



Bible Study

Desire!

Matthew Kneisler

13 September 2004

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1 Introduction

All of us have desires. Jesus and God have desires. We have wishes, dreams, heartfelt thoughts that float through our minds. How many times do you hear people say, “I wished I would have done ...” Often we live our lives without seeing these dreams come alive. Maybe through life we talk about our dreams, our desires, or maybe they spark our mind causing us to pause, think and smile. But we can not seem to touch the real thing.

When God inspired dreams and desires are delayed or never materialize, it affects us.

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

There are many reasons for this bible study. Each person will take with them something new. But hopefully, the concept of desire, namely “Godly desire” will encourage you and lead you into new and wonderful dreams fulfilled. And desires that you may currently have will be challenged. Are they God inspired? Do your desires align with God’s desire? Which desires are most important?

As an aid to our discussions, we will use the book, “The Journey of Desire, Searching for the Life We’ve Only Dreamed Of” by John Eldredge.

“What do you want?” It's the question Jesus most often asked of those he met. He knows that desire is the most powerful force in human life. No mountain has been climbed, no dream fulfilled, no love sustained without desire. ... Thankfully, our desire will never quite go away; it calls to us, urging us to take our heart's most important journey. This message will restore hope, freedom and life to parched souls. [Website excerpt]

John Eldredge’s book will provide us with a ‘poetic’ insight into desire. Some of his topics will be directly applicable to our discussion. Please note that the arrangement of his chapters and the order of this study do not tightly align. However, several of the concepts that he presents will become the basis for some of our discussions through the coming weeks.

It is my genuine hope that you find your God inspired desire and soon rejoice when you see how God provides for you in ways you least expect!

1.1 What Are Your Desires?

Before starting your own “journey of desire”, I ask that you take some time to review your life and find you current desires.

Do this in a quiet place: open with a prayer that God will lead you and think about all of the dreams and wishes and desires you currently have. Write them down, keep them some place safe. Keep your list private as these are your intimate thoughts.

Over the next couple of weeks, review your list, pray and think about your desires. If you are actively participating in this bible study, you might find that new desires enter your mind. Add them to the list. And over the next couple of weeks, you might find that some desires now are not

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as important as other desires. Prioritize your list and see what is most important to you. Maybe some of your desires fall off the list.

Listen to others who share with you their desires and see how they think. But most importantly, listen to God. Use your quiet time to listen to His direction. Read your bible and fellowship with other Christians. You might find that your list of desires is beginning to change, your list is maturing, and your desires are maturing. Work with your list so that at the end of the study, you will see how God is working in your life and how your desires are aligning with His desires.

1.2 What Is Desire?

1.2.1 Dictionary

Let us take a look at the dictionary and see what it says about desire.

tr.v. **de·sired, de·sir·ing, de·sires**

1. To wish or long for; want.
2. To express a wish for; request.

n.

1. A wish or longing.
2. A request or petition.
3. The object of longing: *My greatest desire is to go back home.*
4. Sexual appetite; passion.

1.2.2 Thesaurus

The thesaurus will give us words that are similar or are synonyms.

1.2.2.1 Verb

Want - aim, aspire to, be smitten, choose, cotton to, covet, crave, crazy for, desiderate, die over, enjoy, fall for, fancy, go for, hanker after, hunger for, itch for, like, long for, lust after, mad for, pant, partial to, pine, spoil for, sweet on, sweet tooth, take to, thirst, wild for, wish for, yearn for, yen for

Request - ask, beg, bespeak, entreat, importune, petition, seek, solicit

1.2.2.2 Noun

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Want - admiration, ambition, appetite, ardor, aspiration, attraction, avidity, concupiscence, covetousness, craving, craze, cupidity, devotion, doting, eagerness, fancy, fascination, fervor, fondness, frenzy, greed, hankering, hunger, inclination, infatuation, itch, lasciviousness, lechery, libido, liking, longing, love, lust, mania, motive, need, passion, predilection, proclivity, propensity, rapaciousness, rapture, ravenousness, relish, salacity, solicitude, thirst, urge, voracity, will, wish, yearning

Request - appeal, entreaty, hope, importunity, petition, sollicitation, supplication, want, wish

Roget's New Millennium™ Thesaurus, First Edition (v 1.0.5)
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1.2.3 Typical Description

When discussing desire with someone, mixtures of thoughts come to mind. Some of the thoughts are worldly and others are spiritual. How would you describe desire? Here is one such description from the web:

A wish or longing; also, that which you long for. Also: **covet, crave**. Desires can be very noble and positive; for instance, the desire to follow Christ, the desire to be the best at your craft, your sexual desire for your spouse, the desire to learn Scripture, the desire to reach a goal. Life without this sort of desire isn't much of a life. However, desire poses several spiritual problems.

One problem is in the nature of desire itself. Desire is overpowering. It takes over, overrides common sense, and causes rash decisions that can cause great harm to yourself and others. When desire does this, it's no longer a good force in your life. It becomes a new god that can't be satisfied. Once you've had the pleasure of fulfilling this sort of desire, it soon returns, demanding more. As long as you keep desiring, you suffer until you fulfill it, then enjoy until it rages again, and then you suffer again. That's why desire is sometimes described as 'passion', a word which originally meant '**suffering**'. (The original meaning of 'passion' is still used of the last week of Christ's life; it's also the root of the word 'patience'.) The same kind of cycle is found on the mental side of addiction.

Another problem is in desiring the wrong things : desiring what isn't yours, desiring what ought to be shunned. In the Ten Commandments, God told us not to covet (desire) [our neighbor's goods](#), or (in this age of adultery, especially) [our neighbor's beloved](#). Jesus spoke of the desire for [wealth](#), and the fact that [you can't take it with you](#). The desire for fame, for impulsive sex, or for power over other people, very easily twists one's life. The desire to avoid suffering is a good, protective desire on its best side. But on its worst side it can make us desperate to avoid hard truths that, if we faced them, would cause us to suffer for a while, but not nearly as much as the continued pain from avoiding the truth.

Desire can be idolatry, and can be a trap. Either way, problem-desires get in the way of spiritual living. And, in the end, the only way to end all desires and be truly satisfied is to be with God. You won't and can't get that in this life. But the Kingdom will come, and as much as you are living now as an expression of this Kingdom, you will be satisfied.

1.2.4 Biblical Usage

How is the word used in the bible? How was it intended to be used?

Desirable	3
Desire	111

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Desired	50
Desiredst	2
Desires	3
Desirest	2
Desireth	17
Desiring	12
Desirous	6
TOTAL	206

1.2.4.1 Hebrew Usage

The following is a selected list of usage from the Old Testament.

Strong's Number	Original	Pronunciation	Outline of biblical usage	Translation Count
Hebrew 183	אָוָה	'avah {aw-vaw'}	1) desire, incline, covet, wait longingly, wish, sigh, want, be greedy, prefer a) (Piel) to desire, crave (food and drink) b) (Hithpael) to desire, long for, lust after (of bodily appetites)	AV - desire 17, lust 4, longed 3, covet 2; 26
Hebrew 2530	חָמַד	chamad {khaw-mad'}	1) to desire, covet, take pleasure in, delight in a) (Qal) to desire b) (Niphal) to be desirable c) (Piel) to delight greatly, desire greatly	AV - desire 11, covet 4, delight 2, pleasant 1, beauty 1, lust 1, delectable things 1; 21
Hebrew 2654	חָפַץ	chaphets {khaw-fates'}	1) to delight in, take pleasure in, desire, be pleased with a) (Qal) 1) of men a) to take pleasure in, delight in b) to delight, desire, be pleased to do 2) of God a) to delight in, have pleasure in b) to be pleased to do 2) to move, bend down a) (Qal) to bend down	AV - delight 39, please 14, desire 9, will 3, pleasure 3, favour 2, like 2, moveth 1, would 1, at all 1; 75
Hebrew 2836	חָשַׁק	chashaq {khaw-shak'}	1) (Qal) to love, be attached to, long for 2) (Piel) fillet 3) (Pual) fillet	AV - desire 3, set his love 2, filleted 3, log 1, delight 1, in love 1; 11
Hebrew 4862	מִשְׁאֲלָה	mish'alah {mish-aw-law'}	1) request, petition, desire	AV - petition 1, desire 1; 2
Hebrew 7592	שָׁאַל	sha'al {shaw-al'} or sha'el {shaw-ale'}	1) to ask, enquire, borrow, beg a) (Qal) 1) to ask, ask for 2) to ask (as a favour), borrow 3) to enquire, enquire of 4) to enquire of, consult (of deity, oracle) 5) to seek b) (Niphal) to ask for oneself, ask leave of absence c) (Piel) 1) to enquire, enquire carefully	AV - ask 94, enquire 22, desire 9, require 7, borrow 6, salute 4, demand 4, lent 4, request 3, earnestly 2, beg 2, misc 16; 173

