



Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

Years ago, when I was a teenager (ok, decades ago), I asked one of my sisters for a special Christmas gift. I was getting ready to go off to college and I wanted a picture to represent one of my favorite verses: *"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God"* (Ps.42:1). My sister is an incredible artist and since I cannot draw or write legibly, I asked if she could capture the essence of this verse in a small picture. Being that it was a Christmas gift, all she said to me was, "We'll see."

When Christmas morning came, I couldn't find any gift for me from my sister (trust me, I looked). In our family, we took turns opening presents one-at-a-time enjoying the occasion to watch everyone open their individual gift while waiting "patiently" for our turn. When my turn came, my sister abruptly got up and left. To my great surprise, she came back with an enormous but very thin present. I honestly had no idea what it was. When I opened the present, I was stunned to discover that my small request had become a very large reality. She had drawn a beautiful picture of two deer standing before a stream of water, drinking from its refreshing goodness.

That picture is a constant and beautiful reminder of a great Scriptural truth. Throughout the years, I have come to understand and appreciate that verse more and more. At first glance, it is easy to see that the Psalmist is comparing his desire for God with the desire a deer has for water. But that understanding only scratches the surface of what the Psalmist is intending to communicate. The Hebrew word for *"pant"* describes more than a simple thirst for water. Rather, it expresses an intense longing, earnest desire, and desperate need for something (see Joel 1:20).

The Psalmist is not comparing his desire for God to that of a mildly thirsty deer before a brook, but a dehydrated deer that is in desperate need of a drink of water. The picture is not serene, but severe. The deer is not just wanting water but panting for it! This is a perfect illustration of the Christian life. For as Christians, we ought to have an intense longing for God! We must recognize our desperate need for God, and our utter hopelessness apart from God. This is an oft-repeated refrain in the Psalms:

"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm 42:2)

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1).

"My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Psalm 84:2).

"I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land" (Psalm 143:6).

We need to regularly ask ourselves questions such as these: Is my Christian life captured by an all-consuming desire to know and follow after Christ? Could I accurately describe myself as a person who is passionately obsessed with Jesus? Would others testify that I am intensely and faithfully seeking after God in my life? I think all these introspective questions could be answered in response to this one question: Does my life reveal that my soul longs for God as a deer – dying of thirst – pants for streams of water, or have I become too content with the wastelands of this world? May we daily be reminded of our desperate need for God, and His all-satisfying goodness and grace.

Together in and for Christ,
Pastor David
(10/27/25)

Scripture Readings for the Week (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #43):

Deuteronomy 4-6; 2 Chronicles 25-28; Psalm 122-124; Ecclesiastes 1-2; Habakkuk; Acts 9-10; James 1-3

Recommended Reading:

"A Call to Prayer" by J.C. Ryle