

Study 14 - A Passion to Seek God's Presence

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells.” (Psalm 26:8)

Introduction

A serious problem in the church today, is that as people grow spiritually and are blessed by God, they become less aware of their need for Him—for His presence and power. We cannot hunger and thirst for something if we are unaware that we need it. Some people have an intellectual desire to seek the presence of God, but they have no passion for it. This type of “desire” is a passive mental attitude; it is merely a wish or a yearning to reach something without any accompanying action to attain it. Passion, on the other hand, is a driving force, a spiritual energy, that shapes our lifestyles, mentalities, and actions.

When a person is passionate about obtaining something, every thought and every ounce of his or her energy is dedicated to seeking and achieving that desired objective. Our mind-sets, our conversations, and our priorities are based on our hearts' true passions. Simple desire has never led anyone to accomplish anything. We need spiritual passion! We cannot settle for just the initial encounter that we had with Jesus as our Saviour; we must continually seek Him to have more encounters and experiences with Him and come to know Him more fully in all His various facets. We cannot be content with knowing about Him. We must know Him. Then, we can experience His wonderful love, grace, strength, and power. In this study, we will see how to develop a passion for God's presence, beginning with the examples of Moses, David, and Paul.

Study Questions

Part I: Moses' Longing for God's Presence

(a) When the Israelites witnessed the manifestations of God's presence on Mount Sinai, how did they react? (Exodus 20:18b)

(b) What did the people then tell Moses regarding how they wanted to receive communications from God? Why? (Verse 19)

(c) What did Moses tell them to encourage them to move nearer to God? (Verse 20)

(d) While the people continued to “stand afar off,” what did Moses do? (Verse 21)

(a) What did the Lord reply when Moses asked whom the Lord would send to help him lead the Israelites out of Egypt? (Exodus 33:14)

(b) When Moses asked for God's presence to go with the entire nation of Israel, even though they'd been a “stiff-necked people” (Exodus 33:3, 5), what was the first thing God told him in response? (Verse 17a)

(c) Why did God say He would do this? (Verse 17b)

(a) In what manner did the Lord speak to Moses? (Exodus 33:11a; Numbers 12:8a)

What reason did God give for speaking with Moses in this way? (Numbers 12:7b)

(a) For what reason did God allow the Israelites to hear His voice out of heaven and His words in the midst of the fire? (Deuteronomy 4:36a)

(b) Why didn't God allow the people to see His form when He spoke to them from the midst of the fire? (Verse 16a)

In contrast to the corrupt, idolatrous desires of the people, what was Moses' pure desire? (Exodus 33:18)

Part II: David's Zeal for God

What was God's reason for choosing David to be king of Israel instead of Saul?

Complete the following:

1 Samuel 13:14: "The Lord has sought for Himself _____ ..."

(a) What did David say about the position he gave to God in his life? (psalm 16:8a)

(b) What had David discovered may be found in the presence of God and at His right hand? (Verse 11b)

What did David love? (Psalm 26:8)

(a) What "one thing" had David desired of the Lord, which he said he would seek? (Psalm 27:4a)

(b) What two reasons did he give for desiring this? (Verse 4b)

(c) How did David's heart respond when God said to him, "Seek My face"? (Verse 8)

David was a man after God's own heart because of his thirst and passion to seek His presence.

(a) When did David say he would seek God? (Psalm 63:1a)

(b) How did he express his desire for God using a vivid metaphor? (Verse 1b)

(c) Where did David look for God? (Verse 2a)

What did he want to see there? (Verse 2b)

At what other time did David say he remembered God and meditated on Him? (Psalm 63:6)

(a) When David took over as king of Israel, one of his first royal acts was to bring the ark – and, with it, the manifest presence of God – to Jerusalem, where he had established his residence and seat of government. What did David do in celebration as the ark was being transported to Jerusalem? (2 Samuel 6:14a)

(b) How was this unreserved expression of joy in God described? Complete the following:

Verse 16b: "... King David [was] _____ before the LORD."

Part III: Paul's Intense Desires for Intimacy with Christ

What did Paul desire to know? (Philippians 3:10)

(a) What did Paul consider to be loss compared to the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord? (Philippians 3:8a)

(b) What reason did he give for counting these things "as rubbish"? Complete the following:

Verses 8b – 9a: "...[I] count them as rubbish, _____."

Paul showed his longing for the return of Jesus Christ, and for being in His presence, by the statements he made in relation to Christ's coming. Complete the following:

Philippians 3:20b: "... we also _____ for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Timothy 4:8b: "... to all who have _____."

To be continued next week...

Prayer of Activation

Father of glory, our greatest desire is for You. Like David, we set You always before us. We commit to seeking Your face. Our souls thirst for You, as in a dry and thirsty land. Quench our thirst with Your living water. May it flow out of our hearts to bring salvation, healing, and deliverance to the multitudes who need You. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Action Steps

- If you have only a remote desire to seek God but want to exchange it for true passion, pray that the Holy Spirit would descend upon you with His fire and fill you with His passion. Ask God to free you from spiritual lethargy and to ignite within you a flame of spiritual love and zeal for Him.
- A passion for God usually begins with a commitment—not a feeling. And it is maintained by a continual renewal of that commitment. Make the decision to meet with God every day in a quiet place, free of distractions. Pour out your heart before Him, praise Him for what He has done in your life, and then wait quietly in His presence in a spirit of worship. As you do this each day, with sincerity and the knowledge that God's Spirit will help you in your human weakness, then your passion for God, your loving heavenly Father, will continue to grow.