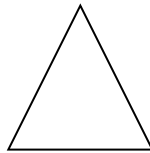


How Do I Deal With My Unfulfilled Longings?

LOIS KEHLENBRINK, LMFT

For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things. Psalm 107:9

The Triune God



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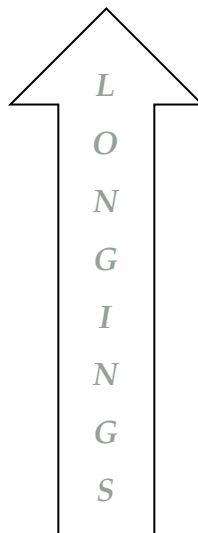


Object of your affection

Created things / People / Gifts

Consider what you love about your object of affection:

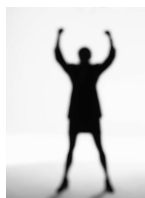
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Creator / Gift-Giver

Consider what your object of affection tells you about God:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



You

I developed this exercise the day after my daughters flew back to Germany. They had spent the whole summer with me in New York City, and the days had been rich with in-depth conversations, fun outings, and lazy breakfasts. My apartment was now silent and the thought of not seeing them for another whole year seemed more than I could bear. I sat down with Jesus and told him about the crippling ache in my heart and asked him for help. My thoughts wandered to some of C.S. Lewis' meditations from, "The Weight of Glory," and I began to draw. My longings, I assumed, could only be fulfilled by my daughters living in my proximity. But Lewis was suggesting that my daughters only awoke in me longings for something much greater – that all creation points to God Himself. I made a list of the things I loved about my girls and then made a list of how those qualities were found in greater magnitude in God. I then concluded that if I found my daughters, His gifts to me, so wonderful, then what in the world must He, the gift-giver, be like? This led me toward a more passionate pursuit of knowing Him. I would have settled for mud pies; He has given me the ocean.

Quotes on longing

I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you - the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence.... The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and was only longing. If these things are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.... But if we are to take the imagery of Scripture seriously, we believe that God will one day give us the Morning Star and cause us to put on the splendor of the sun.... At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. Someday, God willing, we shall get in.... Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. – C. S. Lewis *The Weight of Glory*

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! – Psalm 119:103

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! – Psalm 34:8

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. – Psalm 139:14

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. – 2 Corinthians 11:3

That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. – Philippians 3:10