



## From the Pastor's Heart

February 2010

Dear Friend,

What do you hope for more than anything else in the world? Whatever it is probably comes to your mind immediately. Perhaps you've asked God repeatedly to provide it for you. Or maybe your greatest hope is so private that you find it difficult to discuss with others—even your heavenly Father.

Most of us have a desire in our heart that we long to see fulfilled. We quote the Lord's wonderful promises and wait expectantly for the day He will reward our faith. There's nothing wrong with this. We see throughout Scripture that even God has desires—such as, His wish “for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). He also plants dreams within each believer to bless and motivate us.

Maybe you're wondering if the Lord inspired the particular yearning that's in your heart right now. Could it be that this hope within you has come from Him? To answer this question, you must first determine whether or not the desire fits God's purpose for your life by seeking His guidance.

I can assure you that the Father will move heaven and earth to show you His will. He desires to provide His very best for you. You can be confident that if something you want doesn't fit His awesome plan and purposes for you, He will be faithful to reveal His opposition to it when you seek Him. Do the things you seek leave God out or hinder your relationship with Him? Then they did not originate with the Lord. When desires tempt you to sin or run from the Father, they definitely do not come from Him.

On the other hand, not only does a righteous longing draw us closer to the Father, but it is also His gift to us. We know this from His beautiful promise in Psalm 37:4, “Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart.” Our responsibility is to seek Him wholeheartedly and obey His commands. When we do that, His blessing is to give us a praiseworthy yearning and then to satisfy it in a manner that is beyond our imagination.

First John 5:14–15 confirms, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

Of course, it's easy to keep the faith when we don't have to wait too long for God to bless us. But that's not usually the case. As the days, weeks, and months go by, we may find it increasingly difficult

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to trust that He is going to answer our prayers. We may begin to doubt that the Lord will ever satisfy our desires. If what we long for is truly from Him, why does He delay fulfilling His promise to us?

The truth is, the stronger our yearning, the more quickly our patience will fall short. So how do we maintain our trust in the Father until He fulfills His promises? First, we need to realize that His pledge to us comes with an important responsibility. Yes, He will grant us the desires of our hearts, but we must first delight ourselves in Him. How do we do that? By seeking, obeying, and pleasing Him, and by rejoicing that He is our Lord and Savior. When we focus on God and feel the joy of His presence, we tend to stop arguing with Him about what is best for our lives.

When I was very young my mother taught me that where our mind goes, our feet are soon to follow. If our minds are always trained upon the thing we're longing for, we will undoubtedly struggle with impatience. But if we keep our minds absolutely set on the Lord, we will be able to endure victoriously. As Isaiah 26:3 tells us, "The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You."

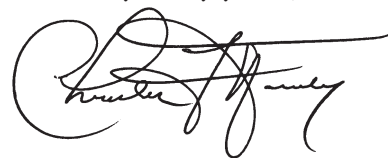
Second, Psalm 37:5 instructs us, "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it." We must be so dedicated to doing God's will that we are willing to lay down our desires if He asks us to. In other words, we should be more devoted to Him than to our hopes and dreams. This takes faith because we can only commit to the Lord when we absolutely trust that He has our best interests at heart.

I can assure you that our heavenly Father knows what each of us really desires and what will truly satisfy our souls. He is absolutely worthy of our confidence. He will not settle for anything less than His very best for us, and neither should we. And if we have faith in Him, He will accomplish it for us.

Finally, Psalm 37:7 tells us, "Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him." When we murmur, worry, and complain we are not demonstrating trust—we're actually arguing with God. This doesn't speed up the process at all; on the contrary, it only hinders His work and our growth. Waiting is one of the most difficult things we will ever do as Christians. But we must remember that it's never up to us to figure out how we will lay hold of His promise or to convince Him that we deserve His blessing. Our job is to rest, wait, trust, and obey.

So what is it that you hope for above everything else in the world? Remember that God works on behalf of those who wait for Him. The Father has a great blessing for you if you will delight yourself in Him, commit your ways to Him, and watch for Him patiently. Don't worry, become impatient, lose your faith, or run ahead of Him. Instead, trust the Lord for His very best today and every day. Because surely you will find that He fully satisfies every desire of your heart. May He bless you as you seek and serve Him faithfully.

Prayerfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles F. Stanley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "S".

Charles F. Stanley

P.S. At In Touch Ministries, our prayer is that you would delight yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ and that He would satisfy the desires of your heart. May your relationship with Him continue to grow as you seek His face through prayer, fellowship with other believers, His Word, and godly Christian resources. And may His love overflow in your life today and every day.