

My Desire

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

The above parable of “The Prodigal Son” identifies three characters: the father and two sons. The younger son in the story tells us so much about human nature. As human beings, we have **needs** and **wants**. These human **desires** motivate our actions and give us a sense of satisfaction or fulfilment when they are met.

1. Some Definitions

The following online definitions are helpful:

“A **need** is something that a person must have in order to thrive. Without it, that person will suffer either physically or mentally.”¹ Examples of needs include food, shelter, security, friends, feeling of accomplishment and so on as shown in Maslow’s popular hierarchy of needs (Fig.1).

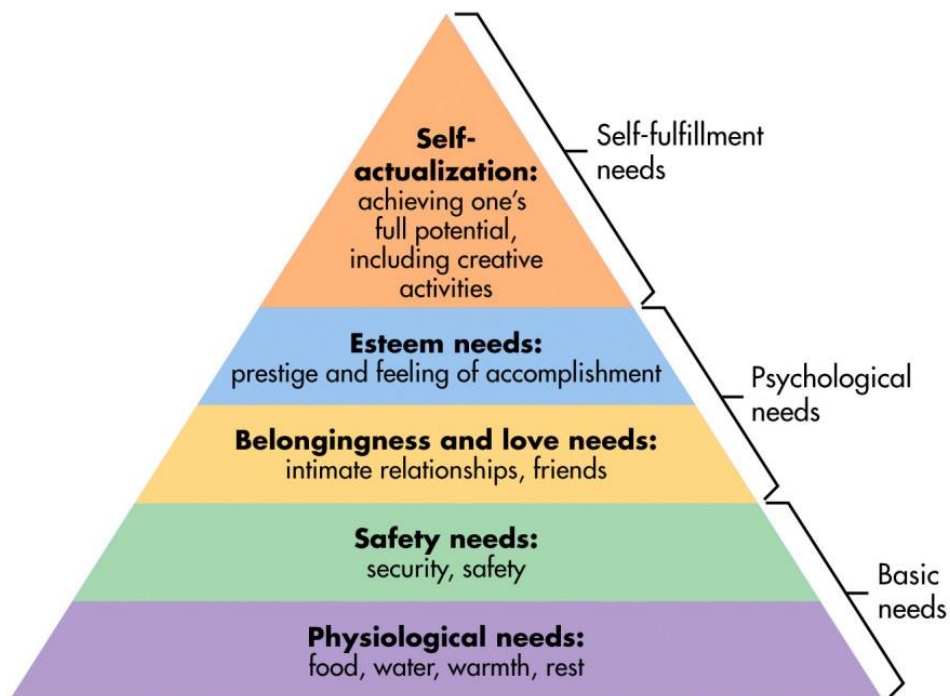


FIG.1

“A **want** is a choice. A desire which a person may or may not be able to get.”¹

Desire (n): “a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen.”

Desire (v): “to strongly wish for or want (something).”

2. A Son's Desire

"Father, **give** me my share of the estate."

So, the **younger son** had a desire – a strong wish – for his inheritance. It is assumed that he was a young man who had reached the age where his father could have given him his portion of wealth.

A few thoughts for consideration. First, I liken the son's request to his father to that of a child of God praying to his/her Father in heaven. However, although the Bible speaks of 'asking' and 'receiving,' our prayers must be in accordance with the will of God for our lives as stated in 1 John 5:14-15: .

*"¹⁴This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything **according to his will**, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."*

Second, sometimes with youthfulness comes a sense of eagerness and a feeling that we 'know it all' and do not need the advice of our parents or that of more experienced and trusted individuals. The son's request seems to border on a command – a strong desire - a decision which was made without seeking advice. The Bible does not say that he sought his father's or his older brother's advice on the matter of his inheritance. Sometimes, it is a good habit for young persons to seek advice from parents or from more experience and trusted adults, before embarking on their plans or before acting out their desires. Even when we prayerfully seek God's advice, our prayers should include the "according to Your will" clause as discussed in 1 John 5:14-15.

3. Self: 'Me' and 'My'

*"Father, give **me my** share of the estate."*

Needs and wants are specific to each individual, and usually vary from one person to another. As humans, our desires centre on satisfying our individual yearnings – 'our flesh.' However, we need to avoid acting on our "fleshly" desires, some of which are defined in Galatians 5:19-21:

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21

Also, the Bible warns that if we walk according to our fleshly, selfish nature we cannot please God:

"... those who are in the flesh cannot please God."- Romans 8: 8.

Further, we must guard against being motivated by our selfish ambitions:

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." - Philippians 2:3.

4. The Father

The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

The father heeded the son's request and gave him his share of the estate - just like a loving God who hears our prayer and blesses us with the desires of our hearts, once they are in accordance with His will for our lives. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father,

"Thank You for the gift of life where I can meditate on Your Word and be blessed. I wrestle with the desire to satisfy my human needs which sometimes run contrary to Your will for my life. O Lord, help me to know the difference and to seek after the things of God. Forgive me for my wrongful thoughts, words and deeds which centred on my selfish ambitions. Guard my heart against the desires of the flesh. Help me to have a greater passion for the things of God, and to die to self. Only give me the things that You desire for my life. In Jesus' mighty name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen."

Memory Verse:

"The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." - 1 John 2:17

Notes:

1. <https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/whats-the-difference-between-want-and-need/>;
2. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/desire>.

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