

Table Group Discussion Guide

Series: The Spacious Life | Title: "What Do We Do With Our Desires?" | October 04, 2026

*Please respect each other by keeping confidential what someone else has shared during the group time. This helps to keep the environment a safe place to show our wounds and find healing.

Looking Back (5-10 minutes)

Last week's practice: when you felt anger rising, ask one question — *is this anger producing healing in anybody's life?* We were practicing **self-control** and **gentleness**, two of the nine things Paul says in **Galatians 5:22–23** that the Spirit grows in a person: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

- Two sentence response. Did you ask it? Did it stop you — or did you notice it after the fact?

Getting Started (15 minutes)

Our culture offers two paths for our desires. One says **satisfy it** — you have an appetite, go feed it. The other, often from church, says **suppress it** — the desire itself is the problem. Most of us were handed one of those two and not much else.

1. Which of those two did you grow up with — at home, at church, from friends, from whatever you were watching? What did it teach you, and was it ever said out loud or just absorbed?

Jesus says to get drastic — and we know he's being hyperbolic, but the principle is real: change your circumstances, don't just white-knuckle your willpower.

2. What's one small environmental change you've actually made that worked? Doesn't have to be about sexual desire — it can be the snacks you stopped buying, the app you deleted, the route you stopped driving. What worked?

Getting Into the Word (25 minutes)

Scripture: **Matthew 5:27–30, Genesis 3:6, Ezekiel 36:26–27**

Read **Matthew 5:27–30**.

The Greek word isn't about noticing — it's about **harboring**. Craig Keener puts it as the difference between noticing a person's beauty and imbibing it, meditating on it, seeking to possess it. So attraction isn't the sin. Temptation isn't the sin — Jesus was tempted in every way we are. The question is what we do next.

3. Did anyone ever teach you the difference between noticing and harboring? Or were they treated as the same thing? What does it change if attraction itself was never the problem?

Read **Genesis 3:6**. Watch the pattern: **see, desire, take**. Eve sees the fruit, dwells on what she'd gain from it, and takes. Lust runs the same three steps — except the thing being taken is a person, and it's taken with the imagination.

4. Where in your life does the *see, desire, take* pattern run? It doesn't have to be sexual — it might be a thing you want, a life someone else has, an opportunity you weren't given. Where does dwelling turn into taking in your mind?

Going Deeper with Each Other (25 minutes) *If your group has more than eight people, split into circles of three or four for these questions and come back together to pray.

Rich Villodas: "When you recognize you're using someone for your own pleasure, there's usually a deep unmet need driving it. Lust reveals a need for **attachment, affection, and communion** — with God and with others." Good needs, met in the wrong place.

5. When you reach for something you later regret — anything, not just this week's topic — what's usually underneath it? Loneliness? Exhaustion? Feeling unseen? Name the hunger, not the behavior.

Barna found that 61% of U.S. adults view pornography — and that 84% of them say they have **no one in their life to help them change**. That second number is the one that should bother us. Your sanctification is personal, but it is not private.

6. Do you have anyone — one person — who knows what you actually carry? Not everything. Just the real thing. If the answer is no, say so out loud. That's not a failure; it's the most common answer there is.

Pray for Each Other (10 minutes) *Before you start: some of us have been following Jesus for a long time, some are newer at it, and some are still figuring out what they believe. All of that is welcome at this table. Nobody has to pray out loud, and nobody has to agree with something they haven't decided on yet.

Come back together as a whole group. Read **Ezekiel 36:26–27** out loud — “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you...”

Then open your hands, the way we did on Sunday, and pray this together:

“God, I’m not asking you to delete what I want. I’m asking you to reorder it. Give me a new heart — one that wants the right things in the right order. I can’t do this part. You can.”

Sit in silence for a minute. Then close by praying for whatever came up tonight — by name, out loud, if people are comfortable with that.

One Thing to Carry into the Week

This week we’re practicing **love**. (Galatians 5:22-23)

When you notice the desire rise — and you will — don’t fight it and don’t feed it. Just ask one question:

What am I actually hungry for right now?

Attachment. Affection. Communion. That’s usually what’s underneath. Then take that to God instead of taking it somewhere else.

And remember what this is and isn’t. You’re not trying to want less. Paul calls this fruit — it’s **grown**, not manufactured. The pause is just where you make room for the Spirit to do the **reordering**. Come back and tell someone what you noticed.