



PULLED

Galatians 5:17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Week One -

1. This week we began a new sermon series called Pulled. This sermon series is about understanding all the pressures and desires that pull on our lives. One of the first points made in the sermon stated, that there are forces continually pulling on our lives. Some of the examples given were worries, temptations, pleasures, managing time, taking care of family members, pleasing God, living out our calling, and all the responsibilities of life. Do you agree there are forces pulling on our lives? What is one thing that is pulling you right now?

2. Another point made early in the sermon may sound kind of obvious, it's good to desire good things. It's good because the desire will prompt us to do good things. Thinking back over your life, what is one good desire that strongly pulls you?

How might you distinguish a good desire from a bad desire?

3. See if you agree with this statement, God desires to satisfy your good desires. David reminds us: Psalm 103:1; **Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. ² Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits - ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.** Also, Jesus says: Matthew 7:11; **If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!** Be honest, is it difficult for you to believe that God wants to give you good gifts and satisfy your desires with good things?

Reflect on this quote from Gordon MacDonald **"The God of the Bible blesses lives. Meaning that he stands willing, in-fact desires, to pour out upon people gracious and uncommon gifts. Gifts that might include personal affirmation, intimate relationships, extraordinary opportunities, and remarkable energies that surpass the limits of what we think of as normal human experience. But it seems he wants us to ask him are you asking him to bless you?"** Do you ask God to bless you? Why or why not?

4. Unfortunately, we are pulled by more than just our good desires. Reflect on James 4:1, **What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?** Are there desires that battle within you? Some common battles are between spending or saving money, seeking God, or sleeping in, working out, or pigging out. Some darker battles are between addiction and sobriety, faithfulness, and adultery, and pleasing God or indulging your flesh. It can be very helpful to admit we are in a battle. Our theme verse for this sermon series is Galatians 5:17, **For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other so that you are not to do whatever you want.** Are you in a battle? Tell a story about a massive battle you have fought and won in the realm of the flesh vs the Spirit.

5. One of the keys to victory in our battle against temptation and the flesh is our mindset. Paul reminds us Romans 8:5-6, **Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.** The more that we focus on our temptations and the pull of sinful desires the more they control our thoughts and the more likely we are to give in. The more we set our minds on the things of the Spirit and the things of God the more we have life and peace. Is this difficult for you?

How well do you do at setting your mind on the things above? Do you have any successful tips that might help someone else learn how to set their mind on the things of God?

One application of this idea involves fear and anxiety. The more we focus on what is causing our anxiety, the more we play out endless scenarios and try to guess how bad it will be, the more anxiety we will have. The more we focus our minds on God, who he is and what he wants, the more peace we have. Learning to trust God and live in his peace can be a painfully slow process but eventually setting our minds on him will directly affect the fears in our lives. Do you agree? Have you seen this work in your life? What is your takeaway from question five?