

# God's Desire

By Mark Mayberry  
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## Introduction

An infant's entire existence centers upon the question, "What do I want?" As children grow toward physical maturity, they learn to contemplate, "What do you want?" In this case, "You" is representative of parents, teachers, and other sources of authority; and also includes the needs or desires of siblings, friends, etc. As we advance toward spiritual maturity, we also ponder, "What does God want?"

God wants what is best for us. God wishes that none be lost but that all be saved (2 Pet. 3:9). In the greatest expression of love that man has ever known (Rom. 5:6-8), God sent his Son to die on the cross (John 3:16-17).

*2 Peter 3:9 ... 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (NASB95)*

*Romans 5:6-8 ... 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (NASB95)*

*John 3:16-17 ... 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. (NASB95)*

In contrast with the benevolence of God, the devil desires our downfall and destruction. His mission is the ruin of humanity (Gen. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8). While God is the embodiment of love, Satan personifies malignant hostility (John 8:44). The wages of sin are death (Rom. 6:23).

*Genesis 4:7 ... 7 "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." (NASB95)*

*1 Peter 5:8 ... 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (NASB95)*

*John 8:44 ... 44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because*

*there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (NASB95)*

*Romans 6:23 ... 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NASB95)*

What does God want from us? Perhaps it would be profitable to note what God does *not* want. He desires something more than empty ritual and meaningless sacrament (1 Sam. 15:22-23; Isa. 1:10-20; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8).

*1 Sam. 15:22-23 ... 22 Samuel said, "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king." (NASB95)*

*Isa. 1:10-20 ... 10 Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. 11 "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. 12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? 13 "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. 14 "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. 16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow. 18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. 19 "If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; 20 "But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword." Truly, the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (NASB95)*

*Amos 5:21-24 ... 21 "I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 "Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. 23 "Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. 24 "But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (NASB95)*

*Micah 6:6-8 ... 6 With what shall I come to the Lord And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? 7 Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God? (NASB95)*

## **Truth**

What does God want of man? God demands that truth inhabit the inner reaches of our heart (Ps. 51:6). In his final charge to his son, David stressed the need to walk before God in truth (1 Kings 2:1-4). Later, Solomon also highlighted the enduring necessity of truth (Prov. 3:1-4).

*Psalm 51:6 ... 6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. (NASB95)*

*1 Kings 2:1-4 ... 1 As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, 2 "I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. 3 "Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, 4 so that the Lord may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' (NASB95)*

*Proverbs 3:1-4 ... 1 My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; 2 For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you. 3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man. (NASB95)*

## **Mercy**

What does God want of man? God requires that we manifest mercy, a quality more important than outward ceremony (Hos. 6:6). Divine mercy is reserved for those who are merciful (Matt. 5:7). Jesus showed mercy toward sinful men (Matt. 9:10-13). In like manner, we must be compassionate, tender-hearted, and forgiving (Eph. 4:31-32; Col. 3:12-13).

*Hosea 6:6 ... 6 For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 5:7 ... 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 9:10-13 ... 10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (NASB95)*

*Ephesians 4:31-32 ... 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (NASB95)*

*Colossians 3:12-13 ... 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (NASB95)*

## **Contrition**

What does God want of man? God commands contrition for sin. The sacrifice that God accepts is a broken spirit and a contrite heart (Ps. 51:16-17). The Lord is near to those whose spirits are crushed (Ps. 34:18), dwelling with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit (Isa. 57:15), esteeming him who humbly trembles at His word (Isa. 66:2).

*Psalm 51:16-17 ... 16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. (NASB95)*

*Psalm 34:18 ... 18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit. (NASB95)*

*Isaiah 57:15 ... 15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. (NASB95)*

*Isaiah 66:2 ... 2 "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the Lord. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. (NASB95)*

## **Obedience**

What does God want of man? God insists upon our full obedience. More than sacrifice and offering, He desires that we manifest a submissive spirit (Ps. 40:6-8). Jesus Christ personified this quality (Heb. 10:5-9). Never has this been more vividly manifested than in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38-42). All who would be saved must follow in His steps (Heb. 5:8-9).

*Psalm 40:6-8 ... 6 Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. 7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. 8 I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 10:5-9 ... 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me; 6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. 7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.' " 8 After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. (NASB95)*

*Matthew 26:38-42 ... 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." 39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." 40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 5:8-9 ... 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, (NASB95)*

## **Conclusion**

Our highest goal in life should be to please God. Our greatest desire should be to do His will (Ps. 73:25; 112:1). Have you demonstrated your love for God by keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3-6; 5:2-3)?

*Psalm 73:25 ... 25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. (NASB95)*

*Psalm 112:1 ... 1 Praise the Lord. How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, Who greatly delights in His commandments. (NASB95)*

*1 John 2:3-6 ... 3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (NASB95)*

*1 John 5:2-3 ... 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. (NASB95)*