

When I Don't Desire God

1 Peter 2:1-3 - NCBC, April 29, 2018

Main Point: **God's gospel is my remedy for hopeless selfishness.**

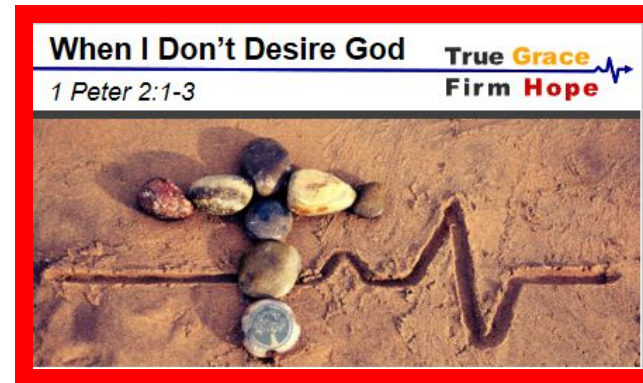
- **When I don't desire God, my relationships will suffer** (1)
 - So I eliminate my sin by confessing & repenting
 - So I grow my love by relishing God's love
- **When I don't desire God, His revelation will revive** (2-3)
 - So I silence my lies by believing Gospel truth
 - So I feed my hunger by tasting Gospel life

Application: **Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! (Ps 34:8)**

Opening Announcements:

- Welcome to Pastor Darren Wiebe visiting today! ABF Q&A
- Churchwide Prayer Gathering – 7pm @ First Mennonite Church, Thursday evening, May 3rd

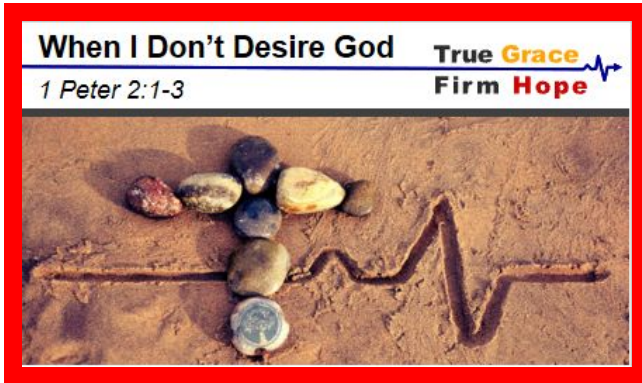
<<O Lord My Rock and My Redeemer>>



Let's continue our worship of the One who is the strong Defender of weary hearts this morning by opening your Bible to Peter's first letter to elect exiles.



If you don't have a Bible with you, simply raise your hand and we'd be delighted to give you one. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just return it after our service by placing it on the table in the back of the room. **1 Peter chapter 2** is on page 1203 in the giveaway Bibles today.



Now for those who are able, I'd invite you to stand in honor of the reading of God's Word as I read from the **English Standard Translation** of **1 Peter**. Since the chapter breaks are not divinely inspired, let's remind ourselves of the context by starting to read in **chapter 1**, starting in **verse 22**:

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ²⁴ for

*"All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
and the flower falls,*

²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever."

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

This is the living and abiding word of God. You may be seated.

Let's Pray.

This week I read an almost unbelievable story of a 23-year old man trapped in a baby's body.¹



Manpreet Singh lives in India, and due to a very rare genetic condition stopped growing after 1 year of life. He was born healthy, but after a year his body suddenly stopped developing and growing. So now the life of this

¹

<https://www.iheart.com/content/2018-04-26-meet-the-23-year-old-man-trapped-in-a-babys-body/>

23-year-old is contained in an 11-lb body – limited to the cognitive and behavior functions of a 1-year-old.

We grieve for Manpreet and his family. Such sustained stunted development makes our hearts sad. I prayed for Manpreet and his family this week – that this global attention would bring them real help. That God would grant them faith in Christ and healing mercies to help their sad plight.

