much greater grace than that. What is grace? God's love and His power. He gives a greater power than that. He demonstrates even more love than that. He does give greater grace. "Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble'" (Js. 4:6b, paraphrased). He gives more to the man who knows that he needs God.

Here's the humble spirit. There are several ways to look at humility, but this is one. When you come to the conclusion that you need God more than you need anything in this life, then you're walking humbly before God. I don't care what you say with your mouth, but if your priority of schedule is giving everything more priority than God, you're not walking humbly in recognition of God. You're not declaring to God that you need Him. You're telling Him you need your novel, you need your TV, you need your recreation, more than Him. And all those things may be good; I don't know. But all I know is this: when a man comes to the recognition that he needs God more than anything in life, he's humble before God. When he comes before God and says: "Father, I need You; I mean, all my recreation is fine, but I need You, God," that's the humble spirit. You're recognizing that your need is nothing but a lack of God. When you come to that recognition, God will give to you. He'll give to you love and power in a greater dimension.

"DRAW NEAR TO GOD, AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU"

Look at verse 8. Here's the principle. It's the law of hunger. I'm just saying the same thing over and over. Draw near to God and, praise the living God, He will draw near to you (Js. 4:8). Who starts the process? Love. You know what? God stirs your heart to give you a revelation to stir yourself up before it ever dawns on you to stir yourself up. I didn't even know anything; we do start the process, but in a real way, God tricked my heart to stir myself up. I wasn't even thinking of God, and He says, "Son, you know what? I would do a lot more for you if you would stir yourself up." So the grace of God even told me that before I even knew it. Then I obeyed that, and then His grace came a second time and gave me a new desire for Himself.

I hope this verse hits you. I hope the promise of this does something to your soul. Let's read it. "God will draw near to human beings. The living God will draw near" (Js. 4:8, paraphrased). I walk around and I pray. I think: "Father God, give me a revelation of Your Son. God, I need a greater understanding of You and Your life and Your power. God, give me more of Yourself. God, give me more of Yourself."

I've got one verse. If there wasn't another verse of Scripture, it's this. God says: "I will draw near to you, son. I will. It's My desire. You're on the right track. I'll answer those prayers." And no matter what happens, if I get discouraged, I can always go back to James 4:8, and God says: "I do give a greater grace. I'll draw near. You're on the right track."

I think, "Oh God, when, when are You going to do it?"

He says: "In due season if you don't grow weary, you'll reap. In due season you will reap."

“HUMBLE YOURSELF IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP”

Look at verse 10; again, it’s the same thing. “Humble yourself; acknowledge that you need God” (Js. 4:10, paraphrased). Acknowledge that you need revelation of Jesus. Acknowledge that this is the greatest need in your life, and you’re humble before Him in one respect. Acknowledge that and God will exalt you (v. 10b). That doesn’t necessarily mean He’s going to give you a big prominence in the eyes of men. What it means is, He’ll bring you to the place of revelation of Himself. That works for every single boy, girl, man, and woman in this room. God will exalt you; He will give you the knowledge of Himself and His power that dwells in you. When you get the knowledge of God and you get the knowledge of the power that dwells in you, when you’re conscious of those two things, they’ll flow from you and manifest God’s life through you. Those things will be manifested through you.

I want you to take those three verses, verses 6, 8, and 10, and get them in your heart. God will really exalt you. He will bring you that position. God will draw near. God will give the greater grace, not just the introduction. That’s Romans 5:2, by the way, that we receive an introduction to the grace in which we stand, which is salvation from sin. I want those three verses. The reason I’m sharing them with you is because those are the verses I use when I get a little discouraged. I go to James 4 and Galatians 6 every time. God says, “Son, oh son, if you don’t grow weary, you’ll reap a harvest that you don’t comprehend.” But most people grow weary and quit.

My wife came to me the other day and, bless her heart, she said, “Man, I don’t know sometimes.” She said, “Sometimes it seems like nothing happens.” She said, “I’ve been doing this for a few weeks or months or whatever, and nothing has happened.”

I said, “Oh, Diane, how long did it take you to bring forth your child?”

She said, “It took me nine months.”

I said, “How much more is it worth to travail to bring forth the image of God in you?” I said, “We thought nine little months insignificant to bring forth two beautiful little children.” I said, “You will reap in due season. Now if you had given up and had an abortion or something, you never would have reaped, but you didn’t. And in due season we got two beautiful little boys, tremendous, little vessels, full of life.”

God looks at that and says, “Son, son, even more than that: I will produce My own image in you if you don’t grow weary. Don’t grow weary. In due season, if you sow to your spirit, you will reap life.” But it will probably take a little more than what it takes to give birth in the natural. In the spiritual realm it may take a little more time. But what in the world is worth giving birth to the manifestation of God in your life?

Well, look at Matthew 15. I plan to end with this. It’s a great example, this. Basically, all I’m sharing with you is what encourages me when I get discouraged. OK. This is no great Bible study or anything; I’m only telling you the verses that I turn to when my heart gets disheartened. I say, “God”—sometimes I make that absolutely foolish statement, which is, “God, I don’t know if it’s worth it.” Oh, that’s so stupid. If you ever think that, know where it came from. “God, I would rather go pout,” or, “There’s a good movie on; Lord, I mean, it’s only the glory of Your life.” “Lord, but I’ve wanted to watch the movie for almost three hours, ever since I heard the commercial. I quit.”

