

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE A Heart After God

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Psalm 42:1-5

SYNOPSIS A heart after God actively pursues His presence.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ A Heart After God

Uses of “heart” in everyday language

- someone is good at heart
- we learn things by heart
- “aw, come on, have a heart”
- for goals, we set our hearts on it
- when serious, we take it to heart
- when committed, we put our whole heart into it

Some scripture verses about the heart...

1 Samuel 16:7 man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Matthew 6:21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- **Your heart follows your money.** Where is your treasure?

Matthew 12:34 out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

- **Words reveal your heart.** What does this reveal about you?

David had a heart after God (Acts 13:22)

- he ran to the battle with Goliath, who had ridiculed God
- when confronted with his sin, he repented immediately and vigorously
- he wrote many songs of praise to God

Swindoll – David was paradox personified: He slew Goliath with the fling of a stone, but he was wounded by the lust of his own wandering eyes. He soothed Saul’s spirit with soft strains on the harp, but he exploded in anger at Nabal. He gave Jonathan’s crippled son Mephibosheth grace – a seat at his royal table – but he ignored the needs of his own children. He hid from God after his affair with Bathsheba... but, oh, he knew how to draw near. How can such an inconsistent man be considered someone after God’s own heart? David’s heart beat with God’s not because he was perfect, but because he was devoted. One passion was greater than all others: his desire to know and obey God.

☞ **Psalm 42:1–5**

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. 2 **My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?** 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" 4 These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng. 5 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

☞ **A Heart after God Craves His Presence** v. 1–2

Sometimes I crave Mountain Dew. I gotta have it! Or at the end of a hard work day around the yard, I can feel like I’m starving... Imagine a deer running from the hunter... an insatiable thirst develops after a long chase. How about you? Ever have an intense thirst, especially on a hot day? Not only do you want a drink, you might want to jump into the water. Do you desire God like this?



The hunter is like the devil or simply the troubles we face. Do we run to God or look for some other way to find relief? The streams of water are symbolic of God's presence... the psalmist desires to be in it, like being powerfully thirsty on a hot summer day!

If we are not craving him, perhaps we need to start with a realization of how dried out we really are! Or, perhaps you are drinking in other things trying to satisfy your thirst, but they will never fully satisfy!

Some scripture verses about hunger and thirst...

Psalm 107:9 he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Proverbs 27:7 He who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry, even what is bitter tastes sweet.

- **How does your attitude compare to this verse?**

Scripture identifies a number of things we might be filled with:

- Ecclesiastes 8:11... filled with schemes to do wrong.
- Isaiah 41:23... filled with fear.
- Daniel 11:12... filled with pride.
- Habakkuk 2:16... filled with shame.
- Matthew 17:23... filled with grief.
- In Acts 6, Stephen was full of faith and the Holy Spirit; full of God's grace and power.
- Ephesians 5:18 instructs us to be filled with the Spirit.

We need to fill up on God's presence. We need a craving for the things of God. If you're full of other **☞junk**, you won't be very hungry for the things of God. Put it upside down... **if you're not very hungry for the things of God, perhaps it's because you're too full of other junk.**

☞**Matthew 5:6**

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

A Heart After God Craves His Presence.

☞**A Heart After God Considers the Past** v. 4

The psalmist remembers how things used to be... He used to go with others to the House of God. Not only that, but he was at the head of the line, leading others in. And, apparently, he had been very expressive and festive in the old days. These things are inspiring him for a fresh experience today.

We also ought to remember positive past experiences with God... Salvation; healings; Holy Spirit **☞outpourings**; bible camps, etc. As the Psalmist considers **the past, it prompts his action in the present.**

☞**Revelation 2:4-5**

You have forsaken your first love. **5 Remember** the height from which you have fallen! Repent and **do the things you did at first.**



You can't live in the past, but maybe you need to do some of the things you used to do when you experienced God's presence in a powerful way. These things should cause a stirring in our hearts. The psalmist pours out his soul, seeking God.

Jeremiah 29:13

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

I used to play Hide and Seek with my kids. They would search without end if we didn't set a time limit. And they would look in the craziest places, trying to find me. Our attitude in seeking God should be the same!

- Proverbs 8:17 ... those who seek me find me.
- Psalm 34:10 ... those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
- Psalm 24 talks about who may ascend the hill of the Lord... those with clean hands and pure hearts... those who seek God.
- **Psalm 14:2 ... God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. (*God seeks God seekers*)**

Remember an earlier experience with the Lord? Let it inspire you today to seek Him once again. A Heart After God Considers the Past.

☞ A Heart After God Chooses to Praise v. 5

Even though he has been discouraged, the writer here preaches himself happy. He knew what it was to be discouraged, downcast and disturbed, but he decides to lift himself up and go after God. David did this in 1 Samuel 30:6 when everything had gone wrong and people were turning against him. He "strengthened himself in the Lord."

The Psalmist tells himself, "**Put your hope in God...**" What kind of hope do we have?

- Colossians 1:27 speaks of our hope of glory.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:3 mentions our hope in Christ.
- Titus 1:2 highlights the hope of eternal life.
- Hebrew 7:19 speaks of a better hope.
- 1 Peter 1:3 says it is a living hope.

In other words, we have a hope that is absolutely sure. It's not a childish hope of fantasy or wishful thinking; it's **something to look forward to with certainty**. We *will* see Christ in glory; we *will* experience eternal life! So, we give God our thanks and praise.

v. 5 "For I will yet praise him..." In Psalm 63:1-5 the psalmist is feeling dry and weary, but decides to praise God anyway.

When you're feeling dry or perhaps even frustrated and angry, you have a choice to make. You can feed the emotion by dwelling on it, or you can feed your soul what it really needs: more of God's presence. And, a key factor in experiencing God's presence is praise...



- Psalm 22:3... God inhabits our praises
- Psalm 68:4... Sing praise to his name, prepare the way for him who rides through the deserts.
- **Psalm 100:4**... Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.

☞ **Praise invites God's presence!**

I've shared before my personal experience with praising and worshiping God. When I take time to sing and worship, it can settle my spirit or renew me when I am down. It is because God comes near!

☞ The psalmist has been downcast, but he puts his hope in God and chooses to praise him. **Praise soothes the soul and stirs the spirit.** And, if you really think about it, God is always worthy of our praise. He saved your soul. He is always with you. "God is good..." His plans for you are good. Your future with God is excellent!

A Heart After God Chooses to Praise!

☞ We need to have hearts after God! **"When you've been away from God, don't spend too much time feeling guilty; instead feel hungry!"**

Psalms 27:4

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

☞ David had **one passion above all others: to seek the Lord** – so should we.

A heart after God craves His presence. It considers the past and is motivated by it. A heart after God chooses to praise.

Closing Song options:

Here for you

The power of your presence