But Manpreet’s stunted physical growth illustrates what so many in Jesus’ church experience today... spiritually.

Hebrews 5:12-13
*For although **by this time you ought to be teachers**, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since **he is a child**.*

The author of Hebrews writes,

*For although **by this time you ought to be teachers**, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since **he is a child**.*²

² Hebrews 5:12-13
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Some Christians are born again and are healthy for a time...and then they stop growing spiritually. They stop maturing. Although they have been saved for years and years – they are still unskilled in living by God’s Word. They are yet immature in the head, heart, hands, and home³ of a true Christ-follower.

All throughout **chapter 1** of this letter, Peter has been encouraging suffering believers with their invincible hope in God’s future grace. Your hope in Christ is the engine that powers perseverance to live distinctly⁴ and love earnestly.⁵ Now in **chapter 2** he connects this hope in Christ to your spiritual growth.

When it comes to your spiritual life, whatever you feed will grow.⁶ If you hope in Christ, you will crave Him. And when you long for Christ, you will feed on His Word!

To grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ⁷ requires feeding on God’s Word. (Feeding on the fading husks of this world’s entertainment and pleasure⁸ only grows spiritual apathy, hopelessness, and selfishness.)

You see, Manpreet’s family isn’t responsible for his dwarfed physical condition. God has entrusted this

³ Or you could say, doctrinal soundness of truth (head), prayerful dependence of faith (heart), missional faithfulness of witness (hands), and relational wholeness of love (home). These are the four necessary means of living for God’s glory.

⁴ 1 Peter 1:15-16

⁵ 1 Peter 1:22-23

⁶ Galatians 6:7-8

⁷ 2 Peter 3:18; John 17:17

⁸ Hebrews 11:25-26

physical weakness to him for His own good and mysterious purposes.⁹ But Manpreet and his family and you and I are *all* responsible to God for our spiritual condition.¹⁰

And contrary to our physical growth – our spiritual growth is a reflection of our greatest desire!

Peter wants us to understand that we do what we do because we want what we want.¹¹ Spiritually, we feed on what we desire to feed on! Spiritually, we drink what we choose to drink!

This makes sense, right? I grow spiritually whenever my desire for God causes me to feed on His Word.

But what about when I don't desire God?

What about those winter seasons of my soul when my affections for Christ seem frozen by doubts?

Peter is writing to Christians who are living with severe persecution. What should we do when our pain drowns out all honest desire for our Sovereign Lord? When the clouds hang low, and I no longer desire God, what is the remedy for such hopelessness that slowly but surely isolates me into greater and greater selfishness and despair?

1 Peter 2 brings good news for weary and hopeless hearts this morning. For in **verses 1-3** we learn that,

⁹ John 9:3; c.f. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

¹⁰ Acts 17:30-31

¹¹ C.f. James 4:1-3ff



God's gospel is my remedy for hopeless selfishness.

The Gospel preaching that caused you to be born again and receive new life in Christ¹² is still an active agent that is available to cleanse and refresh your dry soul. God's gospel will revive you – and free you from this dark pit of hopeless selfishness.

Let's follow Peter's logic carefully as we start with that first important word in **verse 1**:

So...

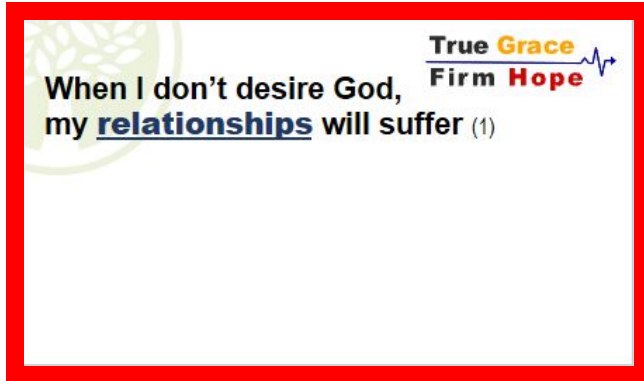
Meaning, "therefore, since" ...the last verses of **chapter 1** taught us that you have been born again through imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God that remains forever...