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Strong's Number	Original	Pronunciation	Outline of biblical usage	Translation Count
			2) to beg, practise beggary d) (Hiphil) 1) to be given on request 2) to grant, make over to, let (one) ask (successfully) or give or lend on request (then) grant or make over to	
Hebrew 8378	תָּאַוָּה	ta'avah {tah-av-aw'}	1) desire a) desire, wish, longings of one's heart 1) lust, appetite, covetousness (bad sense) b) thing desired, object of desire	AV - desire 13, lust 1, greedily 1, pleasant 1, misc. 4; 20
Hebrew 8669	תְּשׁוּקָה	t@shuwqah {tesh-oo-kaw'}	1) desire, longing, craving a) of man for woman b) of woman for man c) of beast to devour	AV - desire 3; 3

1.2.4.2 Greek Usage

The following is a selected list of usage from the New Testament.

Strong's Number	Original	Pronunciation	Outline of biblical usage	Translation Count
Greek 154	αἰτέω	aiteo {ahee-teh'-o}	1) to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require For Synonyms see entry 5802	AV - ask 48, desire 17, beg 2, require 2, crave 1, call for 1; 71
Greek 1939	ἐπιθυμία	epithumia {ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah}	1) desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust For Synonyms see entry 5845	AV - lust 31, concupiscence 3, desire 3, lust after 1; 38
Greek 2309	θέλω	thelo {thel'-o}	1) to will, have in mind, intend a) to be resolved or determined, to purpose b) to desire, to wish c) to love 1) to like to do a thing, be fond of doing d) to take delight in, have pleasure	AV - will/would 159, will/would have 16, desire 13, desirous 3, list 3, to will 2, misc 4; 210

1.3 Spirit, Body and Soul's Desires

Our desires come from our flesh (body) and our spirit. Our minds (soul) must make decisions about how we will respond to our desires. As Christians, we must learn to listen to God's Spirit and put aside the sinful nature. It is important to understand how God made us, to better understand the desires we have within us.

¹ [Thessalonians5:23](#) May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole **spirit, soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground [body], and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [spirit]; and man became a living soul. [KJV]

We know that even as Christians we struggle in this life with desires that are not holy. Paul reminds us repeatedly about the sinful nature or “the flesh” in his letters.

Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[3] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Romans 8:5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man^[5] is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

Romans 13:14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.^[3]

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature^[1] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

2 Peter 2:10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature^[4] and despise authority.

1.4 Desires Designed by God

1.4.1 Refiner’s Fire

How are our desires modified, redirected and refined by God?

Deuteronomy 8:5-6 "You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you. 6 "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

1.4.2 The Good Shepherd

Jesus has said that He is our good shepherd. He will not leave us or forsake us. He desires to help us. He wants us to enjoy this life and enjoy it more abundantly. His promise is to guide us in this life and help us. As good Shepherd, Jesus will help develop our desires and make them real. How will He do this?

Proverbs 16:9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

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John 10:14ⁿ I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--

Each day we start a journey. We make decisions that take us down a path in this life. God promises us that each step we take is guided by Him. If we trust that He is working in our life, then God directs our steps and helps to make our desires His.

1.4.3 Spiritual Passion

Often when thinking of desire, we do not consider that we need to “do something” to make the desire real. What needs to be accomplished for a desire to materialize? How badly do we desire something? Is it a passing fancy or a deep desire designed by God that we will acquire with His help?

King Jehoshaphat king of Israel went down to see Elisha and wept over him. However, when it came time to put forth an effort to help save his country, his energy, his power, and his passion was lacking.

² Kings 18:18 Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. ¹⁹ The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times." ²⁰ Elisha died and was buried.

1.5 Discussion

1.5.1 Blackbird

Writer: Lennon, McCartney; double-tracked lead vocal: McCartney

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise.

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to be free.

Blackbird fly Blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night.

Blackbird fly Blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night.

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

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You were only waiting for this moment to arise
You were only waiting for this moment to arise.

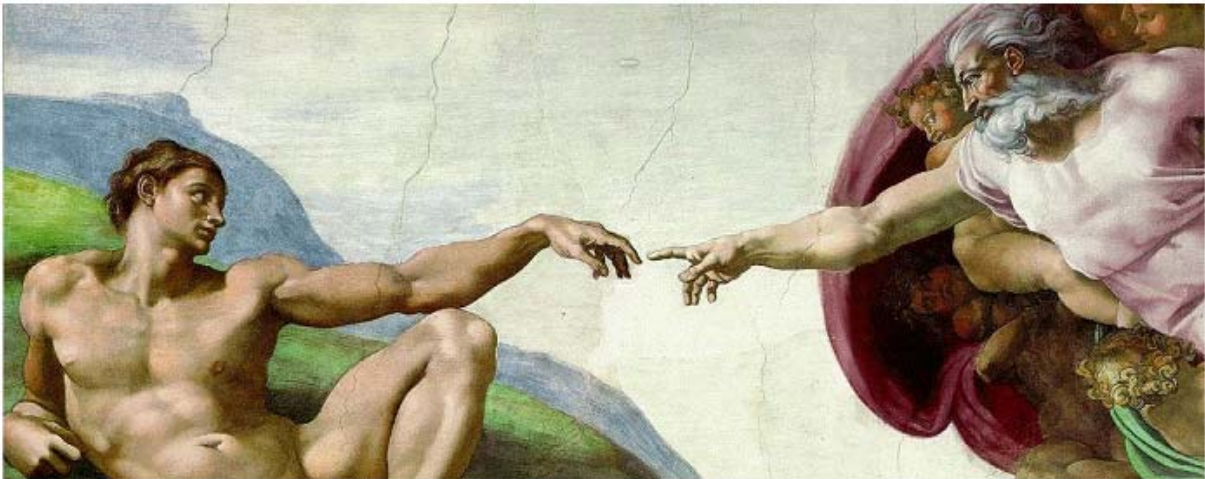
As Christians with God's desire within our hearts know that there is more to this life. We know we are capable of so much more. But often we sit with broken wings and do not try to fly even though this is the reason we were made: to fly! We can be capable of so much more, with the help of God.

Sometimes we do not know that we have broken wings. We just "accept our fate" and do not go boldly before the throne of grace to ask for help. Paul tells us that we must boldly ask God to help us and "fix our wings and help us to fly". This is what we were designed for.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

We must find our dreams and heart's desires and ask God to help make them real. We must ask Him to help us to fly!

1.5.2 Michael Angelo's, The Creation of Adam



In 1510, Michael Angelo painted the awe inspiring Creation of Adam on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Look at Michael Angelo's painting The Creation of Adam and consider the desire of Adam wanting to touch God and consider the desire of God wanting to touch Adam.

God's desire is intense. It is similar to what Christ experienced here on earth but we get a glimpse of his passion through the verse in Hebrews:

Hebrews 5:7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions **with loud cries and tears** to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

1.5.3 Questions

1. Have you ever thought that your desires could be God's desires?

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2. When you hear the word 'desire' what new words come to mind?
3. Can you sense the difference between bodily and spiritual desires? Describe how you sense this and when it occurs.
4. What do you think about God refining your desires? Do you have any life examples?
5. Has, Christ as our Good Shepherd, ever lead you in godly desires? How do you know?
6. When you think of 'passion' and 'desire' what comes to mind? Consider 'good' and 'bad' desires in your discussion.
7. Have you ever thought of 'passion' as a component of godly desire?

