

DESIRE FOR GOD

22 June 2025

Summary:

This Message explores the concept of spiritual desire, defining it as the soul's movement toward God, awakened by grace and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Bruce emphasizes that spiritual growth is not solely about human effort but primarily about God's initiative and our response to His grace. The Message delves into Catholic spirituality, explaining how desire for God leads to a deeper understanding of His presence within us, which in turn transforms our actions and relationships with others.

Key Points:

- Spiritual desire is our soul's movement toward God, awakened by grace and sustained by the Holy Spirit
- The soul is the spiritual principle that gives life to the body and is the core of our identity
- God initiates our spiritual journey through His grace; our role is to cooperate and respond
- True spiritual desire goes beyond mere belief to a yearning for union with God
- Understanding spiritual desire leads to a transformation in how we experience faith, prayer, and relationships
- Mary MacKillop is presented as an example of someone who lived with deep spiritual desire
- Spiritual growth is a journey that requires patience and continual seeking

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 6:19 (mentioned in passing): "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?"

Stories:

- Bruce uses an analogy of people observing a rock from different angles to illustrate how our understanding of God is limited and varies based on perspective
- The story of visiting a church with excellent hospitality is used to explain the concept of "hosting" God in our lives
- An anecdote about Bruce's past misconception of spiritual growth as simply "being a good boy" is shared to contrast with true spiritual desire
- The life and spirituality of Mary MacKillop are presented as an example of living with deep spiritual desire

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
(For Individual or Group Reflection)

- How does understanding spiritual desire as 'our soul's movement toward God' change your perspective on your relationship with God?
- In what ways have you experienced God's grace awakening spiritual desire in your life?
- How might viewing your body as 'the living temple of a spiritual soul' impact your daily choices and actions?
- What does it mean to you personally to 'host' God in your life, as Mary MacKillop did?
- How can we cultivate a deeper yearning for God beyond just believing in Him or attending church?
- In what ways might our limited human understanding of God actually draw us into deeper mystery and desire for Him?
- How does the concept of spiritual desire challenge or enhance your current approach to prayer and spiritual practices?
- What role does the Holy Spirit play in sustaining our desire for God, and how have you experienced this in your own life?
- How might embracing spiritual desire transform our approach to evangelization and building Christian community?
- In what ways can we balance the tension between human effort and divine grace in our spiritual growth?

DESIRE FOR GOD
SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Opening Prayer:

Pray the Impacters prayer together as a group. Begin with a prayer asking God to open your hearts and minds to understand spiritual desire and deepen your relationship with Him.

Key Takeaways:

1. Spiritual desire is our soul's movement toward God, awakened by grace and sustained by the Holy Spirit.
2. The soul is the life-giving core of who we are, our being, our self.
3. God initiates our desire for Him; we cooperate by saying "yes" to His grace.
4. True spiritual desire goes beyond just wanting to be a "good person" - it's a deep yearning for intimacy with God.
5. Mother Mary MacKillop exemplified a life lived from spiritual desire and union with God.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you describe your current level of spiritual desire for God? What factors influence this?
2. Bruce mentions the "white knuckle club of Catholicism" - trying to be good through sheer effort. Have you ever experienced this? How is this different from living out of spiritual desire?
3. Reflect on a time when you felt a strong yearning for God. What circumstances or experiences led to this?
4. How does understanding the soul as our "life-giving core" change your perspective on your relationship with God?
5. The sermon emphasizes that God initiates our movement toward Him. How does this idea challenge or comfort you?
6. Discuss the statement: "You do not have to generate God hunger, you have to respond to it." What might this look like in daily life?
7. How can we cultivate a greater awareness of God's indwelling presence in our lives?

Practical Applications:

1. Daily Stillness: Commit to spending 5-10 minutes each day in silence, acknowledging God's presence within you.
2. Desire Journal: Start a journal to record moments when you feel a strong desire for God or sense His movement in your life.
3. Eucharistic Adoration: If possible, spend time in adoration this week, focusing on your desire for deeper intimacy with God.
4. Grace Awareness: Throughout the day, pause to recognize moments of grace and God's initiative in your life.
5. Soul-Care: Reflect on how you can better care for your soul (intellect, will, emotions) to be more receptive to God's presence.

Closing Prayer:

End by praying for an increased spiritual desire among group members and the grace to respond to God's movements in your lives.