



# HUNGER & THIRST (Pt. 3)

Week 21 | October 21, 2024

We all crave **approval**. We all long for someone to *look favorably* upon us and to *be pleased with* the things we do and the way we behave. It starts in childhood, when we look instinctively to our parents for **confirmation** and **validation**. As we grow older we begin to look elsewhere. Whether it be friends, peers, or mentors we seek to gain *esteem* and *acceptance* from the people around us.

This longing in our hearts is **God-given**, like all other *deep hungers* we feel. Because we serve a good God and a loving Creator, He does not give us desires without also **providing** for their fulfillment. **In Him** we are to *seek* and *find* the approval we so desperately crave. As we pray this week for our **families**, **churches**, and **communities**: ask God to re-instill within us a *hunger and thirst* for His approval that is comprised of and accompanied by a(n):

## 1. Fervor for **HIS FAVOR**. (Romans 11:7; Psalm 67:1)

- a. **NOTE:** Biblically, favor is defined as “**gracious kindness** and *approval* from a superior”. **Intellectually**, most believers know that they *want* God’s favor on their life. But too often, they have lost their **passionate NEED** (their *fervor*) for it in their life. Alternatively, when we are overwhelmed by this feeling there’s **nothing we won’t do** to *please God* and *build His kingdom*. The lost feel this need too, yet unfortunately they seek to gain God’s grace by all the wrong means. The favor of God is **not** something that can be *earned by obedience*, instead it is a gift bestowed upon those who **live by faith** in Jesus Christ. (Galatians 4:10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 5:2-5)

- i. **For Ex.** “Lord God, thank You for the **amazing grace** You show us each day. Thank You for the *awesome gift* that it is, freely given to all who trust in You. We need this grace, Lord, **more than life** itself. *Open up our eyes*, God, to see how desperate our need for Your favor truly is. Give us a hunger to see it **poured out** in our lives, to *live in* and *experience* Your hand of blessing as we act **by faith**.”

1. **REMEMBER:** Faith is **expressed through love**, love *fulfills the command of Christ*, and God’s favor is shown to those who remember His teachings. (Galatians 5:6,14; Proverbs 3:1,4)

## 2. Longing for **HIS LOVE**. (Psalm 36:7; 1 John 4:10)

- a. **NOTE:** God loves **everyone**, but not everyone gets to *experience* and *receive* His love in all its fullness and richness. As human beings, we were created **to love** and **be loved**. The sad reality, though, is that many have settled for *the love of this world* and have forsaken the love of their Creator for the **cheap substitutes** we find so easily. Our prayer, then, must be that all of *the counterfeit* would be exposed as inadequate in order for **the genuine** to be *revealed* and *received*. Ask God to inspire within us a deep and unshakeable desire to greater **know** and **experience** His love that leads us *deeper* into our relationship with Him. (John 3:16; Ephesians 3:17-19)

- i. **For Ex.** “Thank You, God, for **loving us** even when we are *unlovable*. Thank You for expressing that love while we were still Your enemies, sending Christ as the **sacrificial message** of *Your affections*. Give us a longing, Lord, to greater **know, understand, live in**, and **experience** Your love on *a daily basis*. Pull us to Yourself, God, through this need of ours to be loved and **expose** every *false* and *corrupted substitution* for what they truly are. In You alone is found lasting satisfaction, You alone deserve **that place in our hearts**.”

1. **REMEMBER:** God’s love is **best felt** as it is *given to others*. (1 John 4:7-8)

### 3. Aching for **HIS ACCEPTANCE**. (Romans 4:1-3; Luke 15:20)

- a. **NOTE:** We all want to be **accepted**, to be *welcomed* and *received* with open arms by another. We long **to belong**, to be a part of something *bigger than ourselves*. God offers us this type of acceptance, inviting us to become a part of His family with our “warts and all”. We don’t have to **clean ourselves up** or *fix our lives* to receive His warm embrace. He extends the invitation as **a free gift** to all. Too often though, the Christian and the lost alike are *led off track* in pursuit of the acceptance of others. Sometimes God seems so distant, and the opinions of others so close, that it is **easy to compromise** under the *pressure of our peers*. Fight against this tendency in prayer, asking God to bless believers with a contentment in our acceptance by Him while **resensitizing** the lost to their need for *His approval*. (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:17)

- i. **For Ex.** “Father God, thank You for making us **righteous, holy** and *acceptable* to You, through the sacrifice of Your son. Thank You for **welcoming us** into Your family, a privilege we *could never deserve*. Lord, please give Your children an unshakeable contentment in their acceptance by You so that the **thoughts** and **opinions** of others have *no sway* over their actions. For the lost, God, I ask that You would instill within them a supernaturally strong desire to be accepted that **cannot be fulfilled** by anything of this world. *Draw them to Yourself*, Lord, so that they might receive the true desires of their heart.”

1. **REMEMBER:** By **Christ’s death** we were *made acceptable* to God, by His life we can live the same way. (Romans 12:1)

### Questions for Reflection:

- Have you become complacent in your hunger for God’s favor? Is it something you *want* or something you **NEED**?
  - Ask God to reveal to you how desperately dependent on Him you truly are so that your **prayers** and **actions** might reflect it.
- Have you grown **content** simply *knowing that* God will always love you?
  - WAKE UP. God’s love is meant to be **lived** and **experienced**, not simply *understood*.
- Whose **acceptance** and **approval** is your *highest priority*?
  - If the answer is anyone but God, idolatry has gained **a foothold** in your life. *Reorganize your priorities* before the Lord’s hand comes against that false god.