

JACI WIGHTMAN

A glowing yellow and orange flame with a human silhouette inside, surrounded by sparks.

IGNITED

**HOW CHRIST CAN LIGHT
OUR INNER FLAME**

(AND KEEP IT LIT!)

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CONTENTS

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[1 When Our Flame Blows Out](#)

[It's Not Just a Story—It's a Journey](#)

[2 A New Twist on an Old Tale](#)

[3 The Seduction of Our Desires](#)

[4 Our Fallen Heart](#)

[5 Those Unbreakable Chains](#)

[Continuing in Eve's Footsteps](#)

[6 Fig Leaf Fashion](#)

[7 Hide and Seek](#)

[8 Our Pointing Finger](#)

[The Secret of Our Heartlight](#)

[9 If You Only Knew](#)

[10 Christ in Us](#)

[11 Prone to Wander](#)

[12 The Invitation](#)

[13 Awake to Grace](#)

[A Soul Ignited](#)

[14 Lighting Our Inner Flame](#)

[15 Infused with Joy](#)

[16 Abiding in His Love](#)

[Epilogue: Come Home](#)

[About the Author](#)

1

WHEN OUR FLAME BLOWS OUT

I'M GUESSING YOU'VE FELT IT BEFORE. MAYBE YOU'RE EXPERIENCING IT RIGHT now. It's that feeling of emptiness inside—like your inner pilot light has gone out and you just can't get it relit. You may describe it as a sense of hopelessness or restlessness. You may feel apathetic, listless, or even numb. Or you may feel like you're just going through the motions—like your heart has checked out and you can't get it back in the game. However you describe it, this feeling is a gnawing *soul hunger*. Deep down you know there's a void, but you're not sure where it came from or how to make it go away.

Like it or not, this void seems to plague all of us at some point, and it leaves us scrambling to find a way to fill the emptiness and reignite that lifeless inner spark. But try as we might, we find our soul hunger to be both stubborn and unpredictable. At times, it refuses to budge even if we take that much-needed vacation or get that raise we've been asking for. It continues to plague us no matter how much we eat, watch, play, scroll, or self-medicate. Helpless to pull ourselves out of the abyss, we may conclude that our inner pilot light has a life of its own and that we don't have any control over the height of the flame.

Would you be surprised to learn that Isaiah captures this soul hunger in the pages of the Old Testament? Funny how an ancient text can describe exactly what we go through in today's modern world. He wrote, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for

that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” (Isaiah 55:1–2)

First, the prophet calls out to the thirsty, and we know he’s not talking about a big drink of water. He’s addressing those of us whose *hearts* are in need—whose souls are parched, drained, and in desperate need of refilling. Whether that void is a lack of love, joy, peace, or even just patience to get through the day, Isaiah invites us to find the “waters” that can truly satisfy our relentless inner thirst.

Next, Isaiah speaks to those who have “no money,” and again, we know he’s not talking about dwindling Israelite bank accounts. He’s beckoning to those of us whose *hearts* are destitute or bankrupt. We’re talking about much more than just having a bad day (or even a string of bad days). These are the seasons when we’re living in mental, emotional, or spiritual poverty. When we feel absolutely no hope and no desire to continue on. Thankfully, Isaiah offers the answer to everything our impoverished soul is so desperately searching for.

The prophet then takes a dramatic turn. After addressing the thirsty and the bankrupt, he calls out to those of us who *do* have money to spend—only we’re spending it on things that don’t really satisfy. I’m sure we’ve all been there a time or two. Maybe we tried to fill our soul hunger with a nicer car, a new pair of shoes, or some epic concert tickets. Maybe we tried remodeling the house, grabbing that new bestseller, or downing yet another bag of M&M’s. We convinced ourselves we’d finally be happy if we could just have _____ (fill in the blank). But regardless of how much money we spent, our inner void still continued to haunt us. Again, Isaiah holds the key to our heart’s insatiable need.

And what about the prophet’s last category—those who “labour for that which satisfieth not”? What kind of work could he be talking about? Perhaps he’s speaking to those of us who try to fill our emptiness by throwing ourselves into as many activities and responsibilities as we possibly can. We load our to-do list with an endless array of busyness and service in an attempt to create a meaningful and fulfilling life. But for some reason, we continue to struggle with anxiety and burnout. We try to shake ourselves out of it, but nothing

really does the trick. We're left to wonder if the path we've chosen really leads to fulfillment or just a lot of extra stress and exhaustion.

No matter which of Isaiah's scenarios fit our lives, I believe we're all looking for the same end result: a way to ignite that inner spark. To escape the feelings of emptiness or numbness or restlessness and feel *alive* again. But often that just feels impossible. Despite all our efforts, the void won't seem to budge, so we end up settling for survival mode where we try to scrape together what little happiness we can find through our favorite hobbies, escapes, and coping mechanisms.

But what if there's more waiting for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

What if there's an answer we haven't even begun to comprehend? One that will change our lives—and hearts—forever?

