

Your Heart's Desire

I want to speak about something that is often overlooked and yet it is crucial to your relationship with God, the effectiveness of your prayers and the direction of your life.

Opening text: 1 Corinthians 12:31 - *But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I will show you a more excellent way.*

We all know that the context of this statement is a teaching about spiritual gifts in the church and that is a very important subject. Today, however, the topic is not spiritual gifts *per se*, but I want to draw your attention to one very important word in that sentence: *desire*.

We are told to earnestly desire God's gifts. So it appears that 'gifts' don't just come but they are to be *earnestly desired, zealously desired, intensely desired, seriously desired, fervently desired!*

Desire plays a vital role in getting these gifts from God. We know that ultimately praying and believing are important to receive anything from God but interestingly neither is mentioned here. Desiring is mentioned.

Let's look at two other passages:

- **1 Corinthians 14: 1** - *Pursue love, and **desire** spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.*
- **Verse 39** - *Therefore, brethren, **desire earnestly** to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.*

When God says something 3 times, it means that He really wants our attention. It means that He is establishing a powerful principle.

1. The importance of DESIRE to receive from God

The point is, we need hearts that desire what God has for us. Receiving His gifts (in this context "spiritual gifts") or of any of the other gifts and promises God has for us, has a lot to do with the degree with which we desire them (with how bad we want them). That is why we read, *earnestly desire*. In other words, don't be half-hearted about it, look for it zealously, intensely, seriously and fervently!

1 Corinthians 12:11 - *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually **as He wills.***

Again we see that the gifts and the things God has for us don't just automatically come and fall on us. It is as He wills and desiring them is the condition.

The gifts are free and come from God, but the *desiring* comes from us.

Revelation 22:17 - *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever **desires** let him take the water of life freely.*

Hungering and thirsting for God, desiring earnestly all that He has is a vital and often overlooked key to

- the quality of your relationship with God,
- to the effectiveness of your prayers
- and to the direction of your life

2. The importance of DESIRE in prayer

The story of the Syrophenician woman in Matthew 15:21-28 illustrates this point so well.

Matthew 15:28 - *Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! **Let it be to you as you desire.**" And her daughter was healed from that very hour.*

This woman is a great example of someone who desired earnestly, zealously, intensely, seriously, and fervently! Do we 'desire' like that when we pray?

John 15:7 - *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will **ask what you desire**, and it shall be done for you.*

Psalms 21:2 - *You have given him his heart's **desire** and have not withheld the request of his lips.*

It is great to have faith when we pray, it is great to pray well but let's pray with a burning desire. The Italians have an interesting word: *gusto!* Gusto means zest, fondness, appetite, zeal, enthusiasm, keenness, and fervour. Let's pray with gusto.

3. Delight and DESIRE

Psalms 37:4 - *Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the **desires** of your heart.*

God is a giver but we still need to desire – earnestly! Not be indifferent, numb, flat-lined, static people but fervent and passionate!

There is something powerful about the person who lives in the presence of God, who makes God their utmost delight and pleasure. There is something powerful about the person who desires God like that because God causes all his desires to come to pass.

Isaiah 26:8-9 - *Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O Lord, we have waited for You; The desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. ⁹ With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early...*

- a) The very presence of God will also serve to define and refine our desires, so that they are in line with the will of God.

Charles Spurgeon: “*God will direct your desires for the things you ought to seek*”

Daniel L Akin: “*When the Lord is your greatest desire, all other desires find their proper expression*”

b) There are desires clearly outside God’s will:

- Ephesians 2:3 speaks of the ‘*desires of the flesh and of the mind*’
- Colossians 1:3 speaks about “*evil desires*”
- James 1:14, 4:1 etc.

Before we met Christ, we knew well the power of all those negative desires. To be honest, most of us were dominated and slaves of those desires.

However, now that we are in Christ and that God has purified our hearts, why should we be anything but full of desire and passion for God?

4. Deficit and DESIRE

In Revelation Jesus told the Laodicean church about their *deficit of desire*. They were neither here nor there – lukewarm, “*neither frozen in apathy nor fervent with passion*” (**Revelation 3:15 The Passion Translation**)).

- Desire is a clear indicator of where we are at spiritually, of the quality of our relationship with God.
- The absence of desire (for instance desire to pray, to worship, to get into the word, to serve, to be with other believers etc) is a sure indicator in the dashboard of our lives that something is not right. It is a red light that better be addressed and not ignored.

To the church of Ephesus Jesus said that they needed to return to their first love. They also had a deficit of a burning desire for God.

- **Desire God - Psalms 27:4** - *One thing I have **desired** of the Lord, that will I 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 inquire in His temple.*
- **Desire the Word - 1 Peter 2:2** - ***desire** the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,*
- **Desire to be around other believers - 1 Thessalonians 2:17** - *¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured more eagerly to see your face **with great desire.***

A few closing thoughts

God desires! Several Scriptures mention that God desires. For instance, God “*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Jesus desires! We read in **Luke 22:15** - *With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer*

In **Haggai 2:7** Jesus is called “*The Desire of All Nations*”

Is He your desire?

I pray that DESIRE will be awakened in your heart today and that you will be a person living a life of passionate pursuit of God and all the gifts, promises and plans He has for you.