

## Desires of the Heart

By Christina Browning, LCSW

Isn't it amazing how much our perception of reality affects our interaction with reality? I recently found that my perception of my happiness is often wrapped up in my expectations of what I need to feel, things I want to have, or my success as a person. Some days it is enough just to have sunshine, fresh air, and a good cup of coffee - and I am happy. Other days it doesn't matter how bright the sun, or what the coffee tastes like - I am not happy!

Recently in a discussion with a co-worker about what career direction I should pursue, I was surprised at the thought of allowing myself to be happy. I had a nice list of nine different options, and had outlined pros and cons for all of them. In all nine of them, the con-list was bigger than the pro-list. As I sat the lists in front of my co-worker to discuss them with him, I told him that during this process I have learned one thing . . . I don't want to do any of these options! During our discussion, my wise co-worker encouraged me to follow the desires of my heart. He asked me, "What does your heart want to do?" As I burst into tears explaining that the desires of my heart are not options because they are outside of my control, he gently reminded me of Psalms 37:4, "Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." (NIV) and Philippians 4:19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

I must confess I can easily believe this for others, but I struggle to whole-heartedly believe these two verses when it comes to the true desires of my heart. Notice it says "He will meet **all** your needs," not just some of them. The next day I heard myself giving the counsel, "Stupid is doing the same thing repetitively and expecting different results. If you want your relationships to change, you have to be willing to consider changing your own behavior." In that moment the light bulb went on and I found myself needing to consider God's plans. Jeremiah 29:11 promises, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Do you believe it? Do you believe God loves you enough to give you the desires of your heart? Will you trust Him with your deepest dreams?

In the days that followed, I started to let go of my expectations of who I felt I am supposed to be and pressed into who I am in Christ and the desires God has put in my heart. In so doing, God has opened up the floodgates of joy and happiness in my heart which are independent of my daily circumstances. Where is your joy today?



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