

LIVING IN THE HEART OF DESIRE & I AM THE AUTHOR OF MY LIFE

Final Week of a 6-Week Series Based on the Robert Brumet Book, "Living Originally"

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Tonight we are wrapping up the series, "Living Originally," with these final two topics: "Living in the Heart of Desire" and "I am the Author of My Life."

Brumet states, and I quote, that *"Desire is the core of human life, and that is why the practice of desire is so transformative."* He also states, *"To live in the heart of desire is to be fully open to the divine love and wisdom embedded deep within every desire."*

And here, once again, is that mystical word that I love: deep. In the Bible, depth carries both physical and spiritual meanings. Depth refers to literal deep water or literal deep soil. Depth also refers to the incredible wisdom and knowledge of God. And it refers to the vastness of God's love for the planet and for the human beings that inhabit the planet. And it also speaks to the depth of our human frailties. And it speaks to the profound nature of spiritual growth. And it speaks to mystery.

And it often -- it being depth -- often contrasts surface appearances with hidden appearances. And it often contrasts hidden realities as opposed to the realities that we are capable of seeing with our human eyes. In one way or another, all the world's great holy books teach and preach that same conclusion. And if, for no other reason, living originally should be done from that standpoint: for our soul's growth and also for our personal reasons for exploring our desires in our worldly experiences.

Thich Nhat Hanh said, *"Becoming attached to what we desire is what causes our troubles."* Michelangelo, who was one -- if not maybe the most gifted -- creative persons of many lifetimes, had one prayer, and that prayer was simply this. He said, *"Lord, grant that I may always desire more than I can accomplish."*

Let me repeat that: *"Lord, may I always desire more than I can accomplish."* Notice in that prayer that there's no arrogance; there's no greed in that request; there's no puffed-upness. He just asked a simple request: to be used to the fullest extent for the benefit of the universe was all he was asking.

And it occurs to me that we modern human beings have come to a point in our historical presence where we want the world. And I don't think there's anything wrong with having desires of a physical kind. But the most important desire that we can have is that desire from within: to express the eloquence and the excellence that is there.

There's an excellent example of living in the heart of desire in one of my favorite stories. It's not about a person who was memorable in that everybody knew his name. It was a simple gentleman that I knew a long time ago. His name, interestingly enough, was Joe Chet. And he drove around my hometown in a horse and a wagon, as many people in my community did ... the only means of getting around, really. He and another gentleman by the name of Elmer Richardson both had horses and wagons that they used to go to the mill to get kindling.

And for the younger people in the house who may not know what kindling is, it's the shavings of wood that people used in order to start fires in their homes. And they'd go to the mill to get the wood, load the wagons with wood, and then drive the horse and wagons around to different people's houses and sell bits of kindling for people to put in their wood-burning stoves or their coal-burning stoves in order to be warm in the winter.

So, these are conveniences that we don't even think about today, because we get up and push a button and it's either hot or cold. If it's too hot, we can adjust the thermostat. But in those days, you got what you got. [Congregants laugh] So, if there are cracks in the house, as there were in many of our homes,

the wind would whistle through. And we'd all gather around the stoves in order to keep ourselves warm in the winter. And the sun in the summer, of course; you'd open the windows and that never helped. [Congregants laugh] But at least you could have some paper fan there.

But Mr. Joe Chet was an interesting character in that he had this kind of faith in the power of God to see him through every circumstance or condition that he encountered. And he got sick once, and there were rumors around the town that he was on his way out. And so, the word got out, and two or three of the preachers in the town went to his house and they prayed over him. And they left him there at his house. And everybody was all concerned in the neighborhood for a few days. And then about three or four days later, we saw Mr. Joe Chet and his horse and his wagon going back to the mill to get a load of kindling to start his kindling route again.

And I remember, as a kid, thinking how much that required: to be able to deal with these kinds of challenges day in and day out and still maintain a faith in a God that we could not see, and a God sometimes that we could not feel. And I think I learned a lot from those turning inward times to stimulate my spiritual growth in my later years when I needed God in a way that I'd never needed God before.

