

Find Your Heart's Desire
Proxe Station Instructions



Purpose

The goal behind this proximate station is to engage people on a personal, heart level. Two main conversations can happen here. First, we can invite people to consider if Jesus quenches our deepest desires, like Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in John 4. But, since not all of our desires are good or healthy, we also question our desires, too. So the second purpose of this station is to start a conversation that says we need Jesus to shape and transform our desires.

As participants move along the proximate station from left to right, each panel is intended to uncover connection points for communicating something about Jesus during the follow-up interview.

'Find Your Heart's Desire?' Proxe Station Introduction

1. Invite people to participate: 'Hi, I'm _____ and I'm with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. We're asking people what we desire and where those desires come from?'
2. Give them a set of 'dots' and a quick overview: 'Answer the questions with the dots. Go top to bottom, and left to right.'

3. Tell them that you'll 'When you're done, if you have time, I'd like to ask a few follow-up questions.'
4. Give them time to engage with the material.

Starting Personally:

1. So what stood out to you? How come?
2. *Share personally.* So when I did this, what I thought of was my desire for...

The Big Picture Conversations: The conversations I'm hoping to have are:

1. *The Satisfaction Question:*
 - a. *Thirst:* On the first question, there is a question about what we most thirst for. What are your thoughts about that? [ask questions in between] Do you think that we have a thirst for God? A certain type of God?
 - b. *Love and Desire:* I realized that I looked to other people primarily to receive love, but I found that Jesus' love is much greater
 - c. *Jealousy, Cravings:* I realized that I needed healing and transformation because I have all these negative desires in me like the Jealousy and Cravings questions point out.
 - d. *What Shapes Your Desires:* I realized that I let all these other people and things shape my desires, and it wasn't all that great. But when I started letting Jesus shape my desires...
 - e. *Undesirable Desires?:* The quote from the Buddhist Master, along with the "Do whatever makes you happy" quote illustrate differences between those approaches and the approach Jesus takes.
 - i. The Buddhist Master says that our physical desires don't really mean anything, or shouldn't really mean anything. But Jesus does believe that our bodies and our souls are both important – they can go wrong though, and we've got to let him shape our desires from both places, but we are definitely body and soul.
 - ii. The "Do whatever" quote just gets us into trouble. What if I act out of jealousy or something? Jesus meets our desire for a loving God, and reshapes our other desires in the likeness of that loving God. If you meet a skeptic who agrees with this "Do whatever" quote, challenge them with the Buddhist quote first.
 - iii. In either case, **ask the followup question**, "If you're really interested in how Jesus thinks about our physical and emotional and spiritual desires, would you be willing to read something with me that Jesus said about our desires?"
 1. John 4: Jesus' calling our heart's desire to himself, not in others (see www.nagasawafamily.org/john_outline.htm)
 2. Luke 15: Jesus' heart for lost people compared with the impatience and judgmentalism of the Pharisees; wanting us to share his heart (see www.nagasawafamily.org/luke_outline.htm)
 3. Matthew 5 – 7 (selections): Jesus' transformation of our hearts and desires (anger, lust, pride, greed, judgmentalism, etc.) (see www.nagasawafamily.org/matthew_outline.htm)
 - f. *Hints of More?:* C.S. Lewis' quotes are cool. He is saying that, because there is a Beauty behind all the beauty, there is a Desire in us behind all the desire. We have a Desire for God. And he's saying that if we experience thirst, it suggests there is something called water that will quench our thirst. If we experience hunger, it suggests there is something called food that will meet our hunger. If we experience a desire for another world, it suggests there is another world.
 - g. *What Kind of God Do You Desire?:* Do you want a God who is personal, who feels affection for us, who we can relate to?
 - i. I like the pottery image connected to "A God who wants to shape our desires towards His/Hers" because if God is good and personal and as good desires, then I want to become more like Him. I do think we all need transformation and healing from a good God.
 - ii. What evidence do we have for a God? Especially for a loving God?
2. *The Human Nature Question:* Do you think that there is something wrong with our desires? Something wrong with human nature?