I read these verses. I don't really do that. I read these verses. I don't have to read them because I've read them many, many times, and I just say to myself: "Son, I will exalt you. In due season you'll reap. I will draw near to you. I give a much greater grace than what you have. I do answer the man who knocks. I'll give to the one who is hungry. I do give to the violent. You must continue to arouse yourself. In due time you shall reap if you sow to the spirit. If you sow to your flesh, you will reap the same miserable depression that you have right now."

I say, "OK, OK, I've got it. Let's go. Back to the battlefield. Let's go. Let's reschedule my priorities. Come on, devil, get out of the way. Come on, God, let's clean house. I will reap."

A PICTURE OF THE CONDITION OF A SOUL TO WHOM GOD GIVES

Look at Matthew 15:21. This is the greatest picture of the condition of a soul to whom God gives. This is the condition of a woman's heart that God will never, ever refuse. Never, ever will God withhold from this type of person.

"Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.' But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, 'Send her away, for she cries out after us'" (Mt. 15:21-23).

OK, let's get the setting here. This poor soul has two terrible things against her in that day. It's not terrible in this day, but it was in that day. It's this. Number one: she was a woman. It's not so bad today, but in that day and in that setting that wasn't good. She had no right to be out being boisterous like that. Number two: she wasn't a Jew; she was a Canaanite. And the Jews have no dealings with the Canaanites. They were their enemies. So this boisterous woman came to Jesus and she had the nerve to call Him "the Son of David." That was a strictly Jewish title. It's like she was saying, "Hey, I'm one of you, you know."

And they looked at her and said, "Hey, who are you trying to fool? You can't call Him 'Son of David.' He's our Messiah. Get out of here."

But look at what it says: she was crying out, and the disciples kept saying, "Lord, that woman keeps shouting all the time; get rid of her."

She kept shouting, "Oh, Son of David, please, oh God, God, I can't be denied!" She had one desire in her heart, and that was to receive the deliverance of her child. She said, "God, I can't be denied. Lord, come back, come back. Oh, Jesus, please come; come, Lord Jesus."

The disciples were saying, "Man, oh man, that woman is going crazy. She keeps screaming and hollering."

JESUS APPEARED TO IGNORE HER IN HER TRAVAIL

She just kept going on and on, and look at Jesus' response to her. This made me mad at first, but I had to repent. In verse 23, Jesus answered her not a word. I thought, "Lord, that was rude."

I mean, imagine you coming up to me and saying, "Mike, I have a question for you," and I stare at you. "Mike, I have a question for you." I turn around. "Mike, I have a question for you. Here's a simple question. Could you answer my question?"

I look at you, look back around, and don't even give you the decency to say, "Can't you see I'm busy?" or, "I'll get to you in a minute," or, "Hey, you're rejected."

He wouldn't even give her one word. He *seemingly*—that's the key word here—totally ignored that woman. She was screaming and hollering. He looked at her and said nothing. He ignored her, as far as she was concerned. I thought that was rude. It certainly appears to be rude, I'll allow for that. You've got the fear of God in you. That's good. Don't raise your hand; I said "appears to be." She kept shouting and shouting, and seemingly He ignored her. He would not answer her. Was she hungry? "Please, just help me! Lord, please help me."

Then He said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs" (Mt. 15:26).

Her response was, "Forget it; it's not worth it." She didn't say that. She said, "But, Lord." She absolutely refused to be denied. She said, "But, God, but God, I'll take the crumbs off the table. Oh God, I need You so badly" (Mt. 15:27, paraphrased).

Jesus turned and answered her, He said: "Woman, you've got the greatest faith of anyone I've ever seen. You've got your request" (Mt. 15:28, paraphrased). That totally astounded everyone because Jesus seemingly ignored her. He seemingly denied her. He seemingly insulted her, but in His heart He knew the whole time what He was doing. God responds to the law of hunger. He was letting the hunger manifest itself. God knew the hunger in her heart from the beginning, but He wanted that hunger to be manifested in the eyes of men so that God could point to that woman and say, "That's the soul that touches God right there."

HE WILL NEVER DENY THE HUNGRY AND TENACIOUS HEART

I don't care if your emotions tell you God is denying you; He will draw near. I don't care if the devil tells you that God isn't going to answer; He will exalt you. I don't care if other people tell you you're wasting your time in legalism; God does give a greater grace.

What I want you to do is this: the next time that your emotions, the devil, other people, or anything else tells you to give up, I'm telling you that in due season you will reap. In due season you will reap. In due season the seeming rejection, the seeming ignoring, the seeming insult, all the different manifestations of God denying you—don't be denied by God. Refuse to be denied until you're exalted to the place where you're experiencing the glory of God that He gave His own Son, because that's what He said is His desire.

If you refuse to be denied, refuse it. I don't care what my emotions say; I don't care if it seems worthless. I don't care what people say. I don't care if it takes me twenty years. God, I'm not letting go. I need more of You. I need a revelation of Thy love, O God. I need a revelation of Your power. God, I won't be denied. I don't care what anyone says. Your Word said You desire it.

"You'll reap. You will reap. You will reap." You take these verses and you encourage your soul with them. God will give to the hungry, but He won't give to the passive. He will not. Let's pray.