As a teenager, God was pretty clear to me, but that also meant that I could go out and I could drink wine and I could do all the things I enjoyed doing as a kid. Get myself in trouble, go home, get my rear end whipped. [Congregants laugh] And then figure it out and go out and do it again and again [congregants laugh] until I learned the lesson. And I learned the lesson by virtue of the experiences.

And there's a lot to be said for experiences. My grandmother would say, *"You always have to learn things the hard way, son. And there's an easier way."* And I never quite figured that out. And I still haven't quite figured it out. [Congregants laugh]

So here I am today talking about this subject that is interesting to me because of my experiences with Robert, the author of the book.

He also states in this first chapter that there is a primal intelligence behind every desire that we have. But that primal intelligence can often be obscured and distorted by our unconscious psychological forces. But, he said, we should honor the intelligence behind this desire and honor it, no matter how absurd the desire may seem to us.

Now, simply put, he's saying that we need to honor and to respect and to follow our own divine guidance ... and then trust God -- or trust our higher selves -- to lead us through each successive step that we consciously know we are about to take. And to lead us when we are making progress in our lives and to lead us when it seems like we are going backwards in our lives.

And he states further that our intuition knows where we are going, and that our souls know where we are going, and that our instincts know where we are going. And that we can validate that knowingness by praying and meditating and not being obsessive with the end results. And is there anyone in here who has not had an opportunity to be obsessed with end results? [Congregants laugh]

You know, we're taught to plan, and we're taught to follow our plans. And we're taught that, if we do specific things, one after the other in specific order, that things will work out for us. But sometimes that is not the case.

I'll tell you a quick story. It's a Kentucky story about a big city lawyer who went duck hunting in rural Kentucky. And he's trotting across the field with his shotgun. Saw some ducks. Shot a duck. Duck fell on to another farmer's field different from the farm where he was hunting. And the field had a fence around it. So the lawyer climbed over the fence. And he noticed that the farmer was plowing in the field quite a

ways off. And he started to retrieve his duck. So the farmer noticed him walking around on his land, and he drove over on his tractor. And, as he reached the point where the lawyer was, he asked him what he was doing.

And the lawyer responded, *"I shot a duck, and it landed here, so I am retrieving it."*

And the farmer said, *"Well, this is my property, and I don't want you on my property."*

And the lawyer responded, *"Sir, I'm only getting the duck that I shot."*

And the farmer said, *"I don't want you on my property."*

And this time the lawyer is getting a little heated, and he says, *"Sir, I'll have you know that I'm one of the best trial lawyers in this state. If you don't let me get my duck, I'm going to sue you for everything you've got, and I'll take everything that you've got, and you'll never get it back."*

And the old farmer smiled, and he said, *"Apparently, you don't know how we do things in these parts. He said, we settle disputes like this with what is known as the three-kick rule."*

And the lawyer says, *"Well, what is that?"*

And the former replied, *"Well, in the three-kick rule, because the dispute is taking place on my particular land, first I get to kick you three times. And then after I kicked you three times, you get to kick me three times. And we go back-and-forth until someone gives up."*

And the lawyer kind of looked at the old farmer and he summed him up and decided that he could take him on. So the old farmer slowly climbed down from his tractor and he walked up to the attorney. And his first kick planted the toe of his steel-toed work boot into the lawyer's groin; dropped him to his knees. Second kick went to the lawyer's mid-drift. And then the lawyer's mouth started to foam; stuff coming out of his mouth. And the lawyer was on all fours. And then the farmer's third kick went to his rear end, and he sent him face-first into a fresh pile of cow manure.

So the lawyer slowly summoned every bit of his will; managed to get back to his feet, wiping his face with the arm of his jacket. And he said, *"Okay, you old coot. Now it's my turn!"*

And the old farmer smiled and said, *"Nah; I give up. You can keep the duck."* [Congregants laugh] Yeah, it's pretty bad.

