

THE DANGER OF (OVER) DESIRE—LUST

1John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and **the desires of the eyes** and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Worldly desires create <i>disorder</i> .	Godly desires <i>rule</i> .
Worldly desires <i>disappear</i> .	Godly desires <i>remain</i> .

The Beginning:

And what was it that I delighted in, but to love, and be loved? but I kept not the measure of love, of mind to mind, friendship's bright boundary: but out of the muddy lust of the flesh, and the bubblings of youth, mists fumed up which beclouded and overcast my heart, that I could not discern the clear brightness of love from the fog of lustfulness. Both did confusedly boil in me, and hurried my unstayed youth over the precipice of unholy desires, and sunk me in a gulf of (nastiness). Thy wrath had gathered over me, and I knew it not. I was grown deaf by the clanking of the chain of my mortality, the punishment of the pride of my soul, and I strayed further from Thee, and Thou lettest me alone, and I was tossed about, and wasted, and dissipated, and I boiled over in my fornications, and Thou heldest Thy peace, O Thou my tardy joy! Thou then heldest Thy peace, and I wandered further and further from Thee, into more and more fruitless seed-plots of sorrows, with a proud dejectedness, and a restless weariness...where was I, and how far was I exiled from the delights of Thy house, in the age of my flesh, when the madness of lust took the rule over me, and I resigned myself wholly to it? (Confessions, Book II)

The End:

But where through all those years, and out of what low and deep recess was my free-will called forth in a moment, whereby to submit my neck to Thy easy yoke, and my shoulders unto Thy light burden, O Christ Jesus, my Helper and my Redeemer? How sweet did it at once become to me, to want the sweetnesses of those toys! and what I feared to be parted from, was now a joy to part with. For Thou didst cast them forth from me, Thou true and highest sweetness...now was my soul free from the biting cares of canvassing and getting, and weltering in filth, and scratching off the itch of lust. And my infant tongue spake freely to Thee, my brightness, and my riches, and my health, the Lord my God. (Confessions, Book IX)

1. Consider your pattern of desires.

- a. Where does your mind go when you are driving home from work? Mowing? Showering? Day-dreaming? Outdoors? Going for a walk? Moments of silence?
- b. What feels like it is missing from your life right now? That's an unmet desire.
- c. What do you see in someone else's life that you wish was your own?

2. Consider your pattern of responses.

- a. Are you hiding something?
 - i. If you answer "yes," then name what is hiding.
 - ii. If you answer "no," then name what you used to hide and how/when you stopped hiding it.

3. Consider what you would say if you said something.

- a. If you were writing your own version of Augustine's *Confessions* in only three chapters, what would be the title or topic of each chapter?

4. Consider your pattern of temptation.

- a. What is your most common type of lust and your most common tool for lust?
- b. Where are you most tempted? When are you most tempted? How are you most tempted? What mood or emotional state are you most tempted in?
- c. Do you have a person of trust you can contact when you are tempted? Those who do and have,