

# MODULE 3: RELATIONSHIPS

## SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING OUR NEEDS AND WANTS

### Key Ideas for This Session:

- Our wants can be good or they can be evil. Living according to God's principles helps us identify unhealthy wants and move away from them.
- The spiritual principles a person adopts to live by are reflected in their core values.
- If we value emotional gratification over everything else, our lives will be self-centred and immature.
- Key verse: Romans 12:2:  
*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.*

### Needs Originate in the Body—Wants are Rooted in Our Soul:

Food, air, and water are obvious examples of human needs and the basic necessities that every human being requires in order to stay alive. Without air to breathe it is impossible for people to survive for more than a few minutes. If those same people have air, but no food, they can survive for days or even weeks, but they will eventually starve to death. The basic human needs that sustain life remain constant.

Human wants or desires are different from our needs. Wants are connected to our emotions and are shaped or influenced by our family, the people we associate with, media and advertising, as well as our own interests. Although wants are shaped by outside influence they take root in our soul. Wants are the things we desire beyond what is necessary to stay alive. Our wants can either be good and honourable, or they can be corrupt and evil.

When we are in right relationship with God, we grow spiritually and our lives begin to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. This includes wanting things that are

pure and lovely. Living according to these principles (vs. pursuing our desires) grows out of our longing to please God—by serving Him and doing His will.

Matthew 6:25-33

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? <sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Does God know what we really need?

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Can we have a right or wrong attitude about the things we need?

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Have you ever pursued something you “want” even though it was something that was not based on spiritual principles? If yes, describe your experience in doing that.

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Read Romans 12:1-2.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.*

The renewing of our minds is the transformation of our lives that comes through spiritual renewal. As we grow in our relationship with God, the “fruits of the Spirit” begin to show in our lives. It is a process of learning to live according to those spiritual principles instead of on the basis of our emotions and feelings.

Look up these verses in the Old Testament and then write them out in your own words:

Proverbs 16:6

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Proverbs 19:23

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Proverbs 22:4

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What is the main theme of these three verses?

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Read Philippians 4:4-8

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your*

*requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*

Is it possible to know if you are being motivated by emotion or principle?

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How can you tell when you are acting selfishly or emotionally?

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In the space provided, put the number corresponding to one of the five motivators that best matches each of the situations described below.

#	1. Compassion 2. Mercy 3. Honesty 4. Deceit 5. Anger
	I cleaned up Mary's vomit in the dining room because nobody else would do it.
	I told Scotty to bring it on because he needs to know I won't take any "crap."
	I helped Joe with his math because last time he flunked his exam.
	Kelly apologized, so I accepted his apology and forgave him for stealing my watch.
	We borrowed a car and drove Frank to the doctor because he couldn't walk to the bus stop.
	I told Bill the jacket was mine, because I didn't want him to think I'm a thief.
	I called in sick, because I didn't want the boss to know I was hungover.
	I returned the ten dollars when the cashier gave me too much change.
	I told him to "go to hell," because he didn't accept my apology.

Is it easy to tell whether these motivations are based on principle or emotion?  
(Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

Name two spiritual principles from Galatians 5:22, 23 that you value, and write your definition for each.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Priorities and Values:**

The spiritual principles a person adopts and desires to live by are reflected in their values (core values) and the priorities of their lives. Every one of us has values. Among those values some things are more important to us than others.

List six priorities that are very important to you, and then number them in order of importance:

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 23:23

*Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

Does Jesus value certain things more highly than other things?

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Read Jeremiah 9:23-24

*This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, <sup>24</sup> but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.*

What does this say that God values?

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Our lives reflect our priorities. If we value and choose emotional gratification over everything else, our lives will be self-centred and immature, and we will have great difficulty living by God's principles. If we value God's principle of loving others and live in such a way as to reflect that, our lives will exhibit consideration for others and personal maturity.

Break into small groups and discuss the following if there is time, or consider these topics this week:

- *Make a list of what you need and then what you want. Pray asking that you will only desire those things that are honourable and good and that you will have the wisdom to know which is which.*
- *Consider how you are spending your thought time and your actual time. Does it line up with what you say your values are? Are you prioritizing what you need to do to renew your mind?*
- *Memorize Matthew 6:25-33.*