



## Women's Bible Study

God created us to experience life as it was meant to be in the garden knowing only good. He created relationship to experience as it was meant to be, fulfilling, intimate and good. But He doesn't give us what we want, He gives us what we need and what is good, because he loves us.

Read Genesis 4 and answer the following questions:

### Observation:

1. What is the new relationship introduced in this chapter? What is the potential of that relationship? What destroyed that relationship?
2. Where do you see a foreshadowing of Jesus in this chapter?
3. What do you notice about sin in this chapter?

### Interpretation:

1. Thinking about the use of numbers in the bible, how are they used here and what do they indicate?



## Processing Forgiveness

### 7 Steps for processing forgiveness

1. Name the offense as clearly as possible. It's hard for us to forgive something that isn't clear to us.
2. Find someone trustworthy and non-judgmental to listen to your story. Having someone listen and understand is a powerful part of healing. Journaling prayers to God, crying with a trusted friend, or seeking help from a qualified counselor are all effective ways to open up about your story.
3. Let yourself feel the pain. We all want to skip this part. Even Jesus prayed to the Father, asking to skip the cross (Matthew 26:39). Yet the pain Jesus endured because of our sin was part of God's plan. Often, we would prefer to be angry because we think it will hurt less. However, forgiveness requires allowing ourselves to feel and express the pain caused by other's actions.
4. Know that some of your feelings will be ugly. It does not help to tell yourself that you "shouldn't feel that way." The fact is you do feel that way. Facing the truth before God is the beginning of freedom (John 8:32)
5. Make an honest assessment of your reaction to the harm done to you. Often our reactions are as sinful as the offense against us. This awareness will help you keep a realistic perspective as you wade through your feelings and take responsibility for how you may have hurt others.
6. Decide whether you want to confront the offender. The rule of thumb I use is simple. If it is a relationship I want to preserve, I make the effort. If not, I let it go. We all have finite amounts of emotional energy. It isn't wise to spend it in unprofitable places. Prayer will help clarify your decision.
7. Understand that forgiveness takes time and does not imply that you are obligated to trust that person again. Sometimes it takes years. Starting out, it may be a daily battle not to accuse the other person over and over in your mind, but as you persevere and seek God's help, forgiveness will come, and you will find joy and freedom.

## WEEK #5 HANDOUT – GENESIS WORD STUDY

### DESIRE

Looking over the biblical passages that contain the word “desire” raises a number of questions. Is it the object of desire that makes desire good or bad? Is there something suspicious about the very act of desiring? Are our desires intrinsically evil? The original languages, especially the Greek, help us find important answers.

**OT 1. Hebrew words for “desire”**

**NT 2. Desire as a choice**

**3. Desire as an expression of human beings’ sinful nature**

**4. Summary**

**OT—1. Hebrew words for “desire”.** The two basic words for “desire” are *’āwâh* and *hāmaḏ*. *’Āwâh* means “to desire,” “to long for,” “to want,” “to wish.” It is used with both good and bad objects of desire.

*Hāmaḏ* emphasizes the desirability of the object as a source of delight → **Delight** but is used often in a strongly negative sense. It is this word that is translated “covetousness”: desire running riot, trapping the subject in an evil passion. → **Covet**

The use of these words makes it clear that human desires are often twisted out of the pattern God established. But the words themselves make no statement about fallen human nature.

There are other, special words that are also translated “desire” in the OT. *Tšûqâh* means “desire or longing.” It appears only in Ge 3:16; 4:7; SS 7:10. In Ge 3:16 it describes the changed relationship that sin introduced in husband-and-wife relationships. A hierarchy is imposed where none existed; it is expressed in the phrase “your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” In Ge 4:7 sin is portrayed as a wild beast gazing hungrily at Cain, desiring to devour him if he fails to respond to God’s instructions.

*Miš`ālâh* is a petition. It is found only in Ps 20:5 and 37:4, in which God grants the desires and petitions of those who love him.