Since your life source is eternal, and your hope is durable and unshakable...

¹² 1 Peter 1:23

Since God's grace has made you new, *put away all malice, and deceit, and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.*

Peter wants suffering Christians to recognize this reality,



When I don't desire God, my relationships will suffer (1)

This isn't immediately obvious to us. We wrongly believe that our relationships with our friends and our family aren't directly connected to our relationship with God. We think our horizontal relationships won't be directly hurt if we just coast for a while in our vertical relationship with God.

Does a dusty Bible and habitual prayerlessness really mean my relationships will suffer?

Look at **Verse 22**. It's our relationship with God's Gospel that powers our love towards others. And **1 John** goes even farther, teaching that our love for others is actually

an evidence, or litmus test, of whether we've been born again by God.¹³

You must recognize this direct correlation for your soul: when you are growing spiritually, your relationships will be more loving. When your soul is hopeless and selfish, your relationships will be less loving.

So Peter calls me to,



eliminate my sin by confessing & repenting

Put away all these sins. They are inconsistent with your new life in Christ. I know you are suffering and in a tremendous amount of pain. But your power to love others doesn't come from your circumstances. Your love comes from your heart, which has been purified by the obedience of faith for a sincere brotherly love!

Follow Peter's argument: You won't grow in Christ until you desire Him more. But you can't grow your desire for Christ while you're still clinging to sin! You must take off

¹³ 1 John 2:9; 3:10, 14; 4:7-8, 11-12, 16, 20-21; 5:1

all sin like you would a dirty shirt – and cast it away from you! And since your relationships with others so honestly mirror your relationship with God’s Gospel...there’s no better place to start your spiritual growth efforts than with repentance of your relational sins.

Because if I’m unwilling to repent or turn from sin – my heart will continually be driven away from God – not closer to Him.

Let’s get practical. Are you unwilling to forgive someone who has wronged you?¹⁴ Or are you unwilling to openly confess something you have done– you know you blew it – you sinned in a way that even surprised you – but now your pride won’t allow you to walk in the light and really come clean?¹⁵ Listen dear child of God. If you don’t confess and repent, you are handicapping your soul’s desire for the very truth that feeds your growth!¹⁶ Spiritual hunger and desire grow best in humble soil.¹⁷ The broken soil of the heart that is quick to confess sin and turn from it in joyful repentance and faith in Christ!¹⁸

Consider this list of “anti-love” qualities carefully,



Peter uses the word “all” three times in this list – meaning “every sort of.” In other words once you’ve been born again by God’s abiding truth there’s no possible way to justify even a hint of any of this kind of sin in us.

Yes, others may have hurt you deeply. Such pain doesn’t go away easily. But your heart has been cleansed by your new birth. You can now live free from all such expressions of hopeless selfishness.¹⁹

Malice is a summary statement for all the ways you can hurt people. It’s the absolute opposite of love. So if your heart is focused on getting revenge, or making people pay, or even just promoting yourself by tearing others down – your heart cannot desire more of God and His truth. **Deceit** wants others to believe what is not true. It literally means to “catch with bait.” **Hypocrisy** wants others to believe what is not true about myself. It’s a specific kind of deceit or insincerity. Like an actor wearing a mask – hiding the real me. **Envy** is the resentment I have of your success. It’s failing to rejoice

¹⁴ Matthew 18:35

¹⁵ Psalm 32:5; 1 John 1:7-10

¹⁶ John 8:31-32

¹⁷ James 4:6-7

¹⁸ James 4:8-10

¹⁹ Galatians 5:22-24

with those who rejoice.²⁰ And when envy gets serious, it leads to **Slander**, which is evil speaking about others, gossip, or back-biting. We wickedly slander others to not feel so bad about ourselves.