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2 Spirit, Body and Soul's Desires

"The answer you desire is within you." [Fortune cookie circa 2004]

James 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from **your desires that battle within you?**

Ezekiel 24:25 "And you, son of man, on the day **I take away** their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes, **their heart's desire**, and their sons and daughters as well- ²⁶ on that day a fugitive will come to tell you the news. ²⁷ At that time your mouth will be opened; you will speak with him and will no longer be silent. So you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD ."

Mark 4:18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and **the desires for other things** come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Judges 17:6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

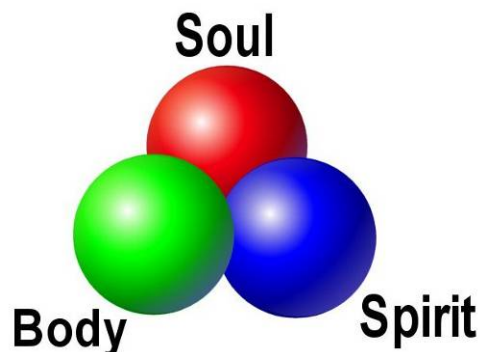
Proverbs 16:²⁵ There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

For us to understand desire, we need to understand how God made us. We will now look at the various parts of His incredible design which are the components of our being.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground [body], and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [spirit]; and man became a living soul. [KJV]

Paul relates this design to Christians and encourages us to keep our entire being blameless.

¹ Thessalonians 5:23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole **spirit, soul and body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.



The original Greek words for Thessalonians are:

1. Spirit – Strong's 4151 - pneuma
2. Soul – Strong's 5590 - psuche
3. Body – Strong's 4983 – soma

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Strong's Number	Original	Pronunciation	Outline of biblical usage	Translation Count
Greek 4151	πνεῦμα	pneuma {pnyoo'-mah}	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the third person of the triune God, the Holy Spirit, coequal, coeternal with the Father and the Son <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) sometimes referred to in a way which emphasises his personality and character (the "Holy" Spirit) b) sometimes referred to in a way which emphasises his work and power (the Spirit of "Truth") c) never referred to as a depersonalised force 2) the spirit, i.e. the vital principal by which the body is animated <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides b) the soul 3) a spirit, i.e. a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) a life giving spirit b) a human soul that has left the body c) a spirit higher than man but lower than God, i.e. an angel <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) used of demons, or evil spirits, who were conceived as inhabiting the bodies of men 2) the spiritual nature of Christ, higher than the highest angels and equal to God, the divine nature of Christ 4) the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc. 5) a movement of air (a gentle blast) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) of the wind, hence the wind itself b) breath of nostrils or mouth 	<p>AV - Spirit 111, Holy Ghost 89, Spirit (of God) 13, Spirit (of the Lord) 5, (My) Spirit 3, Spirit (of truth) 3, Spirit (of Christ) 2, human (spirit) 49, (evil) spirit 47, spirit (general) 26, spirit 8, (Jesus' own) spirit 6, (Jesus' own) ghost 2, misc 21; 385</p>
Greek 5590	ψυχη	psuche {psoo-khay}	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) breath <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the breath of life <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) of animals b) of men b) life c) that in which there is life <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a living being, a living soul 2) the soul <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul etc.) b) the (human) soul in so far as it is constituted that by the right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life c) the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death (distinguished from other parts of the body) 	<p>AV - soul 58, life 40, mind 3, heart 1, heartily + 1537 1, not tr 2; 105</p>
Greek 4983	σωμα	soma {so'-mah}	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the body both of men or animals <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) a dead body or corpse b) the living body <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) of animals 2) the bodies of planets and of stars (heavenly bodies) 3) is used of a (large or small) number of men 	<p>AV - body 144, bodily 1, slave 1; 146</p>

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Strong's Number	Original	Pronunciation	Outline of biblical usage	Translation Count
			<p>closely united into one society, or family as it were; a social, ethical, mystical body</p> <p>a) so in the NT of the church</p> <p>4) that which casts a shadow as distinguished from the shadow itself</p>	
Greek 2588	καρδια	kardia {kar-dee'-ah}	<p>1) the heart</p> <p>a) that organ in the animal body which is the centre of the circulation of the blood, and hence was regarded as the seat of physical life</p> <p>b) denotes the centre of all physical and spiritual life</p> <p>1) the vigour and sense of physical life</p> <p>2) the centre and seat of spiritual life</p> <p>a) the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavours</p> <p>b) of the understanding, the faculty and seat of the intelligence</p> <p>c) of the will and character</p> <p>d) of the soul so far as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions</p> <p>c) of the middle or central or inmost part of anything, even though inanimate</p>	AV - heart 159, broken hearted + 4937 1; 160

As indicated above, another word for the word **soul** is the word **mind**. If our mind is the “decision point” when it comes to making decisions and executing desire then we can begin to understand why we struggle so much in this life. Paul wrestled and struggled with his desires in this life and he captures the essence of a Christian’s struggle in Romans.

Romans 7:22 For in my inner being [spirit] I delight in God's law; ²³but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind [soul] and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Other illustrations throughout the bible show us the struggle humans face in light of the world we live in.

Galatians 5:16-17 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature [body]. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

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2.1 The Body

² Samuel 11:1 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. ² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and **he slept with her**. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then ⁴ she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

Galatians 5:19 The acts of the **sinful nature** are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Proverbs 19:3 ³ People ruin their lives by their own stupidity, so why does GOD always get blamed? [The Message]

2.2 The Spirit

Luke 22:14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve ¹⁴ apostles with Him. ¹⁵ Then He said to them, "With **fervent desire I have desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Timothy 1:5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a **pure heart** and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 Corinthians 2:11 The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the **man's spirit** within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with **our spirit** that we are God's children.

Galatians 5:22 But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

2.3 The Soul

Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the **thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time**. ⁶ The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD .

Colossians 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

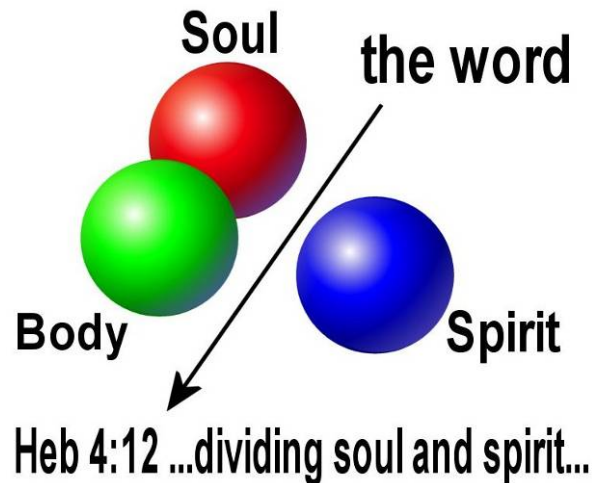
Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. ¹⁸ **For I have the desire to do what is good**, but I cannot carry it out.

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2.4 The Power of God's Word

God's word is the key to breaking the sinful bond of body and soul in our lives by witnessing directly to our spirit. God's word separates the evil from the good and helps to remove the negative influences that our body and soul create within us.



Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
Ecclesiastes 12:7 and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Here is an excerpt from an article by Nancy Missler (www.JohnAnkerberg.org) which highlights the power of God's word and its effect upon our body and soul.

"The Word of God will reveal even our hidden purposes and motives. God wants our will to be His will; our thoughts and motives, His thoughts and motives; and our love, His Love. God's Word will even penetrate to the atoms, if need be, in order to accomplish this. God's whole purpose is to **refine us so that our spirit will not be influenced** and affected by anything in our outward man or in our circumstances. He doesn't want anything to be able to "move us" from the peace and joy of His presence—from oneness of spirit. He sanctifies our spirit and soul so that He might reproduce Himself in us and we might begin to experience His presence and His fullness, no matter where we are and no matter what is going on in our lives."

