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t e a c h
u s t o
w a n t

longing, ambition
& the life of faith

DVD
DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

Five Sessions



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Teach Us To Want

DVD Discussion Questions

Session 1. Fear and Courage

1. Admitting their desires, dreams and ambitions makes many women nervous. Why do you think this is so?
2. Like Rachel, we all wrestle with fears and doubts, and it's important to recognize how these subconsciously drive us. What fears and doubts are you facing right now: for your future, your relationships, your career, your calling?

If you are comfortable enough to do so, share one or two of these with the others in your group.

3. Jesus did not see doing God's will as difficult or grueling, because he delighted to do the will of his Father (see Hebrews 10:7). How should Jesus' example inform, even alter, our understanding of the nature of obedience?
4. Looking at Philippians 2:13, Jen observes that God doesn't drag us "kicking and screaming" to do his will, but he transforms our desires and wants to work with us rather than against us (see also Psalm 32:8-9). Share a time when you have allowed God to reshape your desire and it turned out well. Alternatively, describe a time when you tried obeying God without seeking the transformation of your desires.

What did that experience of ongoing inner resistance produce?

5. Mikel said she is tempted to satisfy her needs with food. We all have experienced slavery to something that became an idol. Name a desire that has enslaved you. How did you find freedom?
6. Eve felt that God was withholding something good from her and Adam. Do you think God ever withholds something good that we desire? What does Genesis 3:1-6 teach us about this?

7. Read James 1:14-15. What can we learn from James's analysis of how temptation leads to sin?
8. Jen observes that we are incapable of willing ourselves into better desires. According to Ezekiel 36:25-27, what needs to be done?
9. Do you see Christ at work in your desires today? How?
10. When have you said to God, "I delight to do your will"?

What was the circumstance and the outcome?

"Brave is she who owns her story of desire." (p. 49)

Session 2. Grace, Good News and Scripture

1. We all have experienced significant loss and disappointment of some kind, whether it came from something like Carrie's unconcerned father, Leslie's lack of meaning or Shannon's troubled sisters. Share with your group a significant loss you have faced and how that has shaped your life.
2. Carrie said that grace was hard for her, and Eugene Peterson says teaching people about grace is a most difficult task. Define grace in your own words.

Are there certain Scriptures that help you understand grace better? If so, what are they?

Why do you think people have difficulty accepting God's grace?

3. Jen observes that while the ancient Israelites brought their own animal sacrifices to the temple, God himself brought the sacrifice for Adam and Eve's sin. What significance does this have for our understanding of God's grace found in Jesus?

How would our life with God change if we lived with constant mindfulness of his grace?

4. In the book of Hosea, God told Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her. She proved to be unfaithful to Hosea, just as Israel was unfaithful to the Lord. Read Hosea 2:19-20, which is the Lord's response to his unfaithful people. What do these verses tell us about God's love for us?
5. Leslie says she first heard the gospel in prison. In your own words, what is the gospel? (Try to avoid churchy language.)

6. Jen says that God wants us to move from self-preoccupation and narrow concern for our personal comfort and convenience to a holy burden for the world. We are to be on a mission for him. Read Luke 4:18-19. What was Jesus' mission to the world?
7. Christ continues his mission on earth through us and has given us unique gifts and desires to accomplish this mission (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; 1 Peter 4:10). What gift do you think God has given you to help complete his mission? (If you have trouble identifying a gift, perhaps others in your group can help you.)
8. It's not easy to see God's goodness and faithfulness in the midst of loss and disappointment. Jen asks, "Can God be good when life isn't?" If you were asked this question by someone who is suffering, how would you answer?

Read Isaiah 53: How does this Scripture help answer Jen's question?

9. Why do you think John Stott said he would not believe in God if not for the cross?
10. How has God walked with you in your journey of loss and disappointment?
11. How is God using your brokenness and pain in the lives of others?

"We want. Life leaks. Desires are disappointed. And God, our Father, remains eternally good." (p. 107)

Session 3. Prayer and Petition

1. When Beth had to quit volunteering in church ministry because of illness, her prayer in essence was "How are you going to fix my problem?" When have you been frustrated with God because he hasn't given you something you earnestly desire?

Since Beth's first questioning response to God, how have her prayers been reordered?

2. How do you react to the fact that great people of the Bible (e.g., Sarah and Hannah) had unfulfilled desires and doubted God's promises?