- a. Go deep. Many people will say that human beings are only good, and that evil is external to us. It's rooted in the bad families, laws, or circumstances. But what about our affections for people changing? What about jealousy? What about the negative things we crave? *Share personally.*
- b. Education is not enough. Look at the campus!
 - i. If the college campus is supposed to be so effective at moral education, then why do 10% to 25% of women in college get raped? In fact, 90% of the victims know the men who rape them?^[1] Alcohol or drugs are frequently used to intoxicate women, especially in fraternity houses, to make them more susceptible to sexual coercion. Sadly, up to 40% of rape victims develop sexually transmitted diseases.^[2] Looking beyond the U.S., we find that 'rape is common worldwide, with relatively similar rates of incidence across countries, with 19%-28% of college women reporting rape or attempted rape in several countries.'^[3] That's not counting attempted rape, attempted coercion, verbal pestering, being stalked, and unwanted sexual contact more generally. The fact that Tufts University in 2009 had to make a residential life policy that you couldn't have sex in your room while your roommate was there, nor could you 'sexile' your roommate (exiling him or her so that you could have sex),^[4] means that even respect and conflict resolution skills have been deteriorating on campuses. This is happening at the campus, the very institution that is supposed to be shaping people's moral lives for the better, the very place that notions of good and evil, right and wrong should be taking root in people's hearts and minds.
 - ii. Furthermore, the campus is effective at producing careerists, but not at producing people who use their professions and lives for higher goals. For example, despite what pre-law students say about wanting to do pro-bono work or civil rights law, most go into corporate law. This is strongly suggested by Katchadourian and Boli, *Cream of the Crop: The Impact of Elite Education in the Decade After College*, in 1994, and by Page Smith, *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America*, 1990. Since college educations cost so much, and graduate school even more, and since people want to maximize their investment in themselves, the emotions that reign on campus are anxiety, fear, greed, and self-centeredness. Naturally, most students will work hard and then choose money-making ventures. Where is the university's moral case for calling students to live for more than themselves? How successful has their rhetoric been? Not very, and increasingly weaker. In an age of moral relativism, the university puts forward a weak moral case, if any at all.
 - iii. I'm not saying that we are totally and only evil. But I am saying that I think the line between good and evil cuts right down the center of who we are. *Share personally.*
- c. Challenge mere intuition. How do you know which desires are good and which are evil?
 - i. If they say, 'I don't know,' you can say, 'So you don't have a real framework for good and evil? How come?'
 - ii. If they say, 'The desires that hurt people are evil,' you can ask:
 1. 'There are lots of desires we have that wind up hurting people. I know that I often craving things where I ignore people, get too busy, get greedy, and just play along with the system. I think I need stronger desires for love, integrity, and courage.' And then how? For me, Jesus has more love, integrity, and courage than anyone else I know.
 2. 'What makes people valuable?' This leads to a conversation about where human dignity comes from, if not from a God who loves us.
 3. 'So professors and students can have sex, as long as it's consensual? Consensual adultery?' Actually, you probably do believe there should be limits to desire. What's behind that?
- d. Compare diagnoses: Invite them to consider reading a comparison of two reflections on human evil: part of it includes Matthew 15:18 – 20 where Jesus says that the human heart is the source of 'evil desires', etc. That is found here: http://nagasawafamily.org/matthew_15.01-20.gig.pdf. The importance of Jesus is that in his human body and in his human choices, God healed and transformed human nature.
 - i. Incarnation: He took on a human nature that had all the cravings we do.
 - ii. Life: He resisted everything selfish, jealous, and impure. He never sinned or desired something evil. Instead, he gave himself to the loving Father.

- iii. Death: He fought the corruption in human nature at its source: within us. He killed it when he died at the cross
 - iv. Resurrection: He came back in his resurrection as a new kind of human being – a cleansed, healed, and transformed human being that is purified by the love of God. And he is able to make a spiritual connection with any of us who ask him so we can share in his new humanity.
 - v. Holy Spirit: As we choose to be united with Jesus, and make choices to follow him, he will start to shape our desires. Our choices for or against Jesus will shape our desires. The assumption you might have is that our desires stay constant throughout our whole lives, but that is not true. Look at how our affections for people change over time.
 - vi. Consummation: When he returns, Jesus will perfect our desires as he completely transforms us.
3. *The God Question*: From the slide on ‘What Kind of God Do You Desire?’ you can get to Jesus and the Christian story:
- a. An affectionate God? Doesn’t it make a difference to have a God who feels affectionate towards us versus a God who feels neutral towards us?
 - i. Offer to read Luke 15 with them. Notice the longing and the pursuit of the shepherd, woman, and father. (see www.nagasawafamily.org/luke_outline.htm)
 - ii. Or, you can consider reading Luke 22:31 – 24:11 to engage with Jesus’ death and resurrection. This is how much Jesus loves us. (see www.nagasawafamily.org/luke_outline.htm)
 - iii. If great love from another person can empower us to do heroic things, what do you think great love from a loving God can empower us to do?
 - iv. What if the love we sometimes feel for one another is a fragment of the love that exists in the heart of God, for us?
 - b. A healer God? Jesus compared to Buddhism and hedonism: The quote from the Buddhist Master, along with the “Do whatever makes you happy” quote illustrate differences between those approaches and the approach Jesus takes.
 - i. The Buddhist Master says that our physical desires don’t really mean anything, or shouldn’t really mean anything. But Jesus does believe that our bodies and our souls are both important – they can go wrong and we’ve got to let him shape our desires from both places, but we are definitely body and soul.
 - ii. The “Do whatever” quote just gets us into trouble. What if I act out of jealousy or something? Jesus meets our desire for a loving God, and reshapes our other desires in the likeness of that loving God. If you meet a skeptic who agrees with this “Do whatever” quote, challenge them with the Buddhist quote first.
 - iii. In either case, **ask the followup question**, “If you’re really interested in how Jesus thinks about our physical and emotional and spiritual desires, would you be willing to read something with me that Jesus said about our desires?”
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 - c. A God who identifies with us? He knows what it’s like to struggle like us. In Jesus’ human body and in his human choices, God healed and transformed human nature.
 - i. Incarnation: He took on a human nature that had all the cravings we do.
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humanity.

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 - vi. Consummation: When he returns, Jesus will perfect our desires as he completely transforms us.
 - d. If it makes sense, ask: 'Have you ever considered allowing Jesus to heal your desires and your human nature?' 'Are there any things that hold you back from allowing him to?'
 - e. Offer to pray with them, that God would help them be aware of when they desire something and making certain choices, etc.
4. *The Chicken and Egg Question of Desire and Belief:*
- a. People sometimes start with their desires and then decide what belief system they will stand in. This is the basis on which people who want to be sexually active, outside of male-female marriage meant for a lifetime, decide that Christianity is not true.
 - b. The big problem here is that your belief system interprets your desires already. So you can't make a decision about your belief system based on what you already desire. You have to be open to a belief system that you don't necessarily desire, because it might be true! And you also need to evaluate (say) Christian faith according to how it invites you evaluate it: Was there a historical Jesus? And did he rise from the dead?