

# The Power of Affection

By Jim Davis

Jesus taught, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" Matthew 5:6. A. W. Tozer said, "Every Christian will become at last what his desires have made him. We are all the sum total of our hungers." It is a basic principle that whatever it is our heart desires consumes our thoughts, time and energy. There would be no need for laws if it were not for the desire of the human heart wishing for things that come at great expense or damage to others. If I were to ask you what you value most in life the quickest way for you to respond truthfully would be to consider what you have thought about and meditated on this past week. The significance of the power of affection is stated in the first great commandment of God. "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind*" (Matthew 22:37).

I grew up in West Texas where mesquite wood was in abundance. Barbecue steak was frequently on the menu for the evening meal. We enjoyed good food and being outside in the cool desert climate. When I was little my father raised pit bulldogs. When I got older we always had a German shepherd dog on the premises. Regardless of the breed, when it came time to barbecue steaks they were always close at hand.

You have to admire their focus. I can remember finishing that T-bone steak and leaning back in the chair to clean the bone. With great intensity the dog would gaze at the hand of his master. If I moved my hand slowly forward and slowly back or if I moved it very quickly you could not distract the dog from the desired object. It would sometimes become a game to see if we could divert their attention by calling their name, pretending to ignore them, or standing some object or person between the thing that they wanted most.

We need that kind of intensity and focus of purpose for the right things in life. Jesus said, "*where your treasure is there your heart will be also*" (Mt. 6:21). The Apostle Paul said, "*If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth*" (Col. 3:1-2).

I love how the Psalmist in Psalm 145 says it.

***The Lord sustains all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to Thee, and Thou dost give them their food in due time. Thou dost open Thy hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and kind in all His deeds. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. (Psalm 145:14-19)***

In a moment's time, a big dog can demolish and consume a T-bone. So many of the things that we enjoy in life can only satisfy us for a moment. But what about lasting satisfaction? Is it possible? The Apostle Peter speaks of an inheritance that is imperishable, and undefiled, and will not fade away (1 Peter 1:4). Think about it. Something in life that will not perish. Something that is undefiled. Something that will not fade away. Almost everything that we can have in this life will either perish, or become defiled, or fade away. The Lord will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him. Only the Lord knows our makeup and can supply lasting satisfaction.

Have you ever considered the possibilities and the benefits of hungering to know God?

How our lives would change if we were hungering for the living God? As we consider the focus of that big German shepherd dog and take to heart Paul's admonition to set our minds on the things above, not on the things on the earth we should grasp the emotional intensity of the first commandment. Deep hunger and longing after God produces true satisfaction.

The things above that we should seek are the attributes exhibited in the life of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect demonstration of righteousness for which we should thirst. Seeking the benefit of others more than self. Always pursuing sinful men with love and compassion. Extending kindness to those who insult Him. Exercising patience toward those who are self-focused and self-consumed. While being reviled Jesus did not revile in return. He was not provoked to wrath nor did He hold grudges. The Bible says that Jesus kept entrusting Himself to Him (the Father) who judges righteously. That focus will take our minds off of jealousy and hatred for others and greed and other things of the earth.

Maybe you are trapped in the jaws of bitterness or hatred. As your thoughts become obsessed with these things of the earth you find yourself in bondage. But when you forgive and release the person with whom you are angry, then you are free. There is deep satisfaction in righteousness. If we understood the true value of holiness and righteousness we would thirst after it. It would take priority in our lives and our thoughts would be set upon those things from above.

You may find it very difficult to control your thoughts. Maybe your thought life has gotten completely out of control and you are so focused on the things of the earth that any escape seems hopeless. May I suggest that you start simply by asking God to give you the right desires? If some area of lust or sin is controlling you, Jesus Christ has the power to deliver you. God is so compassionate and forgiving of sinners. He will forgive you and He is able to free your thoughts from bondage. He will give you new desires for righteousness.

The power of your affections will lead you to life and freedom or it can lead you to bondage and destruction. Our Lord will open His hand and satisfy our desires. Put your focus upon Him.