

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

This summary is to give a very brief insight into what the book 'Desire' is about. To stimulate the reader's desire to buy the book, to review my longer summaries, and benefit from the incredible insight John Eldridge has into the mind of Christ. To understand Jesus' message of Desire is to bring freedom and rest to the believer. At the same time to propel them to run the race, the apostle Paul spoke about so ardently.

MILE 1. Our hearts deepest secret.

There is a secret set within each of our hearts. It is the desire for life as it was meant to be. Isn't there a life you have been searching for all your days? We long to live this life we dream of, the life that is beyond our grasp. Our desires often seem a secret that may surface at times and then hide again in the deeper places of our hearts. Recalling these defining desires cannot be rushed or orchestrated. It takes time, reflection, and allowing your heart to be moved as you sort through things.

MILE 2. The Dilemma of Desire.

Desire is the source of our most noble aspirations and our deepest sorrows. The pleasure and the pain go together; indeed they emanate from the same region in our hearts. We cannot live without the yearning and yet the yearning sets us up for disappointment. Our dilemma is: we can't seem to live with desire, and we can't live without it. Our question then has to be 'What do we do about this dilemma? Jesus knows our dilemma and spoke to it in nearly everything he said. So go and find out what he said.

MILE 3. Dare we Desire.

Jesus came to speak to our desire because it was 'desire' that sustained him. Desire was the source of his strength, particularly when he faced the cross. He said 'come to me and have life to the full'. And now he asks 'What do you want?' We have a realistic God. He knows ecstasy is not an option, we were made for bliss.

MILE 4. Disowned Desire.

To kill or just disown your desire is sin! It says "I don't trust you God to come through for me!" Nothing reveals this belief as clearly as what we do with our desire. Jesus is not impressed. He said "When I return, will I find anyone who lives by faith?" He was speaking about 'desire'. C.S. Lewis said "We can only hope for what we desire." No desire, no hope! The adventure of faith first involves identifying our heart's desire, and then staying with it and with God as he reveals to you how it will unfold. Let him handle "the how." You chase "the what." Do not be fooled by the imposters for they will surely present themselves.

MILE 5. Mocking our Desire.

These are the imposters that pose as the 'real' thing. They only take us further away from God. We need to identify these 'other loves' and idols in our lives, repent and turn away from them. These imposters usually show up in the arenas of love, adventure and pleasure. Most have a perfectly legitimate place in our lives but we have let them rule us. Although our desire may take us to many other lovers, we must not make the fatal error and revert to killing our hearts. Instead, we must examine the first lesson of desire: *we must have life, it is not an option.* Our usual problem is in refusing to wait and admit we have got the timing wrong.

MILE 6. The Divine Thwarted.

God loves us so much that he has to thwart us, or even take away those imposters, idols, that we have in our lives, in order to save us. He can at times seem like our enemy. It is not correct to believe that God is responsible for every trial or plan that goes wrong in our life. We live in a broken world and we have an adversary, the Devil. Neither can we win our game of chess with God, and we cannot outrun the curse (death). The second lesson of desire is: *we must have life, we cannot arrange it, we must take it as it comes*. If we do not accept this, the spell will not be broken and we will never discover true hope. To sustain the life of the heart, the life of deep desire, we desperately need to possess a clearer picture of *that* life which lies before us.

MILE 7. The Great Restoration.

See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone, The flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come. Song of songs 2:11-12 God gives us the seasons to remind us that the Great Restoration is at hand. He has a Spring planned for us to, and we do not have to accept that the winter of this world is the final word. The kingdom of God in all its fullness is the 'Summer' the Father has in store for us. We should by now be starting to see, be stunned and surprised by at how the life we've always longed for really *is* the life that God has promised us.

MILE 8. The Grand Affair.

The Grand Affair is about God's love for us. It is about his longing and desire for intimacy with each of us. It is deeply personal. For in our hearts we carry many desires, but the deepest of them all is our longing to be loved, to be loved by another human being. This desire within each of us has been set there by the father. It is in the deep centre of our being that we call the heart. While our desire for human love is valid it is only a shadow or substitute for being loved by him.

MILE 9. The Adventure Begins.

