

Inspired Desire  
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“The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:9

A. There were two trees

1. In the garden of Eden there were two trees, both of which were in the middle of the garden
2. The tree of life was to be part of Adam and Eve’s lineage
3. God’s command regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil
  - a. “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.” Genesis 3:6
4. The temptation: visual and psychological
5. Adam and Eve lost their moral compass and their identity

B. Our Inheritance

1. Expelled from the garden, the desire for true intimacy became buried
2. Humankind became accustomed to the separation and darkness
3. Desire is a crucial component for us to become the men and women God created us to be
4. When our desires are unmet, the result is discontentment, pain, or grief

C. Our Battle with Desire

“There is a desire within each of us, in the deep center of ourselves that we call our heart. We are 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*, quoted by John Eldredge in *Journey of Desire*, p. 2

1. “We are far too easily pleased.” C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*
2. “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fair.” Isaiah 55:1-2
3. Jesus appeals to our hearts and therefore, to desire
4. We can either respond or react to our life experiences

**TABLE TALK QUESTIONS**

- 1. How in touch are you with your deepest yearnings for connection?**
- 2. How have you reacted when a desire went unfulfilled?**
- 3. How do you respond/react to your daily aloneness or incompleteness?**

D. In Reaction to Desire

1. When we encounter a desire surfacing in our hearts, there are three main ways to process the experience

2. The stoic is someone who avoids and suppresses the pain of desire
  - a. “The reason we don’t know what we want is that we are so unacquainted with our desire. We try to keep a safe distance between our daily lives and our heart’s desire because it causes us so much trouble.” John Eldredge, *The Journey of Desire*, p. 30
3. Sex becomes viewed not as something spiritual, being God-inspired but as something secular which is to be suppressed at all costs
4. We clamp down on our emotions because we fear if they’re released we’ll be out of control
5. The sensualist avoids the pain of desire by feeding on the finite, they become abandoned to false intimacy
  - a. “Behind every false god we discover our desire for the true God gone awry” Christophe West
6. The sensualist turns to isolation/darkness results with a deepening of despair and avoidance of the light
7. Jer 2:23b-24a “You are a swift she-camel running here and there, a wild donkey accustomed to the desert, sniffing the wind in her craving— in her heat who can restrain her?”
8. The sojourner has often walked in the shoes of the stoic and sensualist
9. Choosing to become vulnerable and open means to not self-protect or self-medicate
10. Sojourners are transfixed by the deep love of God and do not thwart the desire for an ever more intimate union with Jesus our Beloved
11. Sojourners learn how not to indulge in excess but how to find true expressions of intimacy

#### E. Disowning our Desire

1. “Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long, in vain.” A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, pp. 17-18
2. We make attachments to false intimacy to assuage the inner void
3. We routinely try to change our circumstances to avoid pain
  - a. “As we pursue the goal of constructing our own reality through the illusion of false intimacy, the further we move from the reality in which God has placed us and calls us to live, the more we create our own insanity.” Harry W. Schaumburg, *False Intimacy*, p. 19

#### F. Reclaiming the good of desire

1. The faithful lover of our souls does not abandon us
2. We must recognize what hinders our intimate relationship with God
3. God wants our deepest desires to be one with Him

4. We must begin to see how truly precious our hearts are

5. “The whole life of the good Christian is a holy longing. What you desire ardently, as yet you do not see. (So) let us long because we are to be filled...That is our life, to be exercised by longing.”  
Augustine

G. Being Real

1. We need to renounce our idolatry and grasp the reality of desire

a. Paul Tripp (noted pastor/author) calls idols “functional God replacements”

2. We are in a journey home

3. True community and intimacy with God has nothing to do with sex

a. “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28

4. We are to embrace the depths of this God-given gift in us with His help to find its ultimate fulfilment in Him