

/ by design series study guide

Speaker: Pastor Henry Schorr

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SERMON TITLE: Desire / By Design

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: Opportunities to connect as a group

1. What do you do to cheer up when you're down?
2. Pastor Henry said, "When used in the way God intended...desires are good and wonderful gifts. However, our desires can also tempt us to go outside of God's design for our lives". What are some examples of good desires God has given us?
3. Even if a person has everything they need (e.g. Adam and Eve), temptation can still come when we think there is still more, or God is not fully kind and benevolent. What are you fearful of missing out on?

PURSUE GOD: Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Pastor Henry taught that humans live in two spheres: Compare the earthly (seen) and the heavenly (unseen) spheres. Read Romans 6:1-7, Romans 7:21-23, 2 Cor 5:21, 2 Cor 4:18, Heb 10:14. Fill in the chart below.

<u>Heavenly (unseen)</u>
<u>Earthly (seen)</u>

2. How would you respond from these verses to someone who asked, "Why should we fight against sin and temptation in the earthly realm, when in the heavenly realm I am considered perfect?"
3. Pastor Henry told a story about a skylark (reference) who sold his feathers to feed his desires and ended up giving away his ability to fly. How can sin rob us of our God given gifts?

PURSUE MISSION: Seek to be the community of God's people in your community

1. Pastor Henry offered four ways we can keep our desires in alignment with God's will: Trust Christ, Embrace our Position in Christ, Offer Ourselves to Christ, Walk with Christ. Which ones do you need to focus most on in the coming week?
2. According to Romans chapter 1, God eventually "gives people over" to sinful desires. How can we help others who are not living according to God's way, so that they are not "given over"?

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THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 6:1-7

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, ^[a] that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Romans 7:21-23

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

2 Cor 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin[a] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Cor 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Heb 10:14

For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

/ by design series study summary

Our Christian worldview begins with God. We're like Him in that we can reason, reflect and know Him as our Creator. Regarding sexuality, Christians embrace God's blueprint and moral guidelines for sexual intimacy, believing He has our best interest at heart. Honouring His DESIGN will result in a full and satisfying life.

God has given us physical desires for food, water, physical touch and physical intimacy. When used in the way God intended, these desires are good. But our desires can tempt us to go outside God's design, and we struggle.

In the book, *Surfing for God*, Michael Cusick relates how a Rabbi helped his disciple who wanted to be a man after God's heart but struggled with the shame and unfaithfulness. The Rabbi told him the parable of a skylark that gave a peddler two feathers for worms each time he was hungry. After the skylark had given away all his feathers and could not fly, he came to his senses. He hunted for worms on his own, returned to the peddler, and tried to get his feathers back. But the peddler, the devil in disguise, just laughed and disappeared. The Rabbi said, "The heart of God breaks when we give away our feathers for worms. And even more, His heart breaks when we try to buy back our feathers. For only God can restore our feathers."

In Genesis 2:24, God gave the context for sexual intimacy. Any relationship outside is immoral, otherwise God would have included it. Ephesians 5:3 says that among us there must not be a hint of sexual immorality or impurity. God created Adam and Eve and gave them one ultimate desire—to love and serve Himself. But Satan tempted them to buy into the lie that there was more, that God wasn't as benevolent as they thought He was. Their relationship with God was fractured, distorted and tainted. That is what sin is and what it does.

Sin is unbelief in God, saying "I don't trust You, God. I don't believe you are a good God or that you have my best interest at heart." Sin is putting our trust in something or someone other than God for our own satisfaction, significance and security (Romans 1:24-28). People who do so exchange the truth of God for a lie. The ultimate outcome is that God will give them over to their sinful desires. Paul uses the phrase three times, "God gave them over . . .": to sexual impurity, to shameful lusts, and to a depraved mind. If we keep ignoring God, if we keep suppressing the truth and justifying our sin, there comes a time when God allows us to have what we want and we will reap the results of going our own way. When we step outside God's design for sex, we will suffer many negative consequences—physically, emotionally, spiritually and relationally.

What then? How can we be freed from the power of sinful desires? We need to do four things.

Trust Jesus. Everyone must decide what they are going to do with Christ. If we choose Jesus, He becomes our Lord and source of truth and authority. We'll worship Him and surrender our lives to Him. Regarding sexuality, however, many who say they're a follower of Jesus believe their sexual decisions are so personal that God and His word are not invited. They elevate their own reasoning as equal or greater than God's wisdom. But as a Christian we can't have it both ways. If we're to find freedom from sinful desires, we have to believe that ultimate satisfaction cannot and will not be found in sex, but only in God. So ask yourself: "Is He *Lord* of my life or just '*sort of* Lord?'"

Embrace our position in Christ. Many believers who struggle with sinful desires are frustrated and ashamed, even wondering if they're actually Christians. We need to understand that we live in two realms: the ETERNAL, or unseen and the EARTHLY, or seen (2 Corinthians 4:18). Both realms are vitally important to God.

The ETERNAL is invisible, changeless and timeless, the realm of Spirit and God's absolutes. This is the POSITIONAL truth of what God says about who we are. When we put our faith in Christ, God takes the sin from our account and deposits it in Christ's account. Then He deposits Christ's righteousness to our account (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is a gift—we don't work for it or earn it. Once we accept it, His gift of grace is ours!! In the Spiritual realm, we die to the control and influence of our old selfish nature and are made spiritually alive in Christ (Romans 6:2). We are new persons in Christ, living under His authority and control. God sees us as forgiven, righteous, and perfect, not because we live perfectly in the EARTHLY REALM (far from it!!!), but because we are in Christ Jesus, the Righteous and Perfect One.

In contrast, the EARTHLY realm is visible and temporary, the realm of God's creation, of past present and future, of birth, life and death. This is the realm in which we see good and evil. It's not the realm of PERFECTION but of SPIRITUAL GROWTH. That explains why we're still tempted to sin. Our old sinful nature is still alive in us with old habits, thoughts and actions. Renewing our minds takes time as we allow Christ to live His life in and through us. We experience many failures. The secret is to not give up when we give in to temptation, but to confess to God, get up and keep on.

Offer ourselves to Christ. We have a choice to surrender our minds, emotions, wills and bodies to Christ or to temptations and lusts (Romans 6:12-14). We will be and are tempted (James 1:13-14). However, temptation is not a sin but an invitation to sin. If we rationalize our sin, we will be dragged away by our own evil desires. But if we are in Christ, we not only have the *authority* but the *power* to say NO to sinful desires and YES to God. If we say YES to God, we will increasingly experience freedom from the power of sinful desires.

Finally, we walk with Christ. A practical way to find victory over sinful desires is to stop focusing on/thinking about them and instead focus on Jesus, cultivate a relationship with Him and do what He calls us to do. We can serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13). For example, we can become absorbed in a worthwhile project or have fun with friends and family. In this way we will think about and have our minds set on what the Spirit desires (Romans 8:5).