

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

The Sea Lion loved his rock, it had become very special to him. But in reality it was not the rock so much itself, but the smell of salt air that came to him on the easterly breeze and the vivid dreams he had of the sea. But as you know the best of dreams cannot go on, and when he awoke in the mornings he was still in the barren lands. Eventually it all became too much for him to bear. He visited his rock only occasionally, telling himself that he was much too busy to waste his precious time sitting on a rock. The truth of it was, that waking up so far from home was becoming unbearable for him. And so, the day finally came when he stopped going to his rock altogether, and he no longer lifted his nose when the sea breeze blew.

4. ‘Disowned Desire’.

“The danger is that the soul should persuade itself that it is not hungry. It can only persuade itself of this by lying.” Simone Weil

If we are totally honest with ourselves, we’ve all abandoned desires that are deep within us and in this leg of the journey, the goal is to discover how much of your current life is a true reflection of your desires, so that you might begin to live life with real faith and genuine hope. Talking about passion, Augustine said *“Give me a man in love, one who yearns deeply, who is far away from home. give me that sort of man, he knows what I mean. If I speak to a cold man, he just doesn’t know what I am talking about.”*

Every great saint had great desire, a burning passion for more, it was in the heart of all of them. Those who would kill passion altogether would murder the very essence that makes heroes of the faith. Are we producing men and women in the church whose greatest virtue is that they do not offend anyone! We then wonder why there is not more passion for Christ. Our greatest enemy of holiness is not passion; it is apathy. After all, the writer of Hebrews says *“It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God...for our God is a consuming fire.”*

We cannot hope to live like Jesus did without a similar depth of passion. So many people find that the dilemma of desire is too much for them to live with, and so they abandon, and they disown their desire. You may recall in Jesus’ story of the talents, Matt 25:14-30, that the third servant was thrown into outer darkness! Why? The issue is not capital gains-it’s about what we think of God. When we bury our desires, we are saying the same thing. “God, I don’t dare desire because I don’t trust you. I think you’re hard hearted.” Killing our desire may look like sanctification, but it’s really Godlessness! Literally our way of handling life without God. Jesus said *“When I return, will I find anyone who lives by faith.”* He had been talking about the persistent widow who wasn’t getting justice but who refused to give up. Jesus was using her as a picture of unrelenting desire.

To live with desire is to choose vulnerability over self protection; to admit our desire and seek help beyond ourselves is to be even more vulnerable. It is an act of trust in the living God. The deepest moral issue is always what we, in our heart of hearts, believe about God. And nothing reveals this belief more clearly as what we do with our desire. We hide our true desire and call it maturity. Jesus is not impressed. He points to the less sophisticated attitude of a child as a better way to live. We do not allow ourselves to feel how desperate our situation truly is. We sense that our desire will undo us if we let it rise up in all its fullness. Wouldn’t we just be better burying the disappointment and yearning and just get on with life? As Larry

Crab points out, pretending seems a much more reliable road to Christian maturity. The price we pay is a loss of soul, of communion with God, a loss of direction, and a loss of hope. The damage of drifting without desire is, of course, a life lost to itself. Millions of souls drifting through life, without an inner compass to give them direction. Most take their cues from others and live out scripts from make believe or someone else's life. It's a high price to pay. Far too high.

The believers life in God should be filled with romance not duty. After all, 'dutiful' roses to a woman are a contradiction in terms; she wants to be *desired*, and so does God. W.A Tozer said "God waits to be wanted."

Sanctified resignation has become the new abiding place of contemporary Christians. No wonder nobody ever asks them about their faith. Why would they? They lead such boring lives. And so, having abandoned their desire, they have of course also lost hope. C.S. Lewis summed it up when he said "*We can only hope for what we desire.*" No desire, no hope! It is not wrong to desire, we get into more trouble from disowned desire. The danger of disowned desire is that it sets us up for a fall. We are unable to distinguish real life from a tempting imitation. We are fooled by the impostors and eventually we find some means of procuring a taste of the life we were meant to have. It is however a poor substitute.

For Reflection

1. What are the dangers of recovering Desire? What wonderful things might you do? What might be the effect on other people?
2. Why are we so embarrassed by our desire? Why do we pretend that we are doing fine, thank you, and that we don't need a thing?
3. Is duty or desire the governing force in your life? What does desire do in your prayers? How desperate and persistent are you?
4. What do you think God thinks about your dreams and desires? More to the point, do you believe he really wants to help you reach them?
5. What desires over the years have been precious to you? Have you disowned them? Does it seem that God is indifferent or even hostile to these desires?
6. Do you feel you are living from your heart in your true calling? What does the way in which you handle desire tell you about your heart's real beliefs about God, and his heart toward you?
7. How hopeful would you say you are these days? What are you honestly hoping for? How much anticipation are you living with - a sense that your desires are coming true?