2.5 The Power of Fasting

By removing our bodily influence through fasting, our spirit and soul can be fed directly by God's Holy Spirit. Our soul is humbled when the desires of our body are removed. If done properly, fasting can provide an awesome opportunity to communicate directly with God without the strong pulls of our sinful nature. Fasting helps to quiet the fleshly desires and helps to put our fleshly demands out of our thoughts. Even though fasting brings "a little pain", it provides us self

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discipline and a brief opportunity to bring reconciliation, restoration and be truly at one with God or atoned with Him in this life.

^{Mark 2:18} Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. ²⁰ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day **they will fast.**

2.5.1 A Good Fast

A good fast is one in which a person goes without food and water for a period of time with the express intent to be humbled before God. Dieting, although a form of fasting from food, has no spiritual intent. The spiritual intent of the fast is very important and Christian love should be evident.

^{Isaiah 58:3} 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. ⁴ Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. ⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD ?

⁶ "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? ⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness ^[1] will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

Have you ever had the flu with that “achy” feeling? Fasting has a tendency to produce similar sensations. As a result of the flu, you do not feel like doing “fun things”. As a result of the fast, you do not “feel like sinning”. A man once said, “When I fast, I do not sin.” Although not an accurate statement, the pulls and desires of the body are seriously diminished while fasting.

2.5.2 Day of Atonement

Fasting is also called, “afflicting your soul”, “denying yourself”, or “humbling yourself”. Leviticus 23 discusses one of God’s holy days called the “Day of Atonement” or Yom Kippur.

Fasting for The Day of Atonement is a high holy day or Sabbath and is characterized by a 24 hour period from sunset to sunset without both food and water.

^{Leviticus 23:26} The LORD said to Moses, ²⁷ "The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and **deny yourselves**, ^[4] and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. ²⁸ Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹ Anyone who does not **deny himself** on that day must be cut off from his people. ³⁰ I will destroy from among his people anyone who does any work on that day. ³¹ You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. ³² It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must **deny yourselves**. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath."

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2.5.2.1 Jewish Description

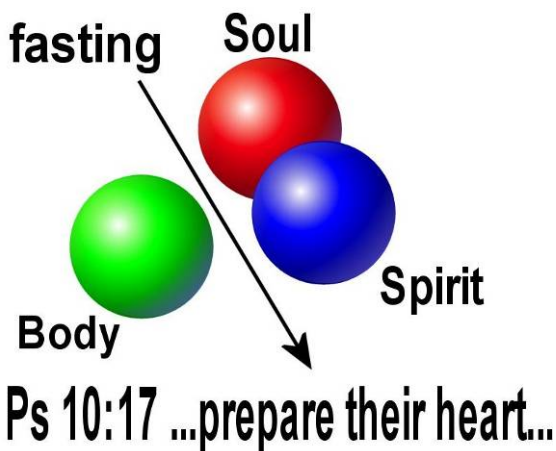
The following is a description of the day from <http://www.holidays.net/highholydays/yom.htm>.
NOTE: Items 2 through 5 are not biblical as they are derived from Jewish tradition. Item 3 can be inferred to be valid because God uses the phrase “afflict the soul” in Leviticus.

Yom Kippur is a day of "NOT" doing. There is no blowing of the Shofar and Jews may not eat or drink, as fasting is the rule. It is believed that to fast on Yom Kippur is to emulate the angels in heaven, who do not eat, drink, or wash.

The Five Prohibitions of Yom Kippur

1. Eating and drinking
2. Anointing with perfumes or lotions
3. Marital relations
4. Washing
5. Wearing leather shoes

2.5.3 Prepare the Heart



Psalms 10:17 LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear,

Judges 20:23 The Israelites went up and **wept** before the LORD until evening, and they inquired of the LORD . They said, "Shall we go up again to battle against the Benjamites, our brothers?" The LORD answered, "Go up against them." ²⁴ Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day. ²⁵ This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords. ²⁶ Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel, and there they sat **weeping** before the LORD . **They fasted that day until evening** and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings ³ to the LORD . ²⁷ And the Israelites inquired of the LORD . (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there, ²⁸ with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, "Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?" The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

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Psalm 35:13 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

¹ Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Prov 3:34 He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.

2.5.4 God Listens to the Humble

Humility cures worldliness and allows God to listen.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. [NKJV]

Psalms 40:1 I waited patiently for the LORD ; he turned to me and heard my cry.

When we approach God with humility, we open the door for God to hear our prayers, our petitions, **our desires** and He responds!

2.5.5 Three 40 Day Fasts

Moses receives God's Holy law

Exodus 34:27 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." ²⁸ Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant-the Ten Commandments.

Elijah experiences the presence of God

¹ Kings 19:7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

Jesus defeats Satan

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Interestingly, these same three people who experience the 40 day fast also were part of the transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

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2.6 Discussion

2.6.1 Questions

1. After studying this section, can you see more clearly within you the desires of your flesh, the desires of your spirit and the way your mind processes these desires?
2. What life examples regarding body, soul and spirit's desires could you share with a group to help edify or build them up?
3. How was Jesus able to control the desires of his flesh?
4. Can we control our fleshly desires and be exactly like Christ?
5. After reading and studying God's word, have you ever redirected your life and modified your desires? What can you share with others about this experience?
6. Does fasting from an activity, such as, not watching TV for a month have the same spiritual impact as fasting from food and water or afflicting the body? Why or why not?
7. As show above, fasting is a very powerful tool to better understand God's will in our life. What life examples can you share with others regarding your experience with fasting?

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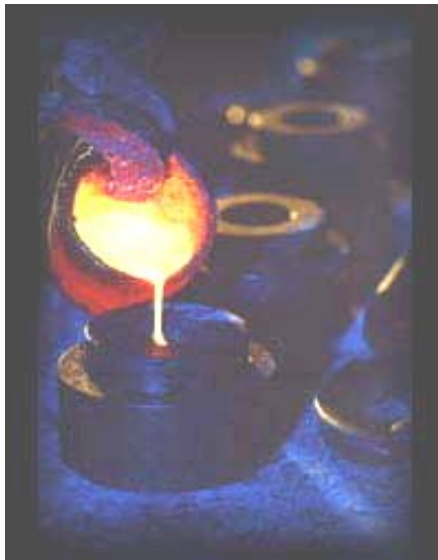
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3 Godly Desires: Refiner's Fire

Marketers know that people are motivated by two basic desires: pleasure and pain. We desire to gain pleasure and we desire to avoid pain. If we are experiencing physical or emotional pain, we want a quick solution. God uses pain to motivate us, to develop a passion, to keep us on the godly path and to draw us near to Him.

It has been said, "God can not supply our needs if we do not experience need." To experience need, God sometimes withholds things from us for a period of time. When we experience pain or the hunger of need, we begin to look for answers. We look for solutions to our troubles. Most importantly, as Christians we ultimately seek God and His direction! God wants us to seek Him. He wants us to be near Him and love Him.

As Christians, we realize that God is working with us. He is refining us and making us a better person. He is preparing our hearts for a joyous eternity with Him!



Psalms 66:10 For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. 11 You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. 12 You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.

Isaiah 48:10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

3.1 God's Chastening

When our desires or our path in life diverges from God's desires or His plan, He will correct us and bring us back to Him. Although chastening is never pleasant initially, it has eternal blessings if we respond humbly to His direction.

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Job 5:17 "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. 18 For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole. 19 He shall deliver you in six troubles, Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.

Psalms 7:8 The LORD shall judge the peoples; Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, And according to my integrity within me. 9 Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, But establish the just; For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds. 10 My defense is of God, Who saves the upright in heart.



Psalms 94:10 He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge? 11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile. 12 Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law, 13 That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, Until the pit is dug for the wicked. 14 For the LORD will not cast off His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance. 15 But judgment will return to righteousness, And all the upright in heart will follow it.

Psalms 118:16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. 17 I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the LORD. 18 The LORD has chastened me severely, But He has not given me over to death. 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD, Through which the righteous shall enter. 21 I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.

Proverbs 3:11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; 12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Proverbs 17:3 The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests the hearts.

