

Our Deepest Desires

Study 1 – Power

1. In what areas of your life do you hold a degree of power? Consider work, education level, money, family, friendship groups, church responsibilities etc.
2. Where can you identify the desire for power in your own life? In the wider society?
3. How can the desire for power be a good and healthy thing? How can it be bad and unhealthy?

Read Philippians 2:5-11

4. How did Jesus use power in his life and ministry?
5. How is Jesus a model for us in our desire and use of power?

Read Matthew 20:1-16

6. What does this parable teach about the kingdom of God and power?
7. How does this challenge our own desires for power?
8. How might we reframe the desire for power in our own lives to be more like Jesus and to better live out the gospel of grace?

Spend some time praying together:

- Confess to God the areas of your life where you have sought power in an unhealthy way
- Thank God for his gospel of grace that empowers us and challenges our desire for power
- Ask God to help you use your power for his gospel mission in the world and to love people in the name of Jesus

Study 2 – Approval

1. Where can you identify the desire for approval in your own life? In the wider society?
2. How can the desire for approval be a good and healthy thing? How can it be bad and unhealthy?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

3. Why might Paul have been tempted to seek the approval of the Thessalonians?
4. Why is seeking God's approval rather than human approval a helpful remedy for our desire for approval?
5. How might our desire for approval lead us to flattery and mask wearing?

Read Romans 8:14-16

6. How does the security of being a Child of God help us with our desire for approval?
7. What role does the Holy Spirit play in this?
8. How might we reframe the desire for approval in our own lives to be more like Jesus and to better live out the gospel of grace?

Spend some time praying together:

- Confess to God the areas of your life where you have sought approval in an unhealthy way
- Thank God for his gospel of grace that gives us certainty and security and challenges our desire for approval
- Ask God to help you know his approval of you in Jesus and to live securely and without fear

Study 3 – Comfort

1. How would you describe the level of comfort you experience as an individual and we experience as a society; how comfortable are we?
2. How can the desire for comfort be a good and healthy thing? How can it be bad and unhealthy?
3. Have you experienced times when you were ‘out of your comfort zone’ which led to growth?

Read Luke 9:57-62 and Mark 8:34-38

4. What comforts did Jesus give up in his own life and ministry?
5. What level of comfort or discomfort should we expect as followers of Jesus?

Read Matthew 5:1-12

6. What does the word ‘blessed’ mean? Is blessing something that you desire in your life and our society?
7. Going through each beatitude (each verse starting with ‘blessed are...’) how would you describe the level of comfort for each category of people describe?
8. What promises are made for these people and when will it be experienced?
9. Christians often talk about the ‘now but not yet’ of God’s kingdom. We experience real blessings in Jesus now, but we are still waiting for the fullness of his plans and blessing when he returns and brings in the new creation. How can we encourage each other as we live with this tension and the lack of comfort it brings?

Spend some time praying together:

- Confess to God the areas of your life where you have sought comfort in an unhealthy way
- Thank God for Jesus who gave up his own comfort for our sake and calls us to follow him into uncomfortable places
- Ask God to help you to live out the blessed life, putting into practice the characteristic named by Jesus and living for God’s Kingdom rather than the Kingdom of Comfort

Study 3 – Control

1. Do you feel like you are in control of your life and circumstances? Why or why not?
2. How can the desire for control be a good and healthy thing? How can it be bad and unhealthy?
3. What motivates your own desire for control in different areas of your life?

Read Matthew 6:25-34

4. Is thinking about food, drink and clothing trying to exert too much control over circumstances? What is the relationship between worry and control?
5. What truths about God's character are expressed in this passage?
6. How might knowing these truths enable us not to worry but instead to trust God and cede control to him?
7. How does putting your faith in Jesus give up control of your life to him?
8. Are there areas in your life that you are holding back from God and keeping control of, due to worry?

Spend some time praying together:

- Confess to God the areas of your life where you are being overly controlling or holding back from trusting him
- Thank God that he is a loving Father who cares for our needs and for Jesus who gave up control of his life for our sake
- Ask God to help you to trust him and to offer Jesus control of your life and circumstances.