

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

June 6, 2008—Atonement—Relationship Restored: Us With God; Part III

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>Desiring God’s Will for Me</p> <p>To the performance-oriented believer, physical death would mean release. Rather, we fear dying to that world of control we have falsely come to believe guarantees us belonging and love. That fear of death prevents even the born anew from change—until love reaches the frozen corners, and death of self sets us free.¹</p> <p>1) What is God’s will for me? a) Eze 33:11 b) Jn 10:10</p> <p>God’s will for us is not <i>primarily</i> a matter of whether you take the job in Chicago or the one in Calgary, whether you marry Jane or [Jill], or whether you attend a Catholic or a Baptist church. God’s will is that you become the person that from eternity you were destined to be—your true self in Christ. The choice between jobs or potential spouses [or service opportunities or giving or church attendance or...] may well have significant impact on this. But we miss the point of God’s will when we fail to recognize that God’s interest in what we do grows out of a much more fundamental interest in who we are.²</p> <p>2) Desiring God’s will for me a) Ps 63:1, 6-8 b) Ps 119:25-32</p> <p>The human journey—particularly our spiritual journey—is shaped by our deepest desires. More often than we expect, we get what we most desire.³ Deepest desires are always fulfilled “not in our arriving but in our journeying; not in the finding but in the searching.” For truly it is in the searching that we are found.⁴</p> <p>Thomas Merton puts it this way: ‘Life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire.’⁵</p>

¹ *The Transformation of the Inner man.* 45.

² *Desiring God’s Will.* 103-104. Emphasis added.

³ *Ibid.* 79.

⁴ *Ibid.* 80. Quote from Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There.*

⁵ *Ibid.* 81.

3) Proper desires

a) Two views of desire (*Chariots of Fire*)⁶

i) Kingdom of God:

Eric Liddell: I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure

ii) Kingdom of Self:

Sybil Gordon: [*about running*] Do you love it?

Harold M. Abrahams: I'm more of an addict. It's a compulsion with me, a weapon I can use.

Sybil Gordon: Against what?

Harold M. Abrahams: Being Jewish I suppose.

Prayer sorts out our desires. Notice that I did not say that in prayer *we are able* to sort out our desires. No. The sorting work is God's, not ours. Our job is to sit in his presence and allow God to purify our desires.⁷

b) Jer 17:9

c) Ps 139:23-24

First Rule: In the persons who go from mortal sin to mortal sin, the enemy is commonly used to propose to them apparent pleasures, making them imagine sensual delights and pleasures in order to hold them more and make them grow in their vices and sins. In these persons the good Spirit uses the opposite method, pricking them and biting their consciences through the process of reason.

Second Rule: In the persons who are going on intensely cleansing their sins and rising from good to better in the service of God our Lord, it is the method contrary to that in the first Rule, for then it is the way of the evil spirit to bite, sadden and put obstacles, disquieting with false reasons, that one may not go on; and it is proper to the good to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations and quiet, easing, and putting away all obstacles, that one may go on in well doing.⁸

4) My desires—what do I seek?

a) Jn 1:38

How do you answer Jesus?

- What do you like to do? (Buddhists try to extinguish “desire,” not Christians. We die to kingdom-of-self motivated desires to live fully into who God created us to be.)
 - Ask “why?” five times
- When do you feel his pleasure?
- What images come to mind?

Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; as for me, I shall be glad in the Lord. (Ps 104:34)
May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your counsel! (Ps 20:4)

⁶ *Chariots of Fire*. Warner Brothers. 1981.

⁷ *Desiring God's Will*. 87. Emphasis in original.

⁸ Rules from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

7:00	<p>Closing Prayer</p> <p>My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I cannot see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But, I believe my desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.⁹</p>

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Benner, David G. *Surrender to Love*. IVP Books. 2003.
- _____ *Desiring God's Will*. IVP Books. 2005.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. *Death on a Friday Afternoon*. Basic Books. 2000.
- Sandford, John & Paula. *The Transformation of the Inner Man*. Victory House. 1982.
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux. *On God's Love*.
- St. Teresa of Avila. *The Interior Mansions*.

⁹ Thomas Merton. Quoted in *Desiring God's Will*. 90.