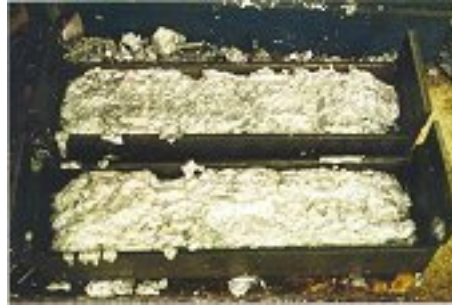
Isaiah 5:15 People shall be brought down, Each man shall be humbled, And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled. 16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness.

3.2 Our Dross

What is dross? Let's look at the dictionary definition and then see what God's word says.

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dross (drŏs, drŏs)

n.

1. Waste or impure matter: *discarded the dross after recycling the wood pulp.*
2. The scum that forms on the surface of molten metal as a result of oxidation.
3. Worthless, commonplace, or trivial matter: “He was wide-awake and his mind worked clearly, purged of all dross” (Vladimir Nabokov).

Psalms 119:119 All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross; therefore I love your statutes.

Proverbs 25:4 Remove the dross from the silver, and out comes material for ^[1] the silversmith;.



God wants us to be with Him for eternity. However, He does not want our worldliness, fleshly desires and our junk for eternity. We really do not want this either. And it must be removed if we are to be pure like God is pure.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Daniel 12:10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

3.2.1 Our Priorities

Aligning our desires with God’s desires promotes peace. This peace fills our heart with warm thoughts, knowing that God is in control, he wants what is best for us and the he loves us.

Sometime we can place the wrong emphasis, time and energy on some of our desires. As a result, we are setting wrong priorities for our desires. To us, some of our desires are more important than others. And this become the order we submit our petitions before God, this is our priority for our desires. However, our priority and God’s can be very different. In fact, the order God **answers** our petitions is His priority. What do we pray for most? How often do we pray for these desires?

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God knows the desires of our hearts. He does want to bless us with our godly desires. But He will often help us see these godly desires by refining them over days, weeks or years. If we are diligent and observe, we will see how He refines our desire and how He aligns our desire with His.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Psalms 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.

3.3 His Reflection

A popular story shows the process of a silversmith. And the process is completed when all of the dross has been removed. How does the silversmith know when all the dross has been removed? When he can see his reflection in the pure silver!

The visitor, with wide eyed wonder, watched the master silversmith at work. He watched the silversmith carefully prepare the silver for molding. He placed the ore in a large pot hanging over the carefully tended, hot fire. Soon the ore liquefied and came to a slow boil. The silversmith carefully monitored the process. Every so often, he picked up a ladle and carefully scooped off a residue that had risen to the top to discard it. The onlooker was curious and asked the silversmith what he was doing. The master craftsman told him that he was making sure that the silver was pure, free from any impurities. He went on to explain that as the silver boiled the impurities would rise to the top. The dross, as they are called, would then be skimmed off until the silver was pure and ready to be molded. "How do you know when the silver is pure," the man ask. The silversmith answered, "When I see my face clearly reflected in the silver, I know it is ready."

The closer we are to Jesus, the more like Him we are made by His sanctifying work, and the clearer His reflection in us becomes!

Proverbs 27:19 As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

2 Corinthians 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect^[1] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Daniel 11:35 And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

Zechariah 13:9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, "This is My people"; And each one will say, "The LORD is my God."

3.4 His Kingdom and His Righteousness

One of the secrets to understanding God's desire is to see what He requires of us. God makes this very clear in Matthew 6 as He commands us to seek one thing before all others: His kingdom and His righteousness. If we seek this first and if it has preeminence in our life, then God's promise it to supply all our needs.

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"²⁶ Look at the

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birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life^[2]? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

2 Chronicles 26:5 He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear^[2] of God. **As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.**

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that **he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**

Philippians 4:19 And my **God will meet all your needs** according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, **graciously give us all things?**

Matthew 7:7 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven **give good gifts to those who ask him!**

3.4.1 His Abundance

Not only does God wish to give us all of our needs, but He also desires to give to us abundantly.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and **running over**, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Notice that God does place a requirement on what we receive: "For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." If you desire to receive a lot... you need to give a lot!! Where are you spending your time and money? Where is your prayer time, your focus? Is it on you or His kingdom and His righteousness? Do we really love God with our whole heart mind and body? Where is your heart regarding matters of God?

Mark 12:30 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

God is ready to give abundantly to you. He is ready to give you the desires of your heart, but in certain cases, you need to give as well!

This is not the doctrine of name it, claim it. This is much deeper. If our heart, our mind, our thoughts, our time, our money, our tithe is focused on His kingdom and His righteousness, then we will receive abundantly.

God's free gift of eternal life, salvation and grace are not predicated on our "giving". God gives freely and in great abundance.

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Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace **abound** to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will **abound** in every good work. ⁹As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

3.4.2 His Blessings

And we find that because of Christ, God has given us all things. Everything that God has is ours.

Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with **every spiritual blessing** in Christ.

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, **graciously give us all things?**

And as an example of our heavenly father, Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son. In the story, the father tells the wiser son that all that I have is yours! All we have to do is "just ask"!

Luke 15: 31ⁿ 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.'

Matthew 7:7ⁿ Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven **give good gifts to those who ask him!**

3.5 Discussion

3.5.1 Refiner's Fire

Refiner's Fire

©1990 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing
Words and Music by Brian Doerksen

Purify my heart
let me be as gold and precious silver
Purify my heart,
let me be as gold, pure gold

CHORUS:
Refiner's fire
My heart's one desire
is to be holy
set apart for You Lord.
I choose to be holy
set apart for you my master,
ready to do your will.

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Purify my heart,
cleanse me from within and make me holy.
Purify my heart,
cleanse me from my sin, deep within

3.5.2 Questions

1. Why does a person desire to keep God's word? Is it the innate goodness of their heart?
2. Have you experienced God's refining fire in your life? What can you share with others about your experience that might help them?
3. As God has refined you in this life, what is some of the dross that you have eliminated?
4. Have you ever felt like your priorities were the same as God's only to find an abrupt end to an active desire or plan?
5. Do you see God working a great work in your life? If so, where and how is He working?
6. Explain how you see God's reflection in your life.
7. Are you actively seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness? How is this reflected in your life?
8. Explain how you have experienced God's abundance in your life.
9. Explain how you have experienced God's incredible blessings in your life.

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4 Godly Desires: The Good Shepherd

When I was a small child, my desire was to chase and acquire the bouncing red ball as it rolled into the busy street. I was oblivious to the 2,000 pound cars driving 30 miles per hour through the residential neighborhood. If it was not for my mothers loving tug on my shirt and a swat on my leg, I may have never known what hit me. The loving guidance from our parents is one thing; but the loving guidance from our Father is so much more.

Not only does He protect and guide us in this life, but He also leads us toward a wonderful world of tomorrow. An eternity of joy, peace and love with Him!

Revelation 21:1¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴**He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**"

However, until the time Christ returns, we must completely lean on Him for guidance and direction in all areas of our life. And if we do, we will be blessed in many ways. Our most bountiful blessings from God become evident when our desires align with His.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Psalms 51:6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts ^[1]; you teach ^[2] me wisdom in the inmost place.

In her book, "How to Hear From God", Joyce Meyers relates the following story:

We used to walk through life on a wide and reckless path, but now we are guided down that narrow path. I remember saying to God once, 'It seems like my path gets narrower all the time.' I remember feeling that the path God was leading me on was getting so narrow that there was no room on it for me. No wonder Paul said, "It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

When our desires and God's desires come together, there is only one path!

However, there are several obstacles that can keep us from receiving our Shepherd's direction and His full blessings.

4.1 Your Obstacles

4.1.1 Your Fear

Fear of things, people or spirits can keep us from receiving proper direction from God. It can keep us from receiving His choicest blessings. Satan would love to have us settle for less than what we truly desire. He is happy to thwart our inner most thoughts and deep desires. If we let fear rule our lives, then we cast away the true desires of our hearts and miss out on what God has planned for us. True love casts out fear.

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¹ John 4:18—There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Psalms 19:9—The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be **desired** are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.[NKJV]

Matthew 10:28—Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Proverbs 29:25—Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

Being fearful of people, may prevent us from moving forward or into places we need to be. Consider Bruce Olson, author of Bruchko. If he had followed the advice of his friends, then he would not have taken the gospel message to the murderous Motilone Indian tribe! Bruce's efforts have not only affected the lives of the Motilone Indians, but also the lives of thousands upon thousands of native Indians in the Columbia region of South America.

