



The ideal of the spiritual life in the Christian understanding is one where all of the essential parts of the human self are effectively organized around God, as they are restored and sustained by him....its result is love of God with all of the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and of the neighbor as oneself. The human self is then fully integrated under God.

Dallas Willard

**Desire: The First Question**

Do you want to get well?

John 5:6

What do you want me to do for you?

Mark 10:51

Simon, son of John, do you love me?

John 21:16

Where are you?

Genesis 3

We are fired into life with a madness that comes from the gods and which would have us believe that we can have a great love, perpetuate our own seed, and contemplate the divine.

Plato



Desire is good: indulge it

Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. 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.

CS Lewis

Desire is bad: ignore it

Our appetites need to be controlled because they are out of tune, out of harmony with our need for God. But control is only a temporary measure. The ideal for us is not to control our appetites at all, but to allow them full rein in the wake of an uncontrolled appetite for God.

Simon Tugwell

# A Spirituality of Desire

The Lord will prepare a lavish banquet for all, a feast of rich food and pure, choice wines; juicy, rich food, and pure, choice wines.

Isaiah 25:6

Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, for your love is more  
delightful than wine...The King has taken me into the wine cellar...He  
has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love...I  
am my beloved's, his desire is all for me.

Song of Songs

The whole life of the good Christian is a holy longing..That is our life,  
to be trained by longing.

St. Augustine



The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God.

Ah! My Jesus, pardon me if I am unreasonable in wishing to express my desires and longings which reach even unto infinity. Pardon me and heal my soul by giving her what she longs for so much! Jesus, Jesus, if I wanted to write all my desires, I would have to borrow your Book of Life...I am certain, then, that you will grant my desires; I know, O my God that the more you want to give, the more you make us desire.

St. Therese of Lisieux

Desire is the straw that stirs the drink...Spirituality is, ultimately, about what we do with that desire.

Ronald Rolheiser

Everybody has a hungry heart.

Bruce Springsteen

# Shame & Disordered Desire

Here we are confronted with a deep paradox: it is desire that evil exploited, inserting shame in its place, yet desire is the very substance of our created being to which God is calling. He is calling out our desire in order to redeem it and make it the leading edge of the renewal of all things.

Curt Thompson

# Redeeming Desire

So discipleship is more a matter of hungering and thirsting than of knowing and believing. Jesus's command to follow him is a command to align our loves and longings with his - to want what God wants, to desire what God desires, to hunger and thirst after God and crave a world where he is all in all - a vision encapsulated by the shorthand "the kingdom of God."

James KA Smith



So let us long, because we are to be filled...That is our life, to be trained by longing: and our training through the holy longing advances in the measure that our longings are detached from the love of this world....Let us stretch ourselves out towards him, that when he comes he may fill us full.

St. Augustine

# Invitation

**What do you want?**