

The Seven Longings of the Human Heart

I. GOD CREATED US WITH LONGING TO EXPERIENCE HIS PLEASURE AND JOY

- A. God created the human spirit with seven longings that draw us to Him and reflect His glory in us. They are the longing for the *assurance that we are enjoyed by God*, the longing to be *fascinated*, the longing to be *beautiful*, the longing to be *great*, the longing for *intimacy without shame*, the longing to be *wholehearted* (passionate), and the longing for *significance with lasting impact*.
- B. Each longing is a reflection of God’s personality. We are made in His image; thus we have these longings that enable us to walk with Jesus as His eternal companion. These longings will be in us forever and give insight into how He created us. We cannot remove them by repenting of them.
- C. Rather, we repent of seeking to fulfill them outside of our relationship with Jesus. Each of these longings has a counterfeit. The enemy tempts us to satisfy these longings outside of God’s will.
- D. The Spirit answers these basic longings in us in part in this age and in fullness in the age to come. As we seek to answer these longings in our relationship with Jesus, we will experience the “superior pleasures” of the gospel. In this way, we can walk free from the dominion of the “inferior pleasures” of sin. The result is that we are empowered to love Jesus more.

II. LONGING #1: THE LONGING FOR ASSURANCE OF BEING ENJOYED BY GOD

- A. Every person was created with a craving in their heart to be pursued, delighted in, and enjoyed, first by God and then by others. Jesus loves us in the intensity in which the Father loves Him (Jn. 15:9).
⁹As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you. (Jn. 15:9)
- B. I believe the most powerful stronghold of the mind is related to the fear of rejection and the trauma of shame. Our longing to be enjoyed by God is answered by understanding God’s emotions (affections) for us. This begins with understanding the finished work of the cross. As we understand **what** Jesus did on the cross, then we can understand **why** He did it.
- C. There is a difference between rebellion and spiritual immaturity in those who sincerely seek to obey God. He is angry at rebellion, but feels affection for immature believers who love Him.
- D. It is not difficult to believe that God rejoices in or enjoys people in heaven or on earth after they are spiritually mature. God enjoys us even now, even in our spiritual immaturity! Jesus described the Father’s joy over those who repent—the message of the lost sheep, coin, and son emphasize God’s joy in receiving any who sincerely seek to obey Him even in their weakness (Lk. 15:4-5, 8-10, 20).
²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. (Lk. 15:20)

¹²For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)

III. LONGING #2: THE LONGING TO BE FASCINATED

- A. There is a craving in our spirit to be fascinated, to marvel, and be awestruck and filled with wonder. The entertainment industry has identified this longing and profited from it. When God (the Spirit) reveals God's beauty to the human spirit we experience "divine entertainment" at its highest.

¹⁷*Your eyes will see the King in His beauty... (Isa. 33:17)*

- B. There is nothing more pleasurable or exhilarating than when God (the Spirit) reveals God to the human heart. This exhilarates our heart at the deepest levels. The Spirit discerns the deep things of the Father's mind and heart including the delight He feels for Jesus and the saints, etc.

¹⁰*The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...¹²We have received...the Spirit ...that we might know the things that have been freely given to us. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)*

- C. The Spirit escorts us on a divine treasure hunt into the beauty of Jesus. This includes the Holy Spirit making known to us the things that Jesus thinks and feels.

¹⁴*He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:14)*

- D. We are liberated from the *inferior pleasures* of sin by experiencing the *superior pleasures* of the beauty of Jesus. Without having a sense of awe, we live aimlessly and in boredom. A spiritually bored believer is weak and vulnerable, while a fascinated believer is equipped to resist temptation.

- E. God releases small "measures" of insight from the Word, which tenderize our spirit for a few moments. These subtle "flashes of glory" are to be a regular part of our relationship with God.

- F. David's heart was preoccupied with God, while his hands were occupied with leading the nation.

⁴*One thing I desired...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD. (Ps. 27:4)*

IV. LONGING #3: THE LONGING TO BE BEAUTIFUL

- A. Our beautiful God created us in such a way that we long to possess beauty—external and internal. The beauty that God possesses is the very beauty that He imparts to His people in His salvation!

¹⁷*Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us... (Ps. 90:17)*

³*...to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning... (Isa. 61:3)*

- B. One expression of receiving God's beauty is in receiving a glorious resurrected body (Phil. 3:21).

²¹*...who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body... (Phil. 3:21)*

- C. We are to cultivate inward beauty—which may even affect one's external appearance.