- “You? You? A missionary?” Bruce's friend Kent
- “And Bruce,” they told me, “you've got a great life ahead of you as a linguist. Don't throw your abilities away.” Friends discouraging him from his calling
- “Dear Mr. Olson: We are sorry to inform you that we cannot accept you at this time for missionary service. You understand, I trust, that...” Missionary rejection letter

Here is an excerpt from his book which illustrates following God's voice and how Bruce ignored the fearful dejecting comments from others.

But many times as I studied in the library I felt God nudging me. “Bruce, I want you in South America.”

“But, Lord, I tried that. Don't you remember? I was turned down.”

“Turned down by whom?”

“Why, by the mission board, of course.”

It was though God were smiling at me, amused and tolerant.

“Bruce, I didn't turn you down. I want you in South America. Follow me.”

“God, this is ridiculous. How can I go down there without a mission board? You want me to go down there without anyone to take care of me? I mean – without protocol and all?”

“Bruce, I'm in South America, too.”

And then slowly, unwillingly, I began to see what God had been trying to teach me. He hadn't called me, really to be a missionary like Mr. Rayburn. He had called me to Himself, to be like His Son, Jesus Christ. And He wanted me to follow Him to South America. Now.

If we can release our worldly fears and rely solely upon God's leading, we will be protected and blessed. He is our good shepherd!

Psalms 23:1—The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, ⁴ **I will fear no evil**, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

John 10:11—¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then **the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.** ¹³The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

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4.1.2 Satanic Foothold

There are spiritual enemies in this life that are set against us. Unresolved emotional issues can create evil spiritual strongholds in our lives. How long have we held onto anger? Has it been for more than one night?

Ephesians 4:26 "In your anger do not sin"^[4] : Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold.

What bitterness, anger, resentment, or hostility do we harbor in our hearts? Is there someone out there whom we have not forgiven? Is there someone out there whom we would like to hurt? These attitudes can prevent us from receiving God's blessings and acquiring our desire, our hopes and our dreams.

1 Peter 5:8 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

If we want God to acknowledge our prayers, our petitions and our desires, then we must forgive others as He forgives us.

Matthew 5:23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

When we release others through forgiveness, God can release to us His choicest blessings and the desires of our hearts.

4.2 God's Smooth Path

God has a plan for us, and it is covered in His perfect will. His perfect will could be also called, His perfect desire!

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

4.2.1 Prayer

No matter what we do or how strong we are, our desires are nothing without God. When we realize that we are powerless to obtain our heart's desire, we humbly go before God through prayer. As God Almighty, He alone delivers us from affliction. He alone delivers us from our troubles. He alone delivers our heart's desire!

2 Corinthians 1:3 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. ⁶If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are

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comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

Psalm 102:1 Hear my prayer, O LORD ; let my cry for help come to you. ² Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.

Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

When we pray, it is good to use God's words, the scriptures, to expound our thoughts. When Jesus spoke, He often used scripture to build on what He was saying. Knowing God's word helps us

And learning to rely on the promises of God is important to developing peace in our hearts, knowing that God is true to His word.

4.2.2 Listening

How can we receive guidance from God to direct us to our desires if we are not listening and close to Him? How can we get close if we do not have consistent quiet time?

4.2.2.1 Quiet Time

As any Christian knows, quiet time is absolutely essential to develop a great relationship with God. During quiet time, we purposefully, remove life's distractions and find that place where you and God can be alone. It is at these times, that you will hear God. If you are not quiet, you will not hear the gentle whisper of God voice!

¹ Kings 19:11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD , for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD , but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. **And after the fire came a gentle whisper.**

You will hear Him lead you. You will hear Him give you the desires of your heart. See what happened with the rest of the story:

¹ Kings 19:13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. **I am the only one left**, and now they are trying to kill me too." ¹⁵ The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷ Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸ **Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel-all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.**"

Mark 4:23 "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

Psalms 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God;

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4.2.2.2 Journaling

When God gives you a scripture, what do you do with it? When God gives you a re word, what happens next? When you pray to God, how do you know when He answered your prayer? Think back two years ago. What did you pray to God for? Did He answer your prayer?

Here are a couple of thoughts that are taken from <http://www.allaboutgod.com/Journaling.htm>:

Journaling can be a form of worship. In solitude, we can explore the blessing of writing our hearts to God. We don't have to be professional writers or even good writers - it's all about the **passion for God in our hearts**. Journals and letters are powerful tools for recording thoughts, prayers, fears and miracles in our lives. Writing our hearts to God is a fantastic compliment to our daily devotionals with Him.

Journaling typically works best in a quiet place. Find a daily retreat and explore the power of meditative prayer and writing in your life. Learn to seek God's face during your alone times with Him. Through writing, learn to hear God's whispers in your life...

- **Reflect...**
Who are you?
What is your background?
What experiences brought you to this time and place in your life?
- **Release...**
What life changing mistakes have you made?
Are there any buried mistakes in your life that still hold you back?
Have you released your mistakes to God, so you can experience His true blessings for your life?
- **Surrender...**
What event or series of events in your life brought you to your knees?
Where did you focus your thoughts and efforts during crisis?
When did you turn it all over to God?
- **Praise...**
What victories have you experienced in your life?
What blessings has God brought your way?
Think about God's role in your life, and give Him thanks for all you have?

The Titan II, an Inter Continental Ballistics Missile (ICBM) is guided to its target 5,500 miles away through a series of very small corrections. Each time the missile moves ever so slightly away from its intended path, the on board computer corrects the flight with tiny adjustments to the control surfaces. This continues for the duration of the flight until the missile arrives at its destination.



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Like the missile, we are guided by God's Holy Spirit. As we leave His path or His plan or His desires, we are corrected by Him. If we humbly respond to His correction, then we will rejoin the godly path and ultimately hit our God designed desires.

When we journal, we gain insight into our lives and the path God has built for us. We see new things and we see the corrections God has for us. Without a journal, prayer, and quiet time, we lose the correction from God and it takes us longer to hit our mark or find our desires.

4.2.3 Worship

The worship of God is an essential part of following our wonderful Shepherd. Through praise, trust, delight and hope we will see our desires become His desires.

Daniel 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

4.2.3.1 Praise

Psalms 103:1 **Praise** the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. ² Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- ³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, ⁵ who **satisfies your desires** with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Psalms 112:1^[1] **Praise** the LORD. ^[2] Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. ² His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. ³ Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. ⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. ^[3] ⁵ Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. ⁶ Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever. ⁷ He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. ⁸ His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes. ⁹ He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever; his horn ^[4] will be lifted high in honor.

4.2.3.2 Trust

Proverbs 3:5 **Trust** in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your **paths straight**.

Psalms 18:1 I will love You, O LORD, my strength. ²The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will **trust**; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So **shall I be saved** from my enemies.

Psalms 18:30 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who **trust** in Him.

Psalms 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD, **Trust** also in Him, And **He shall bring it to pass**.

4.2.3.4 Delight

Psalms 1:1 **Blessed** is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ² But his **delight** is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Psalms 22:8 "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he **delights** in him."

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Psalms 37:4 **Delight** yourself in the LORD and he will give you the **desires** of your heart.

Psalms 37:23 If the LORD **delights** in a man's way, he makes his **steps firm**;

4.2.3.5 Hope

Proverbs 13:12 **Hope** deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a **tree of life**.

Psalms 31:24 Be of good courage, And He shall **strengthen your heart**, All you who **hope** in the LORD.

Psalms 130:5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, And in His word I do **hope**.

