


Control Your Desires, Or...



They Will Control You

“Do not let sin **reign** in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Romans 6:12).

James 1:13–15


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- “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his **own desires** and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”

So what do we need to work on?




- We need to work harder on controlling our thoughts and desires.
 - “Now these things [what the Israelites did] became our examples, to the intent that **we should not lust after evil things** as they also lusted” (1 Corinthians 10:6).

Can we do that?

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- We DO have control over our desires; self control is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23).
 - We DO have control over whom we choose to serve (Joshua 24:14–15).
 - We DO have control over what we feed upon—what we watch, listen to, etc. (Proverbs 4:23).
 - We DO choose our own companions (1 Corinthians 15:33).
 - Stumbling blocks? (Matthew 18:8–9).

But some would argue...


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- That certain thoughts or desires cannot be helped, that God put them there.
 - Let's be careful what we call a natural, or "inborn" desire, because natural desires can become perverted by our own lusts (Rom. 1:24–27).
 - God does NOT tempt anyone to evil (James 1:13).
 - But the devil does, and he will use everything around us to do so.
 - We don't have to be controlled by the past, either.

Here's something to encourage us




- Good desires DO have the power to overcome bad ones.
 - Illustration: In sports, the desire to win.
 - Illustration: Husband or wife in a difficult marriage.

What if we desired these things?

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- The truth from God's word (1 Peter 2:2; Psa. 19:10), and the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that come from it.
 - To follow Jesus, wherever His word directs (Luke 9:23; Acts 3:22–23).
 - To live godly in Christ Jesus, to honor Him in all that we do (2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 13:18; 1 Cor. 10:31).

What if we desired these things?

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- To be with our brethren—to encourage them, and be encouraged by them (Rom. 1:11–12; Heb. 10:24–25).
 - To assist these brethren with whatever they need—physical (2 Cor. 8:10–11) and spiritual (1 Thess. 5:14).
 - What is good for all, even if we have to sacrifice our own desires (1 Thess. 5:15; Phile. 1:13; 1 Cor. 8:13).
 - Things true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report (Phil. 4:8).

What if we desired these things?



- To be GREAT in the eyes of the Lord (Mark 10:43).
- To be a leader among our brethren (1 Tim. 3:1).
- The salvation of souls (Rom. 10:1).
- To go to heaven, to forever be with the Lord, to “see His face” (Heb. 11:16; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 22:4).

Yes, it can be a struggle



- But we can't give up or make excuses. We must continue to strive against sin (Hebrews 12:4).
- We must make a clean break from bad habits, having “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24).
- We must then replace the bad with the good.
- Must pray fervently for God's help (Hebrews 2:18).