

This Could Be Why the Fire of God Isn't Falling on You

"You shall seek Me and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

"I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk, or a snooze in the sunshine ... I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy three pounds of God, please" (Wilbur Reese).

In 2014, I shared that one of the most difficult challenges associated with pastoring is not sermon preparation or taxing counseling appointments, but witnessing the tragic results of spiritual dehydration—dying spiritually with living water just a step away.

Sadly, we become so busy, so self-absorbed to drink of the living water Christ often spoke of. The excuses are broad; the solution is narrow: "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (John 4:14a).

Very few are truly hungry and thirsty for God. Although most of us quote, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6), many have never truly experienced it. Paul said He wanted to know Christ in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His suffering (see Phil. 3:10). King David cried out, "One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I will seek after—for me to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Ps. 27:4).

Hungering and thirsting for God is an all-consuming passion that drives every aspect of life. One summer, I took a bike

ride out into the desert with little water. As I turned around and headed back to my truck, I realized that I was out of water. Each mile brought a new level of thirst and desperation. My thoughts were consumed with water; nothing else mattered. The scenery and quiet that I enjoyed minutes earlier had lost its attraction.

Hope surged when I spotted my truck in the near-distance. Within minutes, I dropped my bike, sprung the truck door open, and devoured the remaining water. Dehydration and exhaustion quickly gave way to a refreshing sense of satisfaction. The extreme thirst I was feeling was now satisfied.

This reminded me of the thirst that God often describes in His Word—those who truly thirst (seek) Him with all of their heart will be satisfied. This is not partial obedience, it's full surrender. It's not trying to squeeze God in, it's about allowing Him to fully saturate every aspect of our lives.

Ironically, we can have the letter of the law, but not the heart of Christ. We can break down the Bible, but hearts remain as hard as stone. We rule our homes with a rod of iron, but know nothing about compassion, gentleness and humility. We come to church to judge rather than to truly seek God. Phariseeism prevents us from truly knowing God. We justify actions by saying, "I'm just passionate," but it's not passion. It's arrogance.

There are also those who have replaced conviction with compromise. If you find yourself saying, "I'm just not convicted," it may be time for self-evaluation. If one is offended by a call to holiness or humility, it may be a good indication that repentance needs to be sought.

Holiness is a mark of conviction and a surrendered life. Holiness is not an option like a choice in a buffet line. Holiness is the mark of someone who is genuinely filled with the Spirit of God. Without holiness, no one will see the Lord

(Heb. 12:14).

The lukewarm church disdains the heat of conviction; thus, it remains lukewarm. Lukewarm knows nothing of holiness, surrender and the Spirit-filled life. It may have a form of godliness, but it denies God by its lifestyle (see 2 Tim. 3:5). Charles Spurgeon rightly noted, “There will be three effects of nearness to Jesus—humility, happiness and holiness.”

Why don't many truly seek God? First, it may be that some are not genuinely saved. They may have religion, but not a true relationship with the living God.

Second, many do not want to seek Him. The excuse is often, “I just don't feel like seeking Him.” But we must first discipline ourselves before desire comes. We must first empty ourselves in order to be filled. We must first obey before receiving the blessing. We must first break before there is restoration. We must first pray before there is transformation. We must praise Him before there is peace. And we must first seek Him if we are to truly find Him.

The fire of God, the manifest presence of God, does not fall on an empty altar: “I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship” (Rom. 12:1). Genuine faith is reflected in sincere humility, selfless love, true repentance and a surrendered life.

Does your life reflect these characteristics? Are you truly seeking God? It's not too late. {eoa}

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