

BE RIGHTEOUS – READING

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6.

Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and “God is love.” 1 John 4:16. It is conformity to the law of God, for “all Thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119:172), and “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.

Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, . . . without money and without price.” “Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord,” and, “This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.” Isaiah 55:1; 54: 17; Jeremiah 23:6.

No human agent can supply that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. But Jesus says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall [Page 19] never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” Revelation 3:20; John 6:35.

As we need food to sustain our physical strength, so do we need Christ, the Bread from heaven, to sustain spiritual life and impart strength to work the works of God. As the body is continually receiving the nourishment that sustains life and vigor, so the soul must be constantly communing with Christ, submitting to Him and depending wholly upon Him.

As the weary traveler seeks the spring in the desert and, finding it, quenches his burning thirst, so will the Christian thirst for and obtain the pure water of life, of which Christ is the fountain.

As we discern the perfection of our Saviour's character we shall desire to become wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. The more we know of God, the higher will be our ideal of character and the more earnest our longing to reflect His likeness. A divine element combines with the human when the soul reaches out after God and the longing heart can say, “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.” Psalm 62:5.

If you have a sense of need in your soul, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, this is an evidence that Christ has wrought upon your heart, in order that He may be sought unto to do for you, through the endowment of the Holy Spirit, those things which it is impossible for you to do for yourself. We need not seek to quench our thirst at shallow streams; for the great fountain is just above us, of whose abundant waters we may freely drink, if we will rise a little higher in the pathway of faith. [Page 20]

The words of God are the wellsprings of life. As you seek unto those living springs you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ. Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect, texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning as a flash of light, you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you will know that Christ is leading you, a divine Teacher is at your side. Jesus said, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:14. As the Holy Spirit opens to you the truth you will treasure up the most precious experiences and will long to speak to others of the comforting things that have been revealed to you. When brought into association with them you will communicate some fresh thought in regard to the character or the work of Christ. You will have some fresh revelation of His pitying love to impart to those who love Him and to those who love Him not.

“Give, and it shall be given unto you” (Luke 6: 38); for the word of God is “a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams of Lebanon” (Song of Solomon 4:15). The heart that has once tasted the love of Christ, cries out continually for a deeper draft, and as you impart you will receive in richer and more abundant measure. Every revelation of God to the soul increases the capacity to know and to love. The continual cry of the heart is, “More of Thee,” and ever the Spirit's answer is, “Much more.” Romans 5:9,10. For our God delights to do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask [Page 21] or think.” Ephesians 3:20. To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should “all the fullness dwell,” and “in Him ye are made full.” Colossians 1:19, R.V.; 2:10, R.V.

God has poured out His love unstintedly, as the showers that refresh the earth. He says, “Let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together.” “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” Isaiah 45:8; 41:17, 18.

“Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” John 1:16.¹

¹ Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association), 18-21.

BE RIGHTEOUS – STUDY GUIDE

1. Think of someone's cooking that you really enjoy. What emotions do you experience when you know you will be eating that person's cooking soon?
2. What's the hungriest you have ever been? What did you do to remedy that situation?
3. Why are we advised to eat regularly, even if we may not feel like we are “starving”?
4. What is righteousness? {MB 18.1}
5. How is righteousness obtained? {MB 18.1, 18.2}
6. Why, if we have to work to satisfy our physical hunger, would we not have to work to satisfy our spiritual hunger? {MB 18.3, review MB 8.2 – poor in spirit}
7. The _____ must be constantly _____ with _____, _____ to Him and depending _____ upon _____. {MB 19.1}
8. The author says that “the more we know of God, ...the more earnest our longing to reflect His character.” {MB 19.3} How do we learn more about God? {MB 20.1}
9. We tend to think of righteousness as something “individual” – he or she is righteous. But how does the author say one's righteousness benefits others? {MB 20.2}

10. Is our hunger for righteousness ever sated? Explain what the author is saying in MB 20.3

Thought Question: There are diseases associated with eating and hunger – anorexia (under eating) and bulimia (binge eating). Are there parallels with these diseases related to spiritual hunger? What would the symptoms be and how can we avoid them?

BE RIGHTEOUS – MY NOTES