To find it, we have to return to the end of Isaiah's passage. You see, his goal in these verses wasn't just to describe the spiritually thirsty and emotionally bankrupt, or to call out the weary spenders and worn-out laborers. I believe that was just a setup to reveal the greatest secret of all: that there *is* a way to satisfy our soul hunger. It comes through what Isaiah calls a glorious feast of "fatness"—an abundant offering of food and drink for our soul. Others have joined him in this call to the banquet table, including Book of Mormon prophets like Jacob (see Jacob 3:2) and Alma (see Alma 5:34). Through their inspired words, we're summoned to a plentiful buffet that will obliterate our inner hunger. In short, it will satisfy every lingering craving of our soul and every unfulfilled longing of our heart.

Perhaps most striking of all is a verse where Christ Himself speaks of the results of this glorious feast. After providing the sacrament as a representation of His atoning sacrifice, Jesus makes this staggering promise that's simple yet mind-blowing at the same time: "He that eateth this bread eateth of my body *to his soul*; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood *to his soul*; and *his soul* shall never hunger nor thirst, *but shall be filled*" (3 Nephi 20:8; emphasis added).

Notice what the Lord doesn't say in this verse. He doesn't say that every time our soul is empty, He'll be there to fill us up again. No, He reveals a much

greater promise than that. With astounding clarity, the Savior instead declares that once we truly learn to feast on Him—meaning we learn to fill ourselves with His incredible light and power and love—*our soul will never feel hungry, thirsty, or empty ever again!* It's a miracle that goes far beyond what most of us are currently experiencing. Can you imagine what it would feel like to have your heart filled so full that you never live in a state of deprivation? To have your flame so lit up that you never spend another moment feeling numb or lifeless inside? It truly is a mind-blowing possibility.

One way to capture this idea is by asking yourself what your soul is hungering for right this very minute. Are you battling nagging feelings of insecurity or a lingering sense of loneliness? Are you plagued by worry or fear or worn down by the stress of your daily routine? Are you thirsting for a greater personal awareness of the Lord's love or peace in a difficult family relationship? If so, Christ is telling you that He can *fully satisfy all those longings*. Not only that, but He can do so in such a way that your needs *stay met*, no matter what's going on in your daily life. Through Him, your restlessness can be calmed, your impatience quieted, your fatigue lifted, and your irritation soothed. Through Him, your sadness can be comforted, your anxiety relieved, your anger dissipated, and your emptiness filled. It's one of the most amazing gifts available through the power of His Atonement.

However, obtaining such a gift is no small task. The only way we can receive it is to seek it “with all [our] heart and with all [our] soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29). In other words, it's going to require a journey. You could call it an adventure, a quest, or even a pilgrimage. It's a trek that will lead us to an astonishing summit—to a place where our inner blaze will shine *continually* rather than just sparking or sputtering every once in a while.

Of course, like any adventure worth its salt, we're going to face some challenging trails before we can reach those blessed heights. The first section of our journey will help us understand the dynamics of our heart and why we experience that emptiness and hunger in the first place. And the middle section will help us identify the things that have kept us from experiencing the kind of

lasting inner fire we've been longing for. But if you'll continue to travel with me, the road will eventually lead us to the secret of our *heartlight*.

I want you to get used to that word because you're going to hear it a lot, especially in the latter part of our quest. Put simply, heartlight is the term I'm going to use to describe the flame Jesus Christ can light deep inside our heart. The best part is, it's a light that actually *stays* lit—*every single day for the rest of our lives*. I promise, once you experience this incredible heartlight for yourself, every sacrifice you've made along the way will fade into nothingness as your soul explodes in a brilliant burst of light, passion, energy, and love. It truly is everything our weary, burned-out hearts could ever hope for.

So tell me—are you willing to endure the rigors of this journey to learn the secret of your heartlight? Would you like to leave your emptiness behind and experience an inner flame that glows with more brightness than you ever thought possible? Do you want to fill your hungry soul by feasting on all the “fatness” Lord has prepared for you?

If so, it's time to lace up your figurative hiking boots. We're about to embark on the expedition of a lifetime.

READINGS & REFLECTIONS

Have you ever thought much about the idea of your soul hungering and thirsting just like your body does? What do you think that looks like for you personally? How does this hunger manifest itself in your everyday life?

To read more about the feast the Lord can provide for our soul hunger, look up several of the verses referenced in this chapter. For instance, take some time to study 2 Nephi 9:50–51; Jacob 3:2; and Alma 5:34. Now add Proverbs 13:25; Enos 1:4; Alma 42:27; and 3 Nephi 12:6. What thoughts and impressions are you left with?

Let's return to Isaiah's passage and make it more personal. As you read it again, notice the four areas pointed out in this chapter:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” (Isaiah 55:1–2).

Now prayerfully evaluate the ways you've felt or experienced each of the areas the prophet mentioned. For instance:

- When has your inner man felt thirsty?
- When has your inner man felt bankrupt or destitute?
- When have you spent money on that which couldn't satisfy?
- When have you poured your labor into something that didn't bring lasting rewards?

Finally, how do you feel about the idea of “[letting] your soul delight itself in fatness”? It's a feast of rich spiritual food for the soul. If you're not sure if you've ever experienced such a thing, what do you imagine that would feel like? How would you want it to feel?

RESPONSE

In what ways are you feeling prompted to respond to the concepts found in this chapter? It could be as simple as a journal entry or as significant as a deep personal conversation with a loved one. Simply ask yourself: what would help me continue to process these ideas and truly make them my own?

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