

Desire

Johnny Mercer, a Christian who wrote many of the most popular songs of the mid 20th century, described well the fervor of romantic attraction in his song "That Old Black Magic" - *I hear your name and I'm aflame, aflame with such a burning desire that only your kiss can put out the fire.*

But as gifted a lyricist as Mercer was, the Sons of Korah depicted the imagery of overwhelming desire even better when describing their longing for God in Psalm 42:1 - *As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.*

We all have desires of one sort or another. We might be surprised to discover that even God has desires. This week, we will look not only at how our desires can line up with God's, but why they should. We'll also learn why God's desires are better than ours, always and for eternity.

Monday – Desires of the Spirit

"I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people." A. W. Tozer

1. Please read Romans 8:5-13. What do you think Paul means in verse 5 when he speaks of the desires of the sinful nature and the desires of the Spirit?
2. In Matthew 6:31-33, what priorities does Jesus desire for our lives? What does he promise will happen for those who seek God first?

Text insight: The Matthew passage says that our material needs (food, clothing and shelter) will be "added." That means that we will find our primary satisfaction resting in the spiritual realm. In other words, God's kingdom and righteousness will increasingly become our passion.

3. Now look at Psalm 37:3-6. How does this support Jesus' words in Matthew 6:31-33? Can the desires of the Spirit in Romans 8:5 and the desires of your heart in Psalm 37:4 be one and the same? How?

Making it Personal: Are you ready for the Spirit's desires to become yours? Pray, telling God of your desire for this to be true in your life.

Tuesday – Making the Impossible Possible

"Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible." Corrie ten Boom

1. Please read Romans 8:6-8. Why is it impossible to please God unless you're guided by the Holy Spirit?
2. In verse 6 what comparison is made between the mind controlled by the Spirit and the mind controlled by sin?
3. According to Hebrews 11:6, there is a fundamental requirement for pleasing God. What is it?

Digging Deeper: For more on the life of faith, read Hebrews 11:1-16. What does a life of faith look forward to, according to verses 1 and 16?

Wednesday – Belonging

"All you really need to know is where you belong." The Newsboys, [Where You Belong](#)

1. Please read Romans 8:9. Paul is making the same point two different ways in this verse. What is the point?

Text insight: In verse 9, Paul uses the phrases "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" interchangeably to refer to God the Holy Spirit. This is a clear indication of the fact that Jesus Christ is God from eternity past, and not just an exalted human. Otherwise the eternal Holy Spirit would not issue from Christ, only from God the Father.

2. Compare Romans 8:9 with 1 John 4:1-6. What insight does John give for recognizing the leading of the Spirit as opposed to the leading of the sin nature?
3. What ultimate reassurance do you get from 1 John 4:4 about knowing you are God's child forever?

Prayer focus: Thank God that he is greater than any other power. Pray, asking God to make this truth powerful in your life. Pray this same prayer for those the Lord brings to mind.

Thursday – Life through the Spirit

"If you have not the Spirit of God ... you are a fruitless tree standing where a fruitful tree might grow." Charles Spurgeon, 19th century British pastor

1. Please read Romans 8:10-11. How does Paul compare our body with our spirit?
2. This idea of God giving life to our physical bodies is explored in more detail in 1 Corinthians 15:35-37 and 15:42-44. As you compare Romans 8:10-11 with this passage, which comes first: spiritual or physical renewal?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 15:51-54, when does the renewal of our physical bodies take place?

Digging Deeper: Psalm 22 is a heartfelt recital of physical distress in a Spirit-led life of faith. Compare the tone of verses 1-18 with that of verses 19-31.

Friday – Obligations

"He hides our unrighteousness with His righteousness, He covers our disobedience with his obedience, He shadows our death with His death, that the wrath of God cannot find us." Henry Smith, 16th c. English preacher

1. Please read Romans 8:12-13. Where do death and life come from?
2. Romans 8:12 says we have an obligation. To whom? What do we owe?
3. Reading Romans 8:1-4 together with 8:13, we see that we cannot overcome our sinful nature on our own; rather, it occurs through the work of Jesus on the cross and the Holy Spirit in our lives. What misdeeds of the body do you need to put to death?

Making it Personal: See Revelation 5:11-14 for a description of the type of devotion Jesus (the Lamb) is worthy of. Is it a desire of yours to be able to give Jesus such praise? According to John 16:14, the Holy Spirit desires to glorify Jesus Christ. Pray, asking God to give you this desire as well (Psalm 37:4).

For the Weekend: Read Romans 8:5, Psalm 37:3-6 and Matthew 6:31-33. Consider the desires of your heart, and ask God to guide you into aligning them with those of the Holy Spirit.