

Our Desires

In the physical creation it is easy to watch the activities that are prompted and driven by desire.

Every normal creature desires a mate and so the perpetuation of physical life is achieved.

Every creature desires food and drink so that physical life is supported.

Therefore, desire is a motivation that the Creator God has built into every living thing.

Within the moral and spiritual realm desire also plays a major part.

Right desires tend to life while evil desires end up being a pathway to death, eternal death.

Whatever a human being desires passionately and persistently enough will determine that person's character.

Romans 8:5-8 [NIV] *“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. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”*

Paul divides all humanity into these two categories.

Those who allow themselves to be controlled by their sinful nature driven by natural physical desires, and those who are blessed with the active indwelling Holy Spirit that can purify those natural physical desires.

The Holy Spirit is only given to those who obey God [**Acts 5:32**], and have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, first working with us, to prompt us to repentance [**John 16:8**] then as we yield to His directive will begin to develop the very character of God within us.

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

These “fruits” of the active work of the Holy Spirit within us will then purify our desires.

Philippians 3:7-11 [NIV] *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

Here we see the change of direction of Paul's desires in life. All the wealth, fame and position that he had in his life before his dramatic meeting with Jesus Christ [**Acts 22:6-16**] he now considered rubbish.

At the root of all spiritual growth is a set of right and sanctified desires.

Unsanctified desire will stop the growth of any Christian life, for wrong desires pervert the moral judgement so we are unable to appraise the desired object at its real value.

For this reason our heart is often our worst counsellor, pleading the purity of something that is in itself anything but pure.

As Christians our **only** safety lies in letting God's Word, the Christian Bible, pronounce judgement on our contemplated course.

If the scriptures condemn an object we must accept that judgement and conform to it, no matter how we may, for the moment, feel about.

To want a thing, or feel that we want it, or fantasise about it and then to turn from it because we see it is against the will of God is to win a great battle.

Ephesians 6:12 [NIV] *“For 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.”*

This battle we have is within our mind as to who has control of the desires that our mind generates.

Romans 6:6-14 [NIV] *“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”*

We are to crucify our old desires and offer our whole life to Jesus Christ as an instrument of right Christian living.

God is always glorified when He wins a moral victory in us and we are always benefited by such a victory.

The glory of God and the eternal welfare of His created family are always bound together.

1 John 2:15-17 [NIV] *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever.”*

Knowing that this evil world and its desires for possessions and sensual pleasures will one day pass away, can help us to have the courage to control our self-indulgent behaviour and to seek to accomplish God's will for our lives.

2 Peter 3:9 [NIV] *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

The major part of God's will for each of us is that we come to a place of repentance.

Repentance is **not** just a “one-off” but is an attitude of mind.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. 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.”*

To offer our whole life, body, mind and human spirit [**Job 32:8**] to Jesus Christ as a living sacrifice is the starting point of our maturing as a Christian.

This will be accepted by God as an act of worship.

We then allow the Holy Spirit to re-educate our mind so that our purified desires will tend towards righteousness and holiness.

1 Peter 1:13-23 [NIV] *“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’ Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”*

Peter sets out for us our new “life plan” as “born again” Christians now living a new life that is dedicated to being disciples of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:8 [NIV] *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.”*

When we concentrate our thoughts on these things we will find our wrong un-purified desires will have no place in our thoughts and actions.

It can then be said that we are “spiritually minded,” that is, having the same mind and desires as our Creator God.

1 Corinthians 2:6-15 [NIV] *“We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him,’ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. 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. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment:”*

It is only by an active Holy Spirit within us that we can attain the new life where our desires and actions are directed by the very mind of Jesus Christ that is at work within our minds.

This is the goal that all Christians are to press towards.