Obviously, any tolerance for anti-love poison feeds lies and starves God's gospel truth. So is your desire for God lacking this morning? Then first honestly examine your soul. Is it possible you don't have a growing desire for God because you're full of untruths? Lies that deaden spiritual hunger, and capture you to do Satan's will?²¹ Is it possible you've allowed your pain to justify a strong commitment to Satan's appetite-destroying lies?

I'm not saying that every expression of spiritual depression is rooted in personal sin.²² But I am saying that some of us are so justified in certain sins – seeking to protect ourselves, defend ourselves, and prove ourselves right, that we have no more room for God. We wonder why our spiritual desire is so weak, while we've gluttoned ourselves on hopeless selfishness.

As Thomas Watson said, "Until sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet."²³ You cannot grow a greater love for Christ in a heart that still loves sin. Repent dear child. Come to your great High Priest Jesus this morning – He

²⁰ Romans 12:15


²¹ 2 Timothy 2:24-26

²² Job experienced great bouts of spiritual depression and confusion, yet not as a consequence of personal sin – rather the consequence of personal integrity and righteousness! (Job 1:8, 22; 2:3, 10) Yet even Job ended up having to confess and repent sin which he had self-justified in all of his pain and suffering – c.f. Job 42:1-6.

²³ Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance*, 63.

sympathizes with your pain.²⁴ And He sits at the right hand of your Heavenly Father today as the picture of your perfect spiritual maturity and righteousness which is your living hope! His resurrection from the dead provides all you need to put away all forms of "anti-love" and practice sincere love.²⁵

So first pursue genuine brokenness over your own sin and obey the truth of God's Gospel, since



True Grace
Firm Hope

When I don't desire God,
my **relationships** will suffer (1)

- So I **eliminate my sin** by confessing & repenting
- So I **grow my love** by delighting in God's love

I grow my love for others by delighting in God's love for me.

Only God's love for an imperfect and broken sinner like me is strong enough to increase my love for others. **Verse 22** says clearly my soul has been purified or cleansed for an unhy hypocritical love of others by faith in God's love for me. I love others, because God first loved me.²⁶

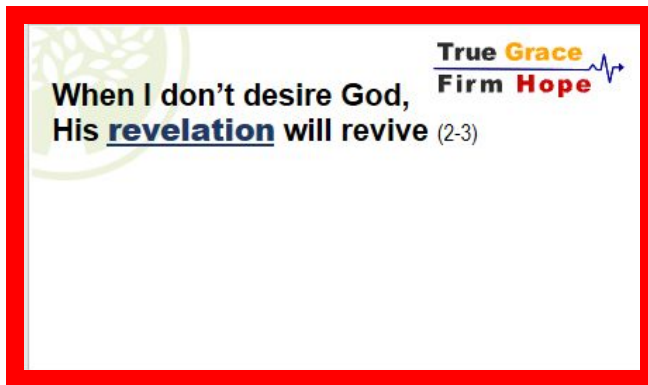
²⁴ Hebrews 4:14-16

²⁵ 1 Peter 1:3-5

²⁶ 1 John 4:19

Or to say it all a different way, most of us will not desire Jesus to be our only treasure until we've truly been satisfied by God's unconditional love. To relish God's love for me is to accept the truth that I didn't do anything to earn it.²⁷ I must repent of thinking that I can make myself acceptable to God with the right behaviors,²⁸ and I must believe the purifying gospel truth that even though I was, and continue to be entirely undeserving, God genuinely loves me in Christ, and this gives me hope!²⁹

So when I don't desire God, start by eliminating all known sin and delighting in God's gospel love. Which leads us to **verses 2 and 3**, where we learn that,



When I don't desire God, His revelation will revive (2-3)

The only way we can confidently know of God's love for us is through His Word – His special revelation to us.

