

Psalm 42 is credited to the sons of Korah, men that David put in charge of music when the Ark of the Covenant was returned to the tabernacle. As I read the words, my mind began to sing one of my all-time favorite worship songs, *As the Deer*, by Martin Nystrom. He writes “*As the deer panteth for the water so my soul longeth after Thee. You, oh Lord, are my one desire and long to worship thee.*” Nystrom gave the words *pant* and *long* a formal flare by adding *th*. I think there is something powerful, yet beautifully poetic, to words ending *th*. Singing the lyrics or even speaking these words stirs my spirit, and might I say, ignites a longing in my soul.

The composer of this Psalm is thirsty. He is thirsty for fellowship with the living God—once a regular experience, but now a distant memory. We are not told what induced his thirst or caused the broken fellowship, but it’s easy to sense the dryness of his throat in our own.

After reading verse one, my mind was plagued with a disturbing question. Perhaps it is one we all should address.

Has my longing for God ever been this intense? If so, how was my longing satisfied?

The Wrong Watering Holes

Our world offers many “thirst-quenching” alternatives, making it easy for us to slip into the wrong watering holes. Turn on the television, browse the internet, or flip through a magazine to see the world’s “watering holes”. They suggest to us that fame, financial security, a new figure, or a fabulous makeover will satisfy our longings. But there is only one source that offers complete satisfaction.

Read Jeremiah 2:12-14

How does God refer to Himself? _____

How does He respond when we go to the wrong watering hole?

The living God of the Old Testament, and all who are in heaven, are appalled when we neglect and reject our God, the satisfying source of refreshment and life. Jeremiah calls our wrong watering holes broken cisterns. In those days, a cistern was used to hold long-lasting supplies of water. Like these cisterns, the world’s watering holes are broken, full of cracks, and not able to satisfy. In fact, they leave us dehydrated and dying, yet longing for even more of the wrong things.

Read John 4:13

Jesus offers water to a woman who is spiritually thirsty. The water He offers is from the same source we read about in Jeremiah.

What is the result of drinking the water that Jesus offers?

Seasons Of Spiritual Dryness

Sometimes, the ebb and flow of life may lead us into a season of spiritual dryness. We suddenly discover, without warning, that our relationship with the Lord is not as it was before. Unless we are careful, dryness can lead to drought. That dryness is a warning for us to wake up and shake up our “normal” with the Lord.

Spiritual drought has threatened my life before. Recently, my teaching prep time was rich, but my personal morning time with the Lord was starting to shrivel. In an effort to shake up my normal, I loaded my favorite worship songs onto an mp3 player and added music to my quiet-time moments with God. This simple act profoundly changed my relationship with the Lord. My spiritual well deepened, and the living water flowed stronger than ever before. My spiritual cup was filled before my day began. I no longer needed—or wanted—to take my cup to the wrong watering holes to be filled.

Read John 7:38.

What does Jesus promise and to whom does He make the promise?

Unstopping The Dam, Resuming The Flow

Our river can get contaminated with sin and/or dammed up by personal indulgence. But the flow of water (joy, contentment, and other blessings of Christ) is not immediately cut off. Little by little our fountain clogs up until there is barely a drip. Resuming the flow maybe as simple as doing what I did—change the normal way of connecting with Christ. Or perhaps it may require some deeper personal examination. A personal examination might start with questions like:

- Am I experiencing spiritual dryness and headed for drought?
- Do I regularly stop by the wrong watering holes?
- Is there something in my life that I long for more than Christ?
- Do I have any unconfessed sin in my life?

The world’s water is tainted with pleasure, possessions, and power. Drinking it will only increase and intensify our thirst for more worldly water. Yet our spiritual thirst is only meant to be quenched with the life-giving water of the Lord.

Read Matthew 5:6.

What happens when we hunger and thirst—or “panteth”—for the right things?

Those who *panteth* and *longeth* for righteousness will be satisfied. We will be filled with the life-giving things of Christ, and they will then overflow, spilling into a lost and dying world. And the best part? We will never be thirsty again!