

LSR2, Session 7

Character

- Dissatisfaction with your current spiritual state is healthy
 - don't settle for less than maturity & completeness
 - you need godly character to do good works God has predestined for you, to handle the anointing & authority he's given you
 - your spiritual condition affects what God can do through you
- Why spiritual hunger is essential
 - Mt 5:6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."
 - "hunger" (Gk, *peinao*): (1) be in a state of hunger; (2) desire strongly, crave
 - "thirst" (Gk, *dipsao*): (1) be thirsty; (2) desire strongly
 - God never turns a hungry person away!
 - If you really don't care whether you grow spiritually, God won't force you
- Ways to develop spiritual hunger
 - devour scripture
 - meditate on what you read
 - associate with people who want the things of God
 - you become like the people you associate with
 - sincerely love God & those around you
 - meditate on extent of God's love for you
 - meditate on God's nature and ways of doing things
 - ask God to make you hungry
 - Mt 7:7-8, keep asking, seeking, knocking
 - be spiritually aggressive
 - Mt 11:12, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."
 - God is pleased to give you the kingdom
 - don't let anything keep you from it
 - 2 Co 3:18, we're transformed with ever-increasing glory
 - don't be satisfied with your present condition or usefulness
 - Mt 6:33, tells us to seek first God's kingdom & righteousness
 - choose to do this whether you feel like it or not
 - choose to hunger after the things of God and nothing else
 - choose to make his kingdom and righteousness your top priorities
- Conclusion
 - If you develop a hunger for God's kingdom and righteousness, he will satisfy that hunger.

Spiritual Development

- Imagination does not make things happen

- we're using our imaginations to build a new library of images to help us change our thinking; to repent
- Spiritual fitness
 - a strong, fit spirit doesn't happen automatically
 - requires consistent effort, pushing past comfort zone, doing things you don't always want to do
 - receiving spiritual nourishment is not sufficient
 - be willing to push the limits
 - take the initiative to serve others with your abilities, even put yourself in situation that seems more than you can handle
 - make yourself dependent on God: if he doesn't do what is needed, you will certainly fail
- Conclusion
 - As you develop a hunger for God's kingdom and righteousness, it will become easier to develop yourself spiritually and do what you now consider impossible.

Spiritual Experiences

- angelic visitations — typical purpose
 - “angel” means “messenger”
 - Lk 1:11-19, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zachariah
 - Lk 1:26-38, God sent Gabriel to Mary
 - Lk 2:9-15, an angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds
 - Heb 2:2, “[The] message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment.”
 - Rev 1:1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.”
 - Rev 22:6, “The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”
 - Rev 22:16, “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches.”
 - when you encounter an angel, expect it to deliver a message, explain or reveal things
- angelic visitations — serving people
 - Heb 1:14, “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”
 - “ministering” (Gk, *leitourgikos*): serving, ministering (as a paid job, vocation)
 - How might this affect our interpretation of Heb 1:14?
 - “serve” (a verb in NIV) (Gk, *diakonia*, noun): (1) service, help; (2) ministry, role or position of service; (3) provision, arrangement for support; (4) contribution, e.g., money given to someone in need; (5) act of waiting upon, to serve food and drink
 - How does this verse define the scope of angels' ministry?

- Mk 1:12-13, “At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.”
 - “attended” (Gk, *diakoneo*, verb form of *diakonia*)
- angels report to God, not to us
- Mt 18:10, “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”
 - What does the phrase, “their angels in heaven,” suggest?
- angelic visitations — their appearance
 - Mt 28:3, “His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.”
 - Heb 13:2, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”
 - angels can present themselves in various ways
 - 2 Co 11:14, “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”
 - Jn 20:14, “At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.”
 - Jn 21:12, “None of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the Lord.”
 - If he appeared in the form they knew, why would they have considered asking, “Who are you?”
 - Mk 16:12, “Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country.”
 - “form” (Gk, *morphe*): (1) nature, character; (2) visual form, outward appearance
 - When and how did they eventually recognize Jesus?
 - Isa 52:14, “Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.”
 - Rev 5:6, “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.”
 - Who is the Lamb in this verse and how did he look?
 - Rev 19:11-13, “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.”
 - Who is this?
 - spiritual beings can take different physical form
- angelic visitations — their affect on people
 - Lk 1:12-13 (Gabriel appeared to Zechariah), “When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has

been heard.”

- Lk 1:28 (Gabriel greeted Mary), “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”
 - v 29, she was troubled by what he said
- Lk 2:9 states the shepherds were terrified
- angelic visitations — physical acts they perform
 - Mt 28:2, “There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.”
 - Acts 5:19-20, angel opened the jail doors and set them free
 - Acts 12:7, “Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up.”
 - Acts 12:22-23, The people “shouted, ‘This is the voice of a god, not of a man.’ Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.”
- divine visitation (theophany)
 - theophany is any temporary manifestation of God — physical, visible or audible
 - Mt 3:16, dove at Jesus’ baptism; also God’s voice
 - Mt 17:5, God’s voice at Jesus’ transfiguration
 - Jn 12:28, God’s voice
 - Acts 9:3-4, Jesus knocked Saul from his horse, spoke to him
 - Acts 23:11, “The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, ‘Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.’”
 - 1 Tim 4:16-17, “At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.”
 - Rev 1:12-20, Jesus appeared to John
 - theophany is not a vision or dream
- Conclusion
 - You may already be encountering angels without realizing it. As you develop a spiritual hunger and build yourself up spiritually, you’re more likely to have obvious encounters.

Blessing

- Have a nice day.

Daily Activities

- Meditate on one of the following passages and visualize yourself as the person visited by the angel.

Acts 5:17-20; Acts 8:26-29; Acts 10:1-6; Acts 12:6-9; Acts 27:21-26