⁴*Let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Pet. 3:4)*

- D. Our culture is obsessed with physical beauty, often seeking to answer this longing in a wrong way.

V. LONGING #4: THE LONGING TO BE GREAT

- A. The great God created us to be great. Therefore, we have a God-given desire for greatness and success. Some misunderstand this longing and repent of it, hoping to remove it. We cannot remove this God-given longing, but we are to repent of pursuing it in a wrong way (Mt. 5:19; 20:26).

¹⁹Whoever does and teaches them [God's commands], he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:19)

²⁶...but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. (Mt. 20:26)

- B. The human race was created to be crowned forever with glory and honor in God's salvation.

⁷You have crowned him [the redeemed] with glory and honor... (Heb. 2:7)

- C. He meets our longing for greatness by giving us a position of authority that surpasses the angels (Rev. 3:21). We will be co-rulers with Jesus (Rom. 8:17). The Church is the "aristocracy of eternity"—the very ruling class who is at the pinnacle of power in the created order.

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne ... (Rev. 3:21)

VI. LONGING #5: WE LONG FOR INTIMACY WITHOUT SHAME

- A. We long for intimacy without shame in knowing and being known by God (Gal. 4:9; 1 Cor. 13:12). This close relationship with God involves a two-way knowing. He understands the secret aspects of our hearts and lives, which are unknown, unnoticed, and misunderstood by others.

¹²Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1 Cor. 13:12)

- B. We can know Him and be known in a way that mirrors how Jesus and the Father know each other.

¹⁴I know My own, and My own know Me, ¹⁵even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. (Jn. 10:14-15, NAS)

- C. God entrusts the secrets of His heart to His people.

¹⁴The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him... (Ps. 25:14)

- D. He rejoices and celebrates with His people and feels their sorrows (Rom. 12:15). He rejoices with us related to our victory. Only God knows the implications of our greatness and the heights of our nobility in redemption. He knows our passions and deepest dreams and our intentions to do what is good. He sees our costly sacrifices as we seek to love Him by walking in faith and obedience.

¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice...weep with those who weep... (Rom. 12:15)

- E. He sees our painful struggle with sin. He understands our pain in our failure and protects us by not disclosing the vast majority of our sin. He knows our shameful deeds, yet He continues to believe in our intentions to love Him; thus He treats us with great honor.

- F. It is satisfying to be fully known without shame and to be free from the fear of being left alone.

VII. LONGING #6: THE LONGING TO BE WHOLEHEARTED AND PASSIONATE

- A. We long to give our deepest affection to God. Our passionate God empowers us to be passionate. We are to love God with all of our heart and strength because God loves us with all of His heart.
³⁰***You shall love the LORD ...with all your heart...and with all your strength. (Mk. 12:30)***
- B. We cannot function properly until we passionately give our heart to a Person and a purpose beyond ourselves. If we don't have something to die for, we have nothing to live for.
- C. The human heart does not work properly in half-heartedness. A passive heart is bored and therefore vulnerable to destructive lusts. In order to be emotionally whole, we must live wholeheartedly. Walking in wholehearted love for God frees us from the burnout and perils of spiritual boredom.

VIII. LONGING #7: THE LONGING FOR SIGNIFICANCE AND TO MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

- A. God designed us to long to make a difference in the lives of others and to have a purpose that is significant to God, one that He esteems and remembers forever .
¹⁰***God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (Heb. 6:10)***
¹⁴***If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. (1 Cor. 3:14)***
²³***And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord...²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward... (Col. 3:23-24)***
- B. Our longing for relevance is satisfied as we realize that our small acts of service and love make an eternal impact on God's heart and others and also result in eternal rewards. When we understand that the Lord remembers even our smallest acts of love, then all of our days are meaningful.
⁴²***Whoever gives...only a cup of cold water...he shall by no means lose his reward. (Mt. 10:42)***
²¹***Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. (Mt. 25:21)***
- C. We love to do and share things that cause others to be changed, helped, and filled with joy. Working together with Jesus to awaken love in the hearts of others is essential to our emotional health. Jesus calls us to work with Him in the mandate that the Father gave Him to disciple the nations.
⁴***I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3 Jn. 4)***

For **FREE resources** on the seven longings of the heart, see MikeBickle.org for more notes and for the free ebooks: *The 7 Longings of the Human Heart*; *7 Commitments For Spiritual Growth*; *The Rewards of Fasting*. Also look for a 12-part teaching series with notes, titled *The First Commandment*.