Verse 2 says,

²⁷ Romans 5:8

²⁸ Galatians 3:3

²⁹ Romans 5:5

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation

Wake up discouraged soul! The smelling salts of the Gospel are before you this morning to revive your soul!!³⁰

Newborn refers back to our new birth in **verse 23**, just like a new baby instinctively cries out for the nourishment of their mother's milk – so likewise God's children need God's truth to live and grow.³¹

Now in **Hebrews 5** that we considered earlier, milk referred to the elementary principles of the Christian life, as opposed to the meat of spiritual maturity. But here in **1 Peter** milk is just an overview word for God's nourishing Gospel truth. *Pure spiritual milk* is the good news of **verse 25** which is the source of our new life in Christ, and our sanctifying sustenance for the Christian life of love.

So when I don't desire God, what I need most is pure spiritual milk! When my soul gets so malnourished with hopeless selfishness that I've lost my appetite for God and His Word – what I need immediately is an IV-drip of pure spiritual milk. My soul needs to be revived by the refreshing truths of Christ's finished work of grace for an undeserving sinner like me.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones once commented that, "Most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself, instead of talking to yourself."

³⁰ Psalm 19:7-8; 119:25, 28, 107

³¹ Matthew 4:4; John 17:17

True Grace
Firm Hope

When I don't desire God,
His revelation will revive (2-3)

- So I **silence my lies** by believing Gospel truth

So I silence my lies by believing Gospel truth.

Lies imprison me in the dungeon of doubts, fear, and isolated selfishness. Lies tell me there's no hope, I should just give up. But **1 Peter 1:5** says God's power is guarding me through faith for my final deliverance or salvation. And **Romans 10:17** says that faith comes by hearing the word of God! Faith overcomes despair when it is fed the encouragement of Gospel truth!³²

Listen, I know "Dr. Google" claims to have all the answers you ever need for this life. But don't ever believe the false advertising of worldly wisdom. Lasting joy doesn't come from education, recreation, meditation, or self-protection. Firm hope doesn't come from wealth, health, family, job, or will. Only the life-giving Word of God has the power to renew your desires and grow you up into salvation. Meaning, continue your development from when you were born again until when you are finally delivered safe into the presence of glory!³³

³² Romans 15:4

³³ Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12

Since I know that God's Word is sufficient to revive my soul,

True Grace
Firm Hope

When I don't desire God,
His revelation will revive (2-3)

- So I **silence my lies** by believing Gospel truth
- So I **feed my hunger** by tasting Gospel life

I feed my hunger by tasting Gospel life

Verse 3 quotes from **Psalms 34:8** saying,

If indeed, or it could be better translated since, you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The more Gospel revelation you drink, the thirstier you will get! The more you taste the undeserved kindness, mercies and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ – and really experience your new life in Christ... the hungrier you will become!

Did you notice what Peter doesn't command in **verse 2**? He doesn't command us to read, or study, or memorize, or preach the Word. He commands here something more foundational to all those right behaviors. He commands us to *long for the Gospel*. To crave God's revelation of Himself. He commands you to desire or want more of God!!

Yet you object: “But I don’t desire God. How can God command me to *want* something I don’t honestly *want*?”

Dear precious child – take courage, for God’s Gospel creates in you what the law requires from you! You must not wait passively for holy desires; you must now feed your hunger! Behold the beauty of Christ! Lift up your eyes again to look upon the one who gave you spiritual sight! Remember again how you have been ransomed from sin by Christ’s death and resurrection.³⁴ Only beholding Christ will cause you to become more like Him!³⁵ You will only begin to grow spiritually again once you have enjoyed God by tasting His kind of spiritual life – the kind that only comes from His living and abiding Word.

Main Point



God’s gospel is my remedy for hopeless selfishness.

God’s gospel is my remedy for hopeless selfishness.