Another major term is *rāṣôn*. It has three basic meanings: (1) it represents God’s favor, (2) it expresses his acceptance of a sacrifice or a person in a ritual sense, and (3) it means “desire,” in the sense of that which motivates a choice of one’s will. It is used in one or more of these senses in Ge 49:6; Lev 1:3; 19:5; 22:19, 29; 2 Ch 15:15; Ezr 10:11; Ne 9:24, 37; Est 9:5; Ps 40:8; 51:18; 143:10; 145:16, 19; Da 8:4; 11:3, 16, 36.

**NT—Desire as choice.** Several times the NIV and the NASB translate *thelō* as “desire” (in the NIV, at Mt 9:13; 12:7; Jn 8:44; Ro 7:18; 9:16; 2 Co 8:10; Gal 5:17; 1 Ti 5:11; Heb 13:18). This word means “to want” or “to will.” There is a strong dimension of choice in *thelō*. When Jesus quoted the OT in saying, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice (Mt 9:13; 12:7), he was not speaking of God’s feelings but of the Father’s conscious choice of what is truly important in a relationship with him (cf. Heb 10:5, 8).

At times in the NT, “desire” is supplied by the translators (Ro 8:5; Jas 1:20) to communicate the sense of the passage but not to represent any specific word.

Ro 10:1 has *eudokia* (“good pleasure”) and 1 Co 12:31 has *zēloō* (“to be jealous for,” “to seek eagerly”).

→ **Jealousy/Zeal**

**3. Desire as an expression of human beings' sinful nature.** The word most often translated “desire” in the NT has definite theological implications. *Epithymeō*, “to desire,” was originally used in an ethically neutral sense. Long before the time of Jesus, however, *epithymia* came to be used in an ethically bad sense. It suggested dangerous passions growing out of one’s false evaluation of the world and its contents.

In the NT, *epithymia* and *epithymeō*, are used in a positive or neutral sense only in Lk 15:16; Php 1:23; 1 Th 2:17; 1 Ti 3:1; Heb 6:11. In other passages, the words are used in its ethically bad sense. Furthermore, the passages where they are used develop a picture of human nature that reveals a truth the Greeks sensed when they used this word to mark their suspicion of their own passions.

The NT reveals that the desires that drive human beings lie deep within sinful human nature (Gal 5:16; Eph 2:3; 4:22). Driven by passions, human beings fall under sin’s power (Ro 6:12; Eph 2:3). What is more, human beings create a world (society) that institutionalizes as values the tragic misinterpretations of what is truly important, for these values are derived from the passions of our twisted nature (1 Jn 2:16; Mk 4:19). Temptation thus does not come from the things that attract us: it is found in our response to them (Jas 1:14–15). → **Temptation/Test/Trial** Only by turning to God and learning to rely on the Holy Spirit can we resist our warped passions and develop a new system of values (Ro 8:9; Gal 5:16; Eph 4:23).

The biblical teaching that the Fall warped and twisted human nature is underlined by the treatment given *epithymia* in the NT. Human personality is wholly infected by sin. Mind, heart, and will are all corrupt: even the desires that motivate us are twisted by our inability to evaluate what is truly good for us.

**4. Summary.** It is not wrong for us to have desires. The capacity to feel pleasure and delight has been given to us by God, a reflection of his own rich emotional capacity. But both Testaments indicate that we may desire the wrong things. The NT helps us realize that we cannot explain away our actions by an appeal to the desirability of the thing that motivated them. Our desire for what is desirable is often tainted, for we are flawed by sin. The flaw includes those desires that lead us to many wrong evaluations. Thus the desires of sinful human beings are shaped by the sin nature and all too often impel us toward what is both evil and bad for us.

But there is release for those who are in Christ. We can let the Holy Spirit shape our desires. We can reject the old and choose those things that God holds to be of value, and so we ourselves may in this way be purified and cleansed.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words: Based on the NIV and the NASB](#), Zondervan’s Understand the Bible Reference Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 221–222.