

Desire and Lust

1. Carefully read these two biblical passages about desire. How does Satan determine if a desire is good? How does the apostle Paul determine if a desire is good? Discuss your observations.

And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, so she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Gen 3:4-5, LSB)

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! Rather, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. For I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet." (Rom 7:7, LSB)

2. Use a Bible dictionary and search for "lust." What does that word mean?

Search: studylight Baker Evangelical Dictionary

From search results, select: StudyLight.org Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

Choose letter: L

Select: lust

3. Carefully observe what the apostles Paul and Peter point out in their comparison of two groups of people. What are they highlighting as influencing one's desires?

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; (1 Thes 4:3-5, LSB)

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose—because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin— so as to no longer live the rest of the time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have worked out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. (1 Pet 4:1-3, LSB)

4. What figures of speech do you see? How does the apostle Paul compare the conflict of desires? What is he saying?

But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5:16-24, LSB)

5. What do you observe of the apostle Paul's comparisons here? What do you learn about sin?

And you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all also formerly conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Eph 2:1-3, LSB)

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17, LSB)

Desire and Lust

Teacher Notes

1. Carefully read these two biblical passages about desire. How does Satan determine if a desire is good? How does the apostle Paul determine if a desire is good? Discuss your observations.

And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God, knowing good and evil.**" Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that **the tree was desirable to make one wise**, so she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Gen 3:4-6, LSB)

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! Rather, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. **For I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."** (Rom 7:7, LSB)

Ask the student: do you recall what God told Adam about eating the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? According to Satan, how do you determine if a desire is good?

And Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may surely eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
(Gen 2:16-17, LSB)

Satan deceitfully lies to deceive the Woman into thinking that "you can be like God, knowing good and evil." In other words, Satan is promoting the idea that the standard for good and evil is determined by you.

Ask the student: According to Paul, how do you determine if a desire is good?

When speaking of the purpose of the Law, the apostle Paul indicates that God's word is the basis of learning what desires are evil (Rom 7:7).

2. Use a Bible dictionary and search for "lust." What does that word mean?

Use your phone to search: studylight Baker Evangelical Dictionary

From search results, select: StudyLight.org Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology

Choose letter: L

Select: lust

Ask the student: how would you define lust?

Lust refers to the degree of desire like a craving, strong or passionate desire.

3. Carefully observe what the apostles Paul and Peter point out in their comparison of two groups of people. What are they highlighting as influencing one's desires?

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like **the Gentiles who do not know God;** (1 Thes 4:3-5, LSB)

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose—because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin— so as to **no longer live the rest of the time in the flesh for the lusts of men**, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have worked out **the desire of the Gentiles**, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. (1 Pet 4:1-3, LSB)

Ask the student: what do you see? What is a Gentile?

A Gentile is someone who is not Jewish either by birth or faith. The apostles point out that there are two groups of people. Those who know God and His word and those who do not (Gentile).

Those who know God and His word pursue sanctification by abstaining from sexual immorality and selfish endeavors. Those who don't pursue "sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries."

4. What figures of speech do you see? How does the apostle Paul compare the conflict of desires? What is he saying?

But I say, **walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh**. For the **flesh sets its desire against the Spirit**, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the **deeds of the flesh** are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5:16-24, LSB)

Ask the student: what do you observe?

Our desires can be influenced by the Holy Spirit (the "Spirit") or by human nature (the "flesh").

Ask the student: how do you get the Holy Spirit?

When you have faith in God through His Son Jesus, God promised in the New Covenant to put a new spirit within you:

Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to do My judgments. And you will inhabit the land that I gave to your fathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. (Ezek 36:26-28, LSB)

If you cooperate with the Spirit, you will exhibit the fruit of the Spirit.

5. What do you observe of the apostle Paul's comparisons here? What do you learn about sin?

And you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, **according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience**, among whom we all also formerly conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Eph 2:1-3, LSB)

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts, but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17, LSB)

Ask the student: is your worldview defined by God or not? Take some time for discussion.

Are you like god knowing good and evil and desire Satan's life of the world?

Or

Do you love God for what He's done and desire the life He promises His people by obeying His word?