

DESIRE a book written by **John Eldridge**
The journey we must take to find the life that God offers us.

There was a time many years back, when the sea lion knew he was lost. In those days he would stop every traveler he met to see if they might help him find his way back to the sea. But no one seemed to know the way. On he searched but never finding. After years without success, the sea lion took refuge beneath a solitary tree beside a very small water hole. The tree provided shelter from the burning rays of the sun, which was very fierce in that place. And the water hole, though small and muddy, was wet, in its own kind of way. Here he settled down and got on with life as best he could.

2. ‘The Dilemma of Desire’.

“I never knew dusk could break my heart. So much folding in. I’d give years away to have you here, to know I can’t lose you again.” Fernando Ortega

Definition of ‘Dilemma’. A quandary, a predicament, a problem, a puzzle, a conundrum, a difficult choice.

Definition of ‘Desire’. A yearning for, a longing for, a craving for, a hunger or a thirst, a burning passion, a strong feeling of wanting to have something.

Desire can be the source of our most noblest aspirations and our deepest sorrows. The pleasure and the pain go together; indeed they emanate from the same region of our hearts. We cannot live without desire, and sometimes it sets us up for devastating disappointments.

“I had a dream in time gone by, when hope was high and life worth living. I dreamed that love would never die, I dreamed that God would be forgiving.” from *Les Misérables*.

Scripture says “Hope deferred makes the heart sick ...” Prov. 13:12

We all know the dilemma of desire, how awful it is when we open our hearts to joy, only to have grief come in. We forget that they sometimes go together. What we don’t know is what to do with it, how to live in this world with desire so deep in us and disappointment lurking around every corner. Should we, dare we, or how do we continue to desire?

But the end of the proverb says “*but when dreams come true there is life and joy*’.

In every person there is a passionate, driving desire for more. The dilemma is that our longings for material joy are almost always partially blocked; our desire for better health and deeper relationships are never quite possible. Even our most small desires like: waiting in a due to be served, waiting for the whole sequence of the traffic lights to scroll through before it is our turn to go. It is so, so frustrating not having even these small desires appeased.

When we find ourselves reacting instantly to a situation with anger and a verbal outburst, do we ever examine what is going on in our hearts? It is rarely the small event causing our rage. If we look below the surface we will find thwarted or blocked desire. It is just that the ‘little thing’ has triggered and opened the reservoir of our pain and disappointments relative to our blocked desires and goals. Very few of our desires are self fulfilling; all our deepest longings require others to come through for us. Inevitably, someone or something stands in the way. Unfulfilled and unrealised desire has an immense power to shape our lives and relationships. Can you see this dynamic of frustrated desire at work in some of your fractured relationships?

You see, the battle of desire rages not only between us, but within us. We are caught on the horns of a dilemma, our unmet desires are a source of our trouble, and it often feels it could get worse if we allow ourselves to feel how much we desire. Not only that, we often don't know what we desire! The reason we don't know what we want is that we are so unacquainted with our desire. Many of us try to keep a safe distance between our daily lives and our desires, because we have found in the past it causes us so much pain and trouble.

Dare we awaken our hearts to their true desires? Dare we come alive? As we have said 'Our dilemma is : we can't seem to live with desire, and we can't live without it.

The tragedy is increased ten fold when this suicide of the heart takes place under the conviction that this is precisely what Christianity recommends! We could never be more mistaken.

For Reflection

Q1. What has led you, if this is so, to reduce your life to just getting on as best as you can? Are you sure you haven't just reduced your dreams to a more manageable size?

Q2. What dreams have you had that have seemingly died along the way?

Q3. Why do we often not know what we desire?

Q4. What do you fear would happen if you lived fully and freely from desire?

Q5. Can you spot any fractured relationships caused by the dynamic of desire?

Q6. And what will happen to you - to your heart, to your life - if you don't live from desire?

Q7. Are you willing to let your desires rise and then embrace them?

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