But you ever find yourself struggling, getting overly deep into matters that are taking place in your life? Hell bent on finding some kind of solution? So committed to finding that solution that you never stop to think that there could be other possible means of solving the issue? Most of us do. Because we don't have that level of trust that we should have in the Power that is greater; in the Power that is greater than our human selves. And so, we think that we have to have the solutions to this, these problems and these challenges in our lives.

And without getting into the complexities of Robert's book, a lot of this to me is just good, old, plain common sense. It's about being willing to have faith in a Power that is greater than ourselves. And to have that no matter what's taking place in our lives.

I mean, we all deal with problems and issues. I've had health challenges in my life. I've had self-esteem challenges in my life. I've had financial problems in my life. I've had every kind of problem that you can think of in my life. And the problems have never been brought to any kind of solution until I'm able to reach that point where I'm saying, *"Okay, God; I can't do this on my own. Need some help."* And sooner, more often than later, that helps starts to unfold. And I began to see myself clear. And I began to find solutions that I thought were not accessible to me. Because all of a sudden I've got some divine help.

And so, this book is pretty complicated, because Robert is a bright -- very bright -- man. But he, like any of us, had his challenges to deal with. And so, he's coming at this from that standpoint of knowing both from the psychological end and from the spiritual end, that there comes a point in our journey wherein we have to turn to something that is greater than ourselves.

Living in the heart of desire. It states, and I quote, *"Original desire is like pure water that arises from an underground spring. And that water meanders across a wide expanse of land before reaching the sea. However, along the way, this once-pure water can sometimes become quite polluted and filled with toxins that were not present at its source."*

And I want you to think about the metaphysical consequences of what he's saying here. Because there are times when our thoughts become polluted. There are times when our efforts become polluted from our own need of ego control. And they're not unpolluted until we're willing to turn inwardly and find that pure water that flows through us.

One of the challenges -- and maybe the most important challenge -- is learning how to manage the impact of the pollutants that we encounter. And those pollutants come to us from all areas in all ways.

And I'm not talking about pollutants in the sense of oil and gases in the water. I'm talking about the pollutants of thought: the thought currents that infiltrate our consciousness when we are attuned to all the craziness that takes place on our planet at any given point in time. And we have to be able to filter through that to live a life of peace when the world seems to be falling down around us.

Our consciousness, our peace of mind, our relationships -- all the things that we have to maintain in this life to protect ourselves and our sense of safety and our sense of sanity, our sense of self-respect and, at the same time, give that to others -- all of that we have to be dealing with every moment of our lives.

And it's something that takes place instinctually within us. It's not something we have to stop and think, *"Oh, I need to do this or that or the other."* It happens instinctually, but we have to be willing to trust it and not to allow it to unfold.

The primary task for us, I think, is for us to be able to live with responsibility. To take responsibility for all the things that are happening in our lives, and then to be willing to overcome them with our own interior intelligence. Sounds high-falutin', but it's really quite simple.

The last chapter -- Chapter #10 -- is called "I am the Author of My Life." And as I was reading that, I thought, "I am the author of my life? Really?!" [Laughs] Yes, I am! And somewhere I've written the wrong thing! [Congregants laugh] But that's all ego stuff.

I am the author of my life. In this chapter, Robert talks about his own personal journey. And he sums things up briefly and pretty specifically in this simple statement. He said, *"Over time, I began to see deep down inside myself that I was actually not much happier than I had been. I'd done all of these things. I'd learned all of this information. But I came to an awareness that, deep down inside, I was actually not much happier than I had been before. I began to realize that changing my life circumstances would not really fulfill my heart's desires. I discovered what I really wanted was not just a different life circumstance, but a different life all together. And then as I explored that, what I really wanted was transformation rather than translation."*

And what he's saying here is that what he really wanted was to be changed at depth. And I