

our decisions. Jesus invites us to listen to our hearts, discover what our desires really are, and bring them into the light of God's presence.

Psalm 37:4 says, "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." God grants the desires of our hearts – not the superficial ones or the destructive ones or the evil ones, but those that come from the deepest place of who we are. These are the God-prompted ones, the ones that God initiates in our hearts, the ones that reflect God's will for our lives. When we follow these God-prompted, God-initiated longings and desires, they draw us toward an abundance of life. May the Spirit of God lead us to these life-giving longings.

### Questions for Reflection

1. On a line where 1 indicates "deeply restless" and 10 indicates "utterly content," where would you place yourself at the moment?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10  
deeply restless \_\_\_\_\_ utterly content

2. How would you like to be remembered at your funeral?

3. How do you work out the difference between healthy and unhealthy desires in your life?

4. What are you looking for today?

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Questions God Asks Us (4)

**What Are You Looking For?**

John 1:35-39

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We are constantly looking for something, seeking something and wanting something. We are looking for something more, beyond ourselves, something we don't have at the moment. We are striving for something that will make us happier, give our lives more meaning, deepen our sense of significance. We are always searching for something that will enable us to live fuller, happier, and freer lives.

Jesus' first question in the Gospels connects with this search. John the Baptizer was talking with two of his disciples. As they discussed together, Jesus walked by. John pointed toward Jesus and called out, "Look, here is the Lamb of God." (1:36) Attracted by this description, John's two disciples began to follow Jesus. Suddenly Jesus stopped, turned around, and asked, "What are you looking for?" (1:38)

They were obviously searching for something that was missing in their lives. Jesus asked them what they were looking for. This question has several meanings. Today's question urged the two disciples to listen to their hearts. It also challenged them to discover what they desired most. And the question invited them to ask for what they wanted.

First, Jesus' question urges us to listen to our own hearts. The word 'heart' is a metaphor that expresses the deep center of our lives, the core of our personalities. When someone has shared his or her heart with us, we have been given access to the most sacred and secret depths of who he or she is. Therefore, when we listen to our hearts, we seek to pay close attention to our innermost yearning and longings.

When we don't listen to the cry of our own hearts, we rob ourselves of living a life that is marked by depth and wonder and passion. We miss out on experiencing beautiful, intimate relationships with each other and with God. Instead we find ourselves living superficially. We are busy but going nowhere of any significance.

Will you allow Jesus' question, "*What are you looking for?*" to lead you deeper into your heart? At first it may not be easy to find your way, especially if you have been living on the surface for a long time. You may need some help in the process of finding your desires and longings.

Second, today's Jesus question challenges us to discover what we desire most. This is not as simple as it sounds. Just try answering this question for yourself right now. It's often difficult to respond clearly. One reason is that we have so many desires. Some are quite superficial, like, "I would really like a new car." Others are much deeper, sometimes coming from painful places within our hearts. For example, a childless couple longs for a baby; a single person wants a partner; a sick person hopes to get well. Sometimes our desires may clash with one another. Part of me wants to be at rest or watch TV at home; another part of me would like to go outside, walk around the garden, and just chill out.

How then do we discover what we most deeply desire? Imagine that you have died and someone writes your eulogy for the funeral. Let us take a few moments to think of or to write your own eulogy that you would like people to say about you at your funeral. Be sure that your eulogy fulfills your deepest desires as you are aware of them in this moment. As you write or think of your own eulogy, consider the following questions. They are designed to get you thinking about the eulogy you would most like to have. Would you like to be remembered as someone who loved deeply or was always self-centered and selfish? Would you like to be remembered as someone who was honest or was deceitful? Would you like to be remembered as someone who was generous or was tightfisted?

Would you like to be remembered as someone who responded with compassion to those in need or never cared? Would you like to be remembered as someone who loved life and cherished each moment or complained constantly? Remember, these questions are not about how you are living at the moment; they are about what you desire most for your life.

Third, Jesus' question, "*What are you looking for?*" invites to ask for what we want. We think we are not supposed to put aside what we want in order to find out what God wants us to do. Jesus taught us to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Then, what is the connection between our desires and God's will?

When Jesus asked the disciples what they were looking for, his question demonstrated once and for all that God is concerned and interested in our desires. Clearly God does not want us to ignore our longings, push them aside, or put them to death. God wants us to listen to the desires of our hearts, to befriend them, to understand them, and then to ask for what we want.

This does not mean that God will simply give us what we ask for. Not all our desires express the true longings of our hearts. Some of them are selfish and quite superficial. Other desires sometimes push us in destructive directions which could cause great pain. Nonetheless, we need to bring all of them into the open before God. Only then can God give us the light to sort out the healthy from the unhealthy.

Unhealthy desires make our world smaller. They isolate us from other people and pull us away from God. On the other hand, healthy desires expand our world. They connect us with others in life-giving ways and draw us toward God. They invite us to share God's dream for the world.

What are you looking for? Our desires shape who we become. They give us energy to pursue our dreams and our goals. They influence