Only God can grant you repentance from sin,³⁶ and genuine joy in Christ.³⁷ But the gospel is His good news

³⁴ 1 Peter 1:18-21

³⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:18

³⁶ 2 Timothy 2:24-26

³⁷ Galatians 5:22-23

of how Christ accomplishes our freedom from sin and our eternal joy through a bloody cross and an empty tomb. So, long for this pure spiritual milk. Or to use the words of the Psalmist,

Application



Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!
Psalm 34:8

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! (Ps 34:8)

You taste God’s mercy every time you repent of sin, and experience His undeserved forgiveness.³⁸ You taste God’s kindness every time your soul truly enjoys some aspect of grace. So feed your sight by what you’ve already seen of God’s goodness! Fill your ears with the good news that future grace is your inheritance! And feed your appetite for God by putting away all your known sin.

Will you pray with me now? That God Himself would do in us what He has commanded us to do...that we would long yet more to know God through His Word, so that we might grow up into our final deliverance by it.

³⁸ 1 John 1:9

When I Don't Desire God True Grace
 1 Peter 2:1-3 Firm Hope

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO AN EVENING OF
PRAYER & WORSHIP!

THURSDAY
 MAY 3RD, 2018
 7:00PM

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
 250 S. BALTIMORE AVE
 MORTON, IL

MORTON AREA
 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

See you Thursday Night!

*God Bless you
 New Castle Family!!*

Let's pray together as we dismiss.

<<He Will Hold Me Fast>>

Benediction

After you have suffered a little while, [may] the **God of all grace**, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:10-11

And after you have suffered a little while, [may] the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:10-11

Recommended Resources on *When I Don't Desire God*:

- Joshua 1:8
- Job 23:12
- Psalm 1:2-3; 19:7-11; 34:8; 42:1-11; 119:18, 103, 105, 140-142
- Jeremiah 15:16
- Matthew 4:4; 5:6
- John 6:63; 8:32; 15:3, 7; 17:17; 20:31
- Romans 10:17; 12:21; 15:4
- 1 Corinthians 3:2; 4:7; 15:36-37
- 2 Corinthians 3:18; 12:20
- Philippians 1:9-11
- Colossians 3:16
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:13
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26; 3:15-17
- Hebrews 5:12-13; 12:1
- James 1:18, 21; 4:11
- Revelation 12:11

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/spiritual-growth-is-not-optional>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/a-remedy-for-envy>
- <https://scripturetyper.com/> (Bible Memory System)

- When I Don't Desire God, John Piper
- Gospel Wakefulness, Jared Wilson
- Spiritual Depression, Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- "Hope for the Depressed," Ed Welch

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read 1 Peter 2:1. Compare with 2:16; Ephesians 4:22, 31; and James 1:21. Take time to define each of the characteristics listed. Which one are you most likely to practice, and why? What difference should our new birth (1 Peter 1:22-25) make in this, and how?
2. Read Psalm 34:8. Note how Peter changes the verb tense in 1 Peter 2:3, and uses the first-class conditional phrase to indicate, "since this is true." How might a Christian pursue greater enjoyment in God's kind grace? How do you seek to continually taste the sweet beauty of Christ?
3. Read 1 Peter 2:2. Discuss how God commands us "to strongly desire." What do you need in order to obey this command, and others like it? (to rejoice – Phil 4:4/Gal 5:22; to repent – Acts 2:37-38/2 Tim 2:25-26; to hope – Ps 42:5/1Pet 1:21; etc.) Discuss how God uses the means of His Word to increase your desire even as you begin to obey His command.
4. Read 1 Peter 1:22-25. How does our invincible hope in Christ and new life in Christ empower a persevering and continuing love for God and for others?
5. Read 1 Peter 2:2. How come Peter commanded these troubled hearts to "crave" God's Word, instead of read, study, preach, memorize, meditate, search the Word, etc. While other Scriptures give these other good commands – what is the significance of this command to desire God's Word in this context?
6. Read 1 Samuel 3:21. (c.f. Exodus 33:18ff) Why does Peter command us to desire God's Word, rather than just desire God Himself?
7. How does a Christian grow? C.f. 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 3:3. What does 1 Peter 2:1-3 teach us about the expulsive power of a greater affection?