One of the grand essentials of human happiness is having something to do, something meaningful. It may come as a surprise to you when Jesus says "enter into the joy of your master", he means I have something for you to do. We are destined to be rulers of the universe, ruling with him and being involved creatively. This is our destiny. God is training us now. What we do for his kingdom now will not be wasted and our gifting and talents will be used in the next phase of his kingdom. The life we live now *is* the dress rehearsal for what is to come. Are you getting ready for it?

MILE 10. Entering more deeply into Desire.

To find the land of desire you must take the journey of desire. You can't get there by any other means. As John has said you need to get your heart back before you can enter more deeply into desire. Over the coming years of your journey, God will take you, if you let him, back through deeper cycles of learning Desire's three lessons. 1. *We must have life, it is not an option*. 2. *We must have this life, we cannot arrange it, we must take it as it comes*. 3. *The life we prize is coming*. Another essential we must learn along the way is: *life is now a battle and a journey*. While this is so, and we do face a desperate quest through dangerous country, but it is to a destination that is beyond our hopes and wildest dreams. The path to a clearer and deeper understanding of our desire depends on how we have been handling it, whether it be from being buried under years of duty, or from years of indulgence. If duty-jettison everything but the essentials of life. If indulgence-give it up-go cold turkey. When you do this, the enemy will tempt you with every trick he has to offer. It will finally come down to worship. What will you give your heart away to, in return for the promise of life? Mind you, it is a lie, as the life he offers is an imposter of the real thing. Only as we truly delight in God is it safe for him to give us our desires, for *then* they are not likely to become our

idols. And by our delighting in God, he heals our false desires as our souls are able to come true in the light of their maker. Worship becomes the means by which we most deeply heal our desire. In the eternal kingdom not only will we find our place, but we will be empowered to do everything we want to do, with and for God. This is the truest explanation for what is going on, the only way to rightly understand our experience.

MILE 11. Letting Go.

To meaningfully speak of 'letting go' is for us to enter the arena of strongly embraced possessions and maybe relationships...those things deeply rooted, people and things that define life for us. In doing this we will experience freedom of desire and rest. And in order for our hearts to live free, we must learn the spiritual grace of detachment—not abandoning our desire but surrendering our will to it. Paul knew what it was to live with desire, it was to be alive and thirst. He also told us the secret of the sojourning heart. He said we are to live in hope, and hope is groaning and waiting. No one wants to groan and wait, but they are necessary if we are to make it through to the end. God, has however, in his wisdom, given us beauty. Beauty is a pure gift and we can use it proportionately to our afflictions. Finally, we must let go because we cannot win the game of chess with God over our lives. We must surrender our lives fully to him. Spiritual surrender is not resignation. It is not choosing to care no longer. It is surrender with desire, or in desire. Desire is still present, felt, even welcomed. But the will to secure is made subject to the divine will in an act of abandoned trust. This kind of surrender comes only after a night of wrestling. It comes only after we open our hearts, our deepest selves. The freedom, beauty and rest that follow are among the greatest of all surprises.

MILE 12. Keeping Heart - to the End.

Of all the enemies our heart must face, forgetfulness may be the worst because it is the most insidious. It does not come against us like an enemy in full battle formation with banners waving. Nor does it come temptingly, seductively like the lady in red. It works slowly, commonly, mostly unnoticed. So we need to be forewarned. How quickly we can forget all the good things God has done for us. John says, in order not to lose heart we must learn how to cling to truth, for we are apt to lose the storyline every day. We can do this by making a practice of unplugging from the constant noise and clamour of our day. Make time for eternity in your daily life. Record what God says to you, so you can remember it, for what he says is precious beyond telling.

The main 'Keys' to be accepted from the Journey of Desire are:

1. *It Can't Be Done.* This is the hardest truth for us to accept. We must have life as it comes to us, good and bad. No matter how hard we try, how clever our plan may be, we cannot arrange for the life we desire or prize.
2. *Life is a Battle and a Journey.* We are at war, and the bloody battle is over our hearts.
3. *The story continues.* Whatever life brings to us on our journey on this planet we must have cemented in our hearts that the story will continue. We have all of eternity before us.
4. *It Is Coming.* How easy it is to slip back into the thinking that it's now or never; that if it's not here, it's not at all." The life we prize is coming. Remember our life here *is the* dress rehearsal for the Grand Affair.