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# What Do You Long For?

**JOHN 6:24-69**

## Introduction

1. Have you ever eaten a meal and thought to yourself,
  - a. "Now that hit the spot."
  - b. Or, "I'm just not satisfied."
2. There are two types of hunger that exist within us:
  - a. The hunger of our physical body.
  - b. The hunger of our soul.
3. The satisfaction of one lasts for the moment, perhaps even the day, but the satisfaction of the other is eternal.
4. What is it that you truly long for?
5. What satisfies your deepest yearning?
6. Jesus addressed that issue long ago when He addressed the crowd which made its way back to Capernaum in search of Jesus, following His feeding of the 5,000.
7. His message to them takes up over half of the sixth chapter of John's gospel. It begins in verse 26.
8. While we do not have the time to examine every detail, I would like for us to ponder the important points which Jesus makes.

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### **A. THE CROWD'S SEARCH FOR JESUS**

1. Though Jesus had sent the crowd away after feeding them, they came back the next morning looking for Him.
2. No doubt, they still wanted to make Him king.
3. When they did not find Jesus or His disciples anywhere around Bethsaida, they got into a number of small boats and went across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum.
4. When they finally found Him, they asked, "*Rabbi, when did You get*

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*here?" (v. 25).*

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### **B. THEIR MISDIRECTED SEARCH**

1. Jesus did not answer their question.
2. Instead, He told them that they did not seek Him because of the miraculous signs they had seen, but because He satisfied their physical hunger.
3. They wanted a miracle-worker who would supply them with an endless supply of food.
4. Jesus informed them that such food does not last. It perishes with use.
5. Instead, they should pour their energies into *"food which endures to eternal life."*
6. This food can only be given by *"the Son of Man,"* Jesus (v. 27).
7. It is evident from their response that they still do not understand — *"Tell us what works God wants us to do, and we will do them"* (v. 28).
8. Jesus said to them, *"This is the work of God — that you believe in the One He has sent"* (v. 29).

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### **C. THE DESIRE FOR A SIGN (VV. 30-34)**

1. The people changed the subject from *"the works of God"* to a sign which Jesus could do (v. 30) — *"What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do you perform?"*
  - a. How many signs would have been sufficient for them to believe?
  - b. Jesus had already performed a number of miracles there in Capernaum (i.e. a man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit (Mark 1), Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1), the sick and demon possessed (Mark 1), Centurion's servant (Matt. 8))
    - ❑ What is necessary for us to believe?
2. They pointed to Moses and the manna in the wilderness as something with

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which to compare, "*Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'*" (v. 31).

3. Jesus, however, pointed out that it was not Moses who gave them "*the bread out of heaven,*" but God (v. 32).
4. Jesus explained His statement a little further:
  - a. It is God, "*My Father*" who gives "*the true bread out of heaven*" (v. 32).
  - b. It is His bread — "*the bread of God*" (v. 33).
  - c. It is not sent down, but "*comes down out of heaven*" (v. 33b).
  - d. This bread has life and it "*gives life*" (v. 33).
    - ☐ The manna of Moses gave nourishment. This bread gives life.
5. It is this bread which you and I need.
6. The people's response — "*Lord, always give us this bread*" (v. 34).

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#### **D. THE BREAD OF LIFE (VV. 35-40)**

1. Jesus declared, "*I am the bread of life*" (v. 35).
  - a. He Himself is the food, the sustenance that nourishes spiritual life.
  - b. It is only from this bread that men really obtain life.
2. He promised that "*he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst*" (v. 35).
3. The old life has no ability to satisfy.
4. The problem with the people, according to Jesus, was that even though they had "*seen*" Him, they did "*not believe*" (v. 36).
5. God's will is that "*everyone who beholds [sees] the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life*" (v. 40).
6. When Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection, all were present except Thomas (John 20:24).

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7. Later, when they told Thomas they had "*seen the Lord,*" he said, "*Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe*" (John 20:25).
8. Eight days later, Jesus appeared to them again, and Thomas was present.
9. Jesus invited Thomas to put his finger into the holes in Jesus' hands and to put his hand into Jesus' side.
10. Thomas responded with "*My Lord and my God!*" (John 20:28).
11. Jesus said to him, "*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed*" (John 20:29, ESV).
12. Here in *John 6*, after responding to the crowd's grumbling about Jesus' statement that He had "*come down out of heaven*" (v. 42), Jesus said, in *verse 47*, "*he who believes has eternal life.*"
13. He then repeats a statement he had made earlier in *v. 35*, "*I am the bread of life*" and points to the limitations of the manna in the wilderness:
  - a. It was food for the body, but no more.
  - b. Those who ate of it still died in due time.
14. Jesus contrasts the bread in the wilderness with the new bread (v. 50).
  - a. The new bread has a different origin, heaven.
  - b. Those who eat of it will not die.
  - c. Earlier, in reference to those who ate the manna, Jesus was referring to physical death (v. 49).
  - d. Here, in *verse 50*, He is speaking of spiritual death.
    - The man who partakes of Christ has within him that life which is eternal.

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**E. A HARD SAYING (VV. 52-65)**

1. "*I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of*

*the world is My flesh" (v. 51)*

2. This statement prompted an argument amongst the Jews, "*How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (v. 52).*
3. But Jesus wasn't finished. Notice the next three verses (*vv. 53-55*).
 

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink." (John 6:53-55)*
4. This upset them, because, going all the way back to Noah, following the flood, God had stipulated that no one was to eat meat with its blood in it (cf. *Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14; Deuteronomy 12:23*).
5. What did Jesus mean by this? Did He mean for His words to be taken literally?
6. No. He intends for us to feed spiritually upon Himself, in that you and I are "dependent upon and sustained by His divine life (eternal life)."
7. Only One who is truly Spirit can feed and sustain our spirit.
8. To this point, many people had flocked to Jesus.
9. The disciples of whom John writes were not the twelve, but those who had loosely attached themselves to Jesus without much thought of the implications.
10. Some had followed Jesus because of His teaching, but many because of His miracles.
11. Jesus was now testing their allegiance — He was sifting the true disciples from the false.
12. In *verse 63*, Jesus makes His point, "*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*"
  - a. Earlier, Jesus had told Nicodemus that it was the Spirit which brings about the new birth (*John 3:5f., 8*).
  - b. In *chapter 7*, John will point out that the Spirit is living water (*7:38f.*).

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## **F. WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE (VV. 66-69)**

1. In *verse 66*, we encounter one of those sad statements in Scripture which serve as a commentary on people's response to God's salvation.  
*"As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and we not walking with Him anymore" (John 6:66, NASB95).*  
*"After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him" (John 6:66, ESV).*
2. The word "*withdrew*" (NASB) and the phrase "*turned back*" (ESV) come from a Greek idiom, composed of four words, which means "to go back to what lies behind."
3. Luke records another occasion for us in which Jesus said, "*No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*" (Luke 9:62).
4. Sadly, these people did not realize who it was that they were walking away from.
5. Jesus asked the twelve, "*You do not want to go away also, do you?*" (John 6:67).

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6. In spite of his many shortcomings, this is one of the times when we must sing Peter's praises, because he hit the nail on the head.  
*"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God"* (John 6:69).

## **Conclusion**

1. You and I are given a choice.

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2. We can “withdraw,” “go away” from Jesus:
  - a. He will not force faith upon us.
  - b. He will not twist our arm, so that we obey.
3. Or, we can remain and walk with Him.
4. We do this because we realize . . .
  - a. there is no one else to whom we may go.
  - b. only Jesus is able to grant us eternal life.
  - c. only He is the Holy One of God.
5. What will you choose?