

A CURIOUS QUESTION—Discussion guide

*Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart
(Psalm 37:4)*

1. What is a recurring desire you have experienced over a significant portion of your life?
2. How has that desire been expressed over time? (Not necessarily fulfilled, but *expressed*.)
3. Trace the argument as you reflect on the quotes below, noting how they differentiate between an ultimate “**Desire**” we possess and other “**desires**” that reveal our giftedness and passions.

- **We all have a Desire that points to our destiny, our purpose**

There is a desire within each of us, in the deep center of ourselves that we call our heart. We were born with it, it is never completely satisfied, and it never dies. We are often unaware of it, but it is always awake.... Our true identity, our reason for being is to be found in this desire. (Gerald May, *The Awakened Heart*)

- **Our ultimate Desire can only be satisfied in a relationship with God**

There is only one Being who can satisfy the last aching abyss of the human heart, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. (Oswald Chambers, *The Complete Works*)

- **We are also defined and motivated by our desires**

Even though we sleep, our desire does not. *It is who we are. We are* desire. It is the essence of the human soul, the secret of our existence. Absolutely nothing of human greatness is ever accomplished without it. Not a symphony has been written, a mountain climbed, an injustice fought, or a love sustained apart from desire. Desire fuels our search for the life we prize. Our desire, if we will listen to it, will save us from committing soul-suicide, the sacrifice of our hearts on the altar of “getting by.” The same old thing is not enough. It never will be. (John Eldredge, *Desire*)

- **Our Desire reveals WHAT we were made for; our desires reveal HOW we express ourselves**

Even in your hobbies has there not always been some secret attraction which the others are curiously ignorant of—something, not to be identified with, but always on the verge of breaking through, the smell of cut wood in the workshop or the clap-clap of water against the boat’s side? Are not all lifelong friendships born at the moment when at last you meet another human being who has some inkling (but faint and uncertain even in the best) of that something which you were born desiring, and which, beneath the flux of other desires and in all the momentary silences between the louder passions, night and day, year by year, from childhood to old age, you are looking for, watching for, listening for? You have never had it. All the things that have ever deeply possessed your soul have been but hints of it—tantalizing glimpses, promises never quite fulfilled, echoes that died away just as they caught your ear. But if it should really become manifest—if there ever came an echo that did not die away but swelled into the sound itself—

you would know it. Beyond all possibility of doubt you would say, ‘Here at last is the thing I was made for.’ We cannot tell each other about it. It is the ‘secret signature of each soul’ the incommunicable and unappeasable want, the thing we desired before we met our wives or made our friends or chose our work, and which we shall still desire on our deathbeds, when the mind no longer knows wife or friend or work. While we are, this is. If we lost this, we lose all. (C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*)

- **If we cannot surrender to what we deeply Desire, we’ll seek fulfillment in unsatisfying places**

If a man does not find those things for which his heart is made, if he is never even invited to live for them from his deep heart, he will look for them in some other way. (John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart*)

- **We often settle for less than God has for us, both with our Desire and our desires**

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. (C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*)

- **God’s word—the Scripture—guides the expression of our Desire and desires**

Our instrument is out of tune from years of misuse. This is where the Law is our help. Everything in you may be saying, “But you don’t understand. I *want* to eat that whole box of chocolates (or sleep with my boyfriend, or let my anger really fly). That’s what really seems like life to me right now.” God says, “I know you do, but it’ll kill you in the end. What you think is life is not. That’s not the comfort (or the love, or the significance) you are seeking. You’ll wind up destroying yourself.” The commands of God become our tutor in the healing of our desire. We need the Law because our instrument is out of tune; we’re not clear all the time on what it is we “really” desire. (John Eldredge, *Desire*)

4. Which of the quotes individually—or the ideas discussed today—seem applicable to you at this point in your life?

5. What steps will you take this week to reflect further or act on what was revealed to you today?

Batter my heart, three personed God; for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine and seek to mend.
That I may rise and stand, o’erthrow me and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new,
I, like a usurped town, to another due,
Labor to admit you, but, oh to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend;
But is captive and proves weak or untrue.

Yet dearly I love you and would be loved fain;
But am betrothed unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.
(John Donne, *Batter My Heart*)