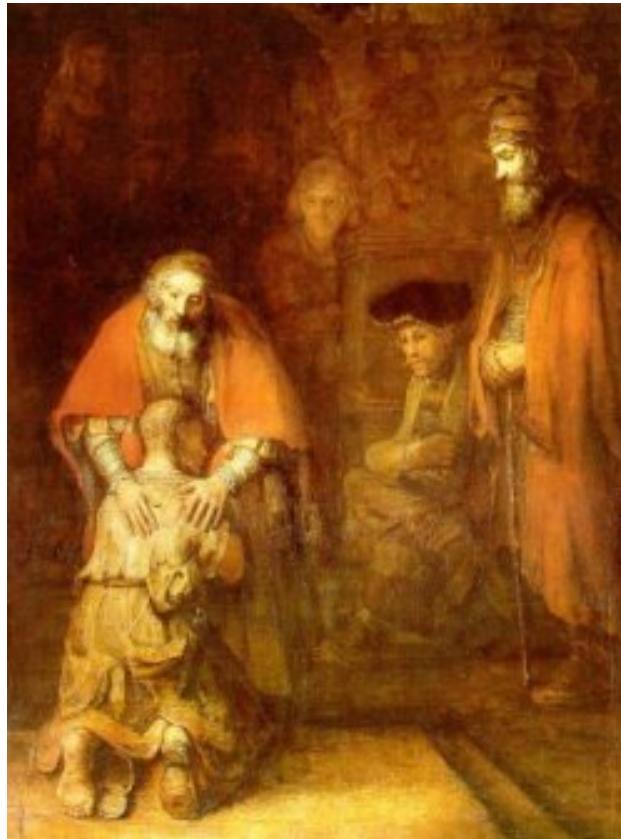
4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Rembrandt's Prodigal Son

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606-1669) painted the "The Return of the Prodigal Son" showing that the son who returned to the father is even more appreciated than the one sticking to Him. In the book "The Journey of Desire" by John Eldredge, he comments on the story by saying,

"The father's reply cuts to the chase: "All that is mine has always been yours." In other words, "You never asked."

These words make us focus on the power of prayer, our petitions, our desires, and our relationship with God.



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4.3.2 Take My Life

Take My Life
(Scott Underwood)

Holiness, holiness is what I long for
Holiness is what I need
Holiness, holiness is what You want from me

Faithfulness, faithfulness is what I long for
Faithfulness is what I need
Faithfulness, faithfulness is what You want from me

(So) Take my heart and form it
Take my mind, transform it
Take my will, conform it
To Yours, to Yours, Oh Lord

Righteousness, righteousness is what I long for
Righteousness is what I need
Righteousness, righteousness is what you want from me

(So) Take my heart and form it
Take my mind, transform it
Take my will, conform it
To Yours, to Yours, Oh Lord

4.3.3 Questions

1. Have you ever thought of God as your shepherd leading you to your desires? Why or why not?
2. Consider your life and think on things that could be an obstacle. Do you have fear or have you provided Satan a foothold in your life which is preventing you from reaching your desires?
3. How often do you pray to God? What prayers did you say one year ago? Where they answered?
4. Have you developed an ear to hear God? Is it getting better or worse? Is it related to your relationship with Him?
5. How much quiet time do you get each day?
6. When was the last time you wrote in your journal? What did you learn?
7. When you worship God through praise, trust, delight or hope, do you see your life becoming more like His?

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5 Godly Desires: Spiritual Passion

Let us see what the dictionary says about passion:

pas-sion (pāsh'ən)
n.

1. A powerful emotion, such as love, joy, hatred, or anger.
2.
 - a. Ardent love.
 - b. Strong sexual desire; lust.
 - c. The object of such love or desire.
3.
 - a. Boundless enthusiasm: *His skills as a player don't quite match his passion for the game.*
 - b. The object of such enthusiasm: *Soccer is her passion.*
4. An abandoned display of emotion, especially of anger: *He's been known to fly into a passion without warning.*
5. **Passion**
 - a. The sufferings of Jesus in the period following the Last Supper and including the Crucifixion, as related in the New Testament.
 - b. A narrative, musical setting, or pictorial representation of Jesus's sufferings.
6. Archaic. Martyrdom.
7. Archaic. Passivity.

When we think of passion, what comes to mind? The terms: ardent love, object of desire or boundless enthusiasm come to mind for the Christian definition of the word passion. How would you describe your passion for the things of Christ?

Hebrews 12: 1 Do you see what this means--all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running--and **never quit!** No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. [Message]

Psalms 51:6 Surely **you desire** truth in the inner parts ^[1]; you teach ^[2] me wisdom in the inmost place.

5.1 Hunger and Thirst

It was a long hot ride through the Mojave desert. The heat of the day permeated our entire being as we rode our motorcycles. Our helmets were hot, our skin was hot, and our throats were hot and dry. We were very thirsty. We underestimated the power of the sun and the dryness of the altitude as we cut through the curvy mountain roads. Our canteens were empty and the next town was miles away. The thought of a drink of water and the satisfaction of our parched throats ached in our minds.

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It seemed to take forever to reach the diner, but once we entered the door, we knew salvation had come: water was near! Strangely enough as we walked to our table, we heard the Bob Nolan song, “Cool Water” sung by The Sons of the Pioneers! The words of the song hit us to the core as we waited patiently for our cool, clear glass of water. We had to have that glass of water!

If the waitress had brought us hot coffee, we would have passed out. Hot coffee would never do. It would not satisfy our desire. We had to have a glass of cool water. Finally, it arrived; the cool goodness felt wonderfully refreshing as it soothed our parched throats and satisfying our deepest need. After two or three glasses, we were fully satisfied and the desire was now becoming a distant memory. We had a passionate desire that needed satisfaction. We had a passion to get that glass of cool, clear water!

Cool Water

Versions by The Sons Of the Pioneers charted twice—at # 25 in 1941 and # 9 in 1948 when they were joined by Vaughn Monroe
Words and Music by Bob Nolan

All day I've faced a barren waste
Without the taste of water, cool water
Old Dan and I with throats burned dry
And souls that cry for water
Cool, clear, water

Keep a-movin, Dan, dontcha listen to him, Dan
He's a devil, not a man
He spreads the burning sand with water
Dan, can ya see that big, green tree?
Where the water's runnin' free
And it's waitin' there for me and you?

The nights are cool and I'm a fool
Each star's a pool of water
Cool water
But with the dawn I'll wake and yawn

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And carry on to water
Water, water, water

Keep a-movin, Dan, dontcha listen to him, Dan
He's a devil, not a man
He spreads the burning sand with water
Dan, can ya see that big, green tree?
Where the water's runnin' free
And it's waitin' there for me and you?

Cool, clear, water
Cool, clear, water

The intense desire for a drink of water is similar to what God desires of us. He wants us to thirst for Him. When we have that passionate thirst for God, we will be drawn to Him and as His promise states we will be filled.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Psalms 42:1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

5.2 Zeal

Hunger and thirst imply intensity, zeal, or passion. If we have a holy passion for the desires of our life, God can not help but smile and want to help us in our time of need.

Consider a child heaped over the dining room table assembling a model airplane. With a raised eyebrow and puzzled look he examines two model pieces which must be glued together. He knows they go together but how? Now consider another child, slouching into the sofa, with feet on the coffee table, surfing to find another channel which suits his fancy. He says he is bored. Which child is will more likely to receive your listening ear or your help?

Numbers 25:13 He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was **zealous** for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites."

Psalms 69:9 for **zeal** for your house consumes me,

Proverbs 23:17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be **zealous** for the fear of the LORD .

Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in **zeal**, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Galatians 4:18 It is fine to be **zealous**, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you.

Titus 2:14 [Christ] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are **zealous** for good works. [ESV]

As Jesus assembled His apostles, he called them out and named them a special name. Notice how He names James and John:

Mark 3:13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴He appointed twelve--designating them apostles²--that they might be with him and that he might send them out

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to preach ¹⁵and to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder);

Both James and John were said to be “bold and zealous”. This characteristic identified them and Jesus aptly named them “Sons of Thunder”.

Luke 9:51 ⁵¹As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴**When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them^[3]?"** ⁵⁵But Jesus turned and rebuked them, ⁵⁶and^[4] they went to another village.

If we are “hot”, or if we are on fire for the Lord, then He can work with us. If we are “cold” He will chasten us. If we are neither hot or cold, He will ...

Revelations 3:15 ¹⁵I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to **spit you out** of my mouth.

