

Desire – Problem or Blessing

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Three things are necessary for the salvation of man: to know what he ought to believe; to know what he ought to desire; and to know what he ought to do. - Thomas Aquinas

Introduction:

Definitions:

English: To long for, want, or covet; a strong wish

Greek: ask, beg, call for, crave, desire

Desire is neither good nor bad in itself – it is a basic part of life

The important moral issue is how one responds to their desires. It is possible to let them control one's conduct, or to control one's desires and use them to serve their God-appointed purposes.

Christians have differed on the appropriate response to desire

Ascetics claim that the desire for food and the enjoyment of eating is sinful.

The example of Jesus shows that he enjoyed good meals - so much so that his critics called him a glutton (Lk 7:34).

His first miracle in John's Gospel was performed at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, where the feasting probably went on for several days (Jn 2:1-11).

Many think that sexual desire is bad.

But it is of itself no eviler than the desire for food. God created people with both desires, and they both must be kept under control, in obedience to God's Word.

God works through our desires - Without desire, nothing is accomplished in life.

Prov 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Ps 21:2 You have given him his heart's desire, And You have not withheld the request of his lips.

Ps 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

Ps 145:16 You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

v. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;

Prov 10:24 What the wicked fears will come upon him, the desire of the righteous will be granted.

Mt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Mt 6:33 "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Heb 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

The powers of darkness and Desire - Evil desires can kill you

Gen 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Gen 3:1-7)

Rom 1:24, 26, 28 "God gave them over" ... [to their desires] ...

Balaam - They killed the kings of Midian along with the rest of their slain, ...they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword (Num 31:8).

2Pt 2:15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

1Tim 6:9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

Samson

Judg 14:1-3 Then Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines ... But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she looks good to me." (she is right in mine eyes) [Judg 14:7]

Israel

Ps 78:29-31 So they ate and were well filled, and their desire He gave to them. 30 Before they had satisfied their desire, while their food was in their mouths, 31 The anger of God rose against them and killed some of their stoutest ones, and subdued the choice men of Israel.

We came be victorious over evil desires as we fight against them

The temptations of Jesus are a call for Jesus to follow His own desires and not the Father's desires. Jesus subordinates His desires to those of the Father, and thereby lives without sin.

To deny yourself is a central message of Jesus (Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23; Mt 16:4; Jn 15:12-17).

Gal 5:16-17 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

Gal 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Col 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

Seven great desires

1. To know Him

Phil 3:8-10 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

When God is one's greatest desire, all other desires become properly oriented and can thus mirror God's own desires for his people's well-being.

2. The presence of God

Psa 27:4 One thing I have asked [*desired*] from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.

Psa 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.

3. Spiritual growth

1Pt 2:2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

4. Righteous living

Mt 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

5. Spiritual gifts

1Cor 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

6. Evangelism

1Tim 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

7. Desire is the key to receiving answered prayer. Whatever you ask

Jn 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Mk 11:24 "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

Mt 7:7-8 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

1Jn 5:14-15 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask [desire] anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask [desire], we know that we have the requests which we have asked (desired] from Him.

Desire is not merely a simple wish; it is a deep-seated craving; an intense longing, for attainment. In the realm of spiritual affairs, it is an important adjunct to prayer. So important is it, that one might say, almost, that desire is an absolute essential of prayer. Desire precedes prayer, accompanies it, is followed by it. Desire goes before prayer, and by it, created and intensified. Prayer is the oral expression of desire. If prayer is asking God for something, then prayer must be expressed. Prayer comes out into the open. Desire is silent. Prayer is heard; desire, unheard. The deeper the desire, the stronger the prayer. Without desire, prayer is a meaningless mumble of words. Such perfunctory, formal praying, with no heart, no feeling, no real desire accompanying it, is to be shunned like a pestilence. Its exercise is a waste of precious time, and from it, no real blessing accrues. (The Necessity of Prayer, by E M Bounds)