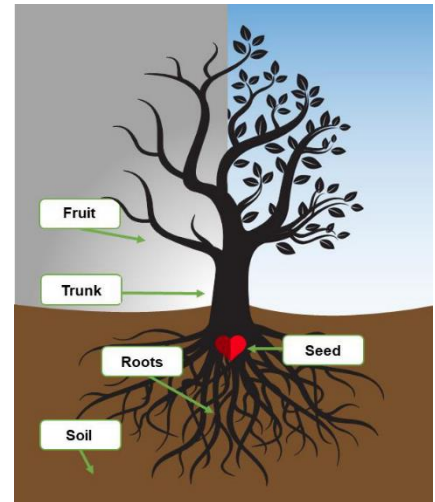


# Desires and Life Expectations - How they work together to shape beliefs and behavior

ABC Conference | Track Session 7

## 1) Biblical view of desires

- a) Review of the Harvest USA Tree Model
  - i) Heart/seed
  - ii) Influences outside of our control/soil
  - iii) Desires/roots
  - iv) Trunk/beliefs (expectations about how life works)
  - v) Behaviors/fruit



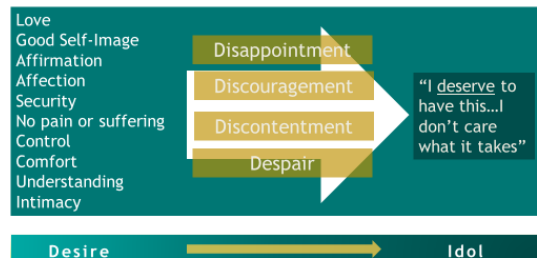
We have many desires that are the result of being created by a loving God. He designed us to look to him in dependence and trust for many good blessings that he lavishes on us. Our desires for significance, for love, for affirmation, for purpose, for security, for belonging are all focused on God's abundant blessing and provision in the original garden of creation. However, since our hearts are now committed to self-rule and autonomy, all of our desires, though originally good, are now corrupted because we do not seek them within a context of trusting, obedient reliance on God. Further, some of these desires become replacements for God himself—idols of our hearts.<sup>1</sup>

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

## 2) NIKKI Case Study - Counseling pathway: desires and expectations

- a) What desires are ruling and why?

### HOW DESIRES BECOME IDOLS



<sup>1</sup> Jim Weidenaar and Mark Sanders, *Men's Discovery Series – Unit 2, Treasuring Christ*, 28. Available as a free PDF download at <https://harvest-usa.myshopify.com/collections/curriculum>.

b) What beliefs are connected to these desires?

c) What expectations does your counselee have regarding their sexual attractions, or lack thereof? Their experience of gender?

d) What fruit is bearing out from their beliefs, desires and life expectations?

### 3) Nikki Case Study - Counseling pathway: reframe desires and expectations with the gospel

a) Keep in mind that your counselee is a saint, sufferer, sinner

To examine desires is one of the most fruitful ways to come at the topic of motivation biblically. New Testament authors repeatedly allude to life-controlling cravings when they summarize the innermost dynamics of the human soul. Which will triumph, the natural deviancy of the lusts of the flesh or the restored sanity of the desires of the Spirit? Christ's apostles have the greatest confidence that only the resources of the Gospel of grace and truth possess sufficient depth and power to change us in the ways we most need changing. The mercies of God work to *forgive* and then to *change* what is deeply evil, but even more deeply curable by God's hand and voice. The in-working power of grace qualitatively transforms the very desires that psychologists assume are hardwired, unchangeable, morally neutral givens. Christ's glance slays and replaces (in a lifelong battle) the very lusts the theories variously explain as "needs" or "drives" or "instincts" or "goals." That's the second unique thing God shows us about human psychology. We can be fundamentally rewired by the merciful presence of the Messiah. <sup>2</sup>

b) Address thwarted desires and disappointment

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<sup>2</sup> David Powlison, *Seeing With New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition Through the Lens of Scripture*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003), 147.

i) God's comfort



ii) God's correction

iii) God's provision

c) Disciple and encourage your counselee about a Christ-centered understanding of life expectations