Does this allow you to see that doubt and disappointment can be part of a faithful Christian's life? Explain.

3. Is it wrong to remind God of his promises—to hold his feet to the fire?

What was God's response to Abraham when he struggled with God in prayer (see Genesis 15; 17:17-18)?

4. What do we learn about desire and prayer from Jesus' prayer in Matthew 26:39, 42?

5. Morgan says that she made the prospect of marriage an idol in her life. What in your life have you been tempted to idolize? (As an aid, you might want to remember Tim Keller's helpful definition of an idol—"any good thing that has become an ultimate thing.")

What has helped you overcome this temptation?

6. Jen asks, "Can we have a desire—and pray for our desire—and also be content?" How does Philippians 4:6-9 answer this question?

7. What are the two principles that Jen says should guide our prayer requests (Philippians 4:6-7)?

8. When we seek God's provisions for our needs, what does the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) teach us about proper priorities?

9. Share what you are currently praying for and answers you have had to your prayers.

What are you learning about God as you pray?

What are you learning about yourself?

"In asking for God's provision, we're admitting our inability to self-sustain." (p. 127)

Session 4. Confession and Community

1. Stacha experienced freedom through confession. Tell of a time when confession freed you.

2. Jen and Stacha say that it is a fearful thing to bring our junk out into the light. But according to Psalm 32:3-4, what happens to us when we fail to confess?

3. Read James 5:13-14. What is the remedy to the anxiety, exhaustion and suffering that our sin brings?

4. In 1 John 1:9, God has given an amazing promise regarding the sin of those who follow Christ. Why do you think it is sometimes so difficult to confess our sins to God even though he already knows what we have done (see Hebrew 4:13)?

5. Jen suggests that we should think of the cross and God's love as we confess. Do you think this suggestion will make confession easier for you? Why or why not?

What ongoing fears or apprehensions prevent you from confessing your sin to God?

6. It is never easy to live in community, as we saw in Nichole's story of her blended family. For this reason, we often shy away from building deep friendships. What role does community play in your life?
7. Jen says that the integrity of our life with God is measured by the integrity of our life with our neighbors. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
What Scriptures can you think of that support Jen's statement?
8. We in the West are shaped by individualism. How do you think this has affected our spiritual life?
How has it affected our view of the importance of the local church?
9. What does Ephesians 4:11-12 say about the importance of community to the Christian life?
10. Have you ever noticed the communal nature of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)?
How was the importance of community evidenced in Jesus' life on earth?
11. How would you summarize the relationship of community to confession?

What friendship(s) would you like to deepen so that regular confession of sin becomes a part of sharing your lives together?

"Speaking aloud our sin to another person is often the first step in beginning to hate it." (p. 154)

Session 5. Commitment

1. After we have prayed, petitioned, confessed and joined a community, the next step in our pursuit of holy desire is commitment. Why do you think making a commitment to something important is often so difficult?
2. Jen says that a key to making a commitment to achieve a desire is trusting God, being confident of his care and provision for us. Read Psalm 20:1-9 and identify all the reasons this Scripture says we should trust God.
3. Jen also says, "Trust in God is never passive." What do you think she means by this in terms of our desires?
4. "When desires are transformed, praying changes, planning changes, trust grows and obedience is nurtured." The key is having our desires transformed. How does this transformation take place?

5. Is it true in your experience that women often live unaware of their desires? Why do you think this is so?

How does this affect women's lives?

6. Sometimes, according to Jen, women may be conscious of their desire but are afraid of it and become paralyzed. What drives this fear?

What desires are you numbing with fear?

7. We need to have integrity between what we desire and how we pray and plan. Can we develop this integrity on our own? If not, how do we obtain integrity (see Psalm 51:10; Philippians 2:13)?

8. Like weeds, disordered desires should be pulled up by the roots. Good desires, on the other hand, need to be watered and nurtured. Which of your desires is the Holy Spirit nudging you to examine? If you feel comfortable, share with the group what you are thinking.

9. Because of our confidence in God (see Psalm 20), our holy desires become catalysts for actively engaging with God. What commitments might you make in line with your God-given holy desires?

What accountability to your friends and church community will be necessary to see these commitments through?

"To be formed into Christ is to fully desire—and fully commit—to the coming of God's kingdom." (p. 89)