

Further Reflections



What are You Hungry For?

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Another way of saying that is what are you passionate about?

We often hear people say that they are hungry to see the unreached reached. Or that a specific personal ministry drives your passion. Or that we are hungry for the Lord or His Word.

One way to tell what we are really serious about is to ask: what do we have a strong appetite for? What do we really look forward to? A good friend of mine, who served long-term as a global worker, is battling through cancer as I write. He wrote concerning the pull of our appetites or temptations and how it draws us away from God and His purposes in the world. He wrote:

Several of you have asked how I can see my cancer as a positive good intended by God to be a blessing. One blessing has been the way it has attacked my sinful appetites and cut them to the bone. Here are some examples.

When it comes to the Lust of the Flesh, like many of us, my biggest temptations are food and sex. Sure I'm no glutton, and I've been physically faithful to my wife throughout our married years. But I still fall into times when a craving for food—or a particular food—dominates my mind and my will. I know I shouldn't eat something, but I eat it anyway simply because (to quote Gollum), "We wants it." I know I shouldn't let my eyes and mind linger on that lustful image, but I do because, I deceive myself, "A little eye candy can't hurt anything."

But the cancer has stripped me of all those appetites. Hardly any food can pass my lips without my suppressing a gag reflex just to get it down. The lust of food has become disgusting to me. And the lust for lust? My wife looks as good to me as ever, but sexual images just don't catch

my eye; why waste my attention on anything that's so shallow and in eternity is going to look so disgusting?

What about the Lust of the Eye, those desires to own or possess or delight in something just because it looks good (whether or not it brings any physical pleasure or public recognition). There's never been a whole lot of "Lust of the Eye" temptations that attract me. Cars, houses, stuff—mostly I can just take them or leave them. But golf has become a different story for me. I love hitting a really good golf shot, and will do almost anything to achieve it. Except now. I can't play golf while on my chemo. And while I miss it, I'm reminding myself (of what I really knew all along) of the far richer satisfactions that come in relationships and the joys of God himself.

Then there's the Pride of Life, that desire to be recognized and honored by those around me. I've had to cancel some coming ministry that brings me a great deal of satisfaction (and let's face it, recognition) and I'm now facing months of experiencing very little of what brings me the "strokes" of others. I want to keep doing it all, because I enjoy it, but also (deep down, I have to admit it), I feed off the appreciation that others give me. In this cancer, God is taking those away and saying to me, "Be satisfied in Me alone. Find your joy in Me alone."

I'm still dealing with a host of sinful temptations. But I'm finding this cancer exposing the most insidious in all their ugliness. And I want no part in them.

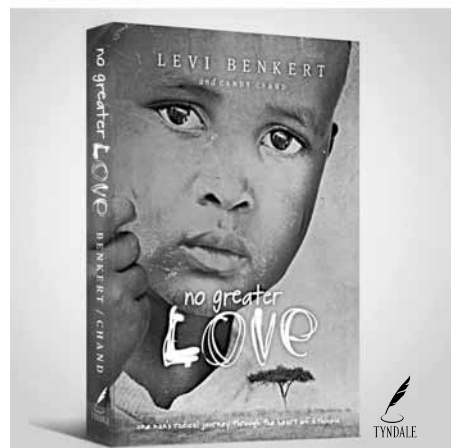
What is the focus of your heart, mind, body, soul? Sure, we have those times we are strong—physically or mentally or spiritually—and our best passion is driving us. But are there times where other things get in the way?

As I thought about my friend's blog post, I was challenged in my own life. Each of us can find things in those three areas that war against what we know is best. As my friend's list notes, they don't have to be bad things or things that are necessarily wrong.

So, how do we focus on God and what He desires?

Why not go to www.missionfrontiers.org, look up this article and post your thoughts? f

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