

Desires, Deception, and the Cross Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. How are you consecrating yourself to God this week?
2. What is one small thing that you would find it very difficult to live without?

Read the following passages: Genesis 3:1-10; Colossians 2:6-15.

Desire is a normal part of the human experience, but our desires are not always trustworthy. Even when we get what we desire we are often unsatisfied. We need God to tell us who we are and what we were made for. In Genesis 3 we discover two fundamental realities: 1) We were made for God; 2) We hide from God. These two realities prompt an obvious question: If we were made for God and our hearts ultimately long for God, why would we hide from God? We can identify at least four reasons: Deception, Temptation, Transgression, and Accusation. Colossians 2 shows us how the cross overcomes each of these barriers.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Do you have a desire to walk with God? Explain. What should we do if we don't feel a desire to pursue God?
2. Have you fallen prey to any of the following deceptive beliefs? Explain.
 - Believing that acquiring money and things will bring lasting happiness (see Matthew 13:22; 1 Timothy 6:10)
 - Believing that excessive food and alcohol can relieve your stress and make you happy (see Proverbs 23:19-21)
 - Believing that an attractive body and personality will get you what you need (see Proverbs 31:30; 1 Peter 3:3-4)
 - Believing that gratifying sexual lust will bring lasting satisfaction (see Ephesians 4:22; 1 Peter 2:11)
 - Believing that you can sin and get away without any negative consequences (see Hebrews 3:12-13)
 - Believing that you must gain the approval of certain people in order to be happy (see Galatians 1:10)
 - Believing that you must measure up to certain standards in order to feel good about yourself (see Galatians 3:2-3; 5:1)

Adapted from Neil Anderson, *The Steps to Freedom in Christ*

3. What's the difference between *wrong* desires and *disordered* desires? Why might we say that the woman's desires in the garden were disordered desires, not wrong desires? What desires are you most tempted to try to meet in an improper way?

4. When God confronted the man about his sin, he tried to shift the blame to his wife. (See Genesis 3:11-12.) Are there any areas of your life in which you find it difficult to fully admit and confess that you are guilty of sin? Explain. Why is confessing our sin so often difficult for us? Are there any sins you need to confess right now?
5. Reflecting on Colossians 2:6-15, how does God deliver us from Deception, Temptation, Transgression, and Accusation?

Pray