Consider this story of zeal from the November 2004, Our Daily Bread written by Herb Vander Lugt:

“When a man learned that an elderly woman could no longer buy her medicine and pay her rent, he came to her rescue. He took her into his home and treated her as if she were his mother. He gave her a bedroom, prepared the food for her meals, bought her medicine, and transported her whenever she needed medical attention. He continued to care for her when she could no longer do much for herself. I was amazed when I learned that this good man was a zealous atheist!”

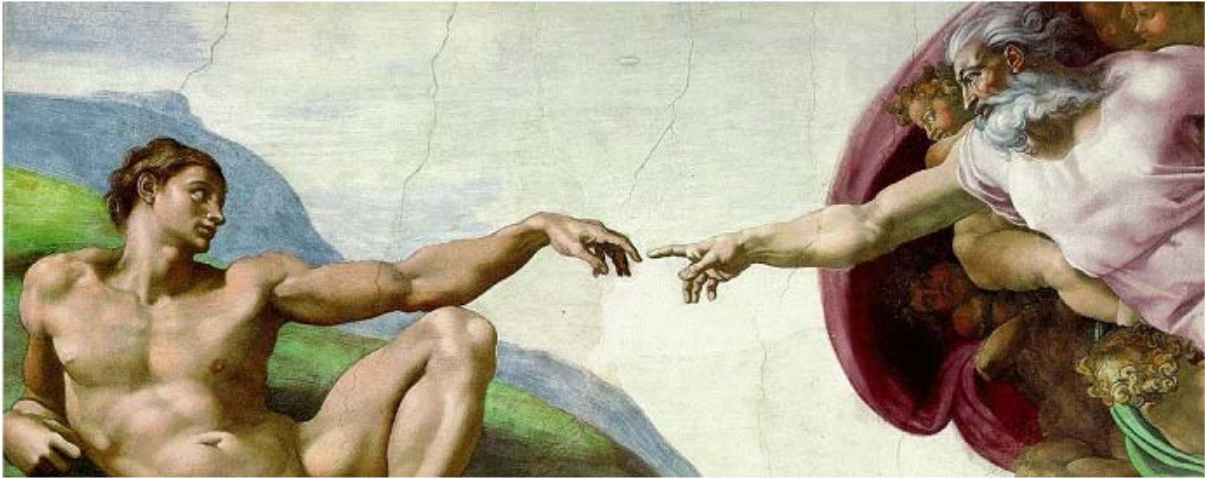
If we are “cold”, God may chasten us or allow us to live in our folly for a period of time. King Jehoshaphat, the king of Israel, went down to see Elisha and wept over him. However, when it came time to put forth an effort to help save his country, his energy was lacking.

2 Kings 18:18 ¹⁸Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. ¹⁹The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times." ²⁰Elisha died and was buried.

Remember the hand of Adam in the painting, “The Creation of Adam”? Adam’s hand was limp. He was exhausted raising his hand to meet God’s. And God was straining to touch Adam. How much are we straining to touch God?

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5.3 Tears

Sometimes through sheer frustration with unsatisfied desires, we are at the end of our rope, we mourn and the tears come. Like the child who desired a good cool lick from his ice cream cone, and accidentally drops his ice cream into the sand. All we can do is wonder where it all went wrong then begin to mourn and finally cry.

When we hit this point, we realize that we are not in control and must go to a higher power for help with our desires. So the crying child goes to the parent for a new ice cream, we go before God with heartfelt prayer. It is at this point, that our prayers are the most heart felt and the ear of God can be quick to hear the humble!

¹ Samuel 1:1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite ^[1] from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ² He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. ³ Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. ⁴ Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶ And because **the LORD had closed her womb**, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. ⁷ This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. ⁸ Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" ⁹ Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple. ^[2] ¹⁰ In bitterness of soul **Hannah wept much and prayed** to the LORD. ¹¹ And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head." ¹² As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk ¹⁴ and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine." ¹⁵ "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." ¹⁷ Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." ¹⁸ She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. ¹⁹ Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and **the LORD remembered her**. ²⁰ So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, ^[3] saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

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Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. ^[1] The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. ² At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. ⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. ⁶ His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. ⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. ¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. ¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. **Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard,** and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

King David captures some of his travails accompanied by tears.

Psalm 6:3 My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? ⁴ Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love. ⁵ No one remembers you when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave ^[2] ? ⁶ I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears.

Psalm 56:8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book? [NKJV]

Psalm 102:9 For I eat ashes as my food and mingle my drink with tears

Psalm 126:5 Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. ⁶ He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

God's desire can be intense. Christ experienced heart felt desires on earth and we get a glimpse of his passion through the verse in Hebrews:

Hebrews 5:7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions **with loud cries and tears** to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

Luke 22:14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve ^[1] apostles with Him. ¹⁵ Then He said to them, "With **fervent desire** I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

5.4 Tenacity

Do not give up! Fight the good fight! God wants to see us put in an effort to obtain some of our desires. If we give up, we fail. If we run the good race, we win.

Galatians 5:7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? ⁸ That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.

Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

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Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

It is easy to quit, but it takes faith to go forward and hang in there!

Exodus 14:10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that **you brought us to the desert to die**? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹² Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" ¹³ Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. ¹⁴ **The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.**" ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. ¹⁶ Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.



God wants to see where our heart truly is; He wants to see our motivation; He wants to see what is important to us; He wants to see our heart's passion! What are we doing to show God how much we need our desires fulfilled?

Genesis 32:24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶ Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "**I will not let you go unless you bless me.**" ²⁷ The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. ²⁸ Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, ^[5] because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." ²⁹ Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" **Then he blessed him there.** ³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, ^[6] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." ³¹ The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, ^[7] and he was limping because of his hip. ³² Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

Jesus illustrates passion to His disciples and describes the boldness of a friend.

Luke 11:5 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶ because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷ Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet **because of the man's boldness** ^[5] he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹ So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ Which of you fathers, if your son asks for ^[6] a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to

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give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

For us to have “dogged persistence” or to be tenacious with holy desires, we can not be stopped by Satan’s ploys. It is vitally important that Christians put on the whole armor of God so that we retain our holy desires and reject the desires of the flesh. As a result, our desires will align more perfectly with His desires!

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

5.5 Discussion

5.5.1 Morgan Weistling’s, Lilies of the Field

The story of God's sovereign control in our lives is reflected in the story of the Lilies of the Field. When we realize that we do not have to worry about anything God's peace fills us. He knows the desires of our hearts all we have to do is trust in Him!



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Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? ²⁸"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³²For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

5.5.2 U2, Beautiful Day

Beautiful Day

U2

The heart is a bloom
Shoots up through the stony ground
There's no room
No space to rent in this town

You're out of luck
And the reason that you had to care
The traffic is stuck
And you're not moving anywhere

You thought you'd found a friend
To take you out of this place
Someone you could lend a hand
In return for grace

It's a beautiful day
Sky falls, you feel like
It's a beautiful day
Don't let it get away

You're on the road
But you've got no destination
You're in the mud
In the maze of her imagination

You love this town
Even if that doesn't ring true
You've been all over
And it's been all over you

It's a beautiful day
Don't let it get away
It's a beautiful day

Touch me
Take me to that other place
Teach me
I know I'm not a hopeless case

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See the world in green and blue
See China right in front of you
See the canyons broken by cloud
See the tuna fleets clearing the sea out
See the Bedouin fires at night
See the oil fields at first light
And see the bird with a leaf in her mouth
After the flood all the colors came out

It was a beautiful day
Don't let it get away
Beautiful day

Touch me
Take me to that other place
Reach me
I know I'm not a hopeless case

What you don't have you don't need it now
What you don't know you can feel it somehow
What you don't have you don't need it now
Don't need it now
Was a beautiful day

5.5.3 Questions

1. How does the biblical story of the Lilies of the Field make you feel about your unfulfilled desires?
2. How does unfulfilled desire fit with passion, zeal, tears and tenacity in your life?
3. Can you think of a time that you had a hunger or thirst for God and His word?
4. When was the last time you had zeal or been zealous for your desires? Was it holy or unholy?
5. Have tears ever been a part of your expression of desire to God? Does this reflect a lack of holy desire? Why or why not?
6. Can you describe a desire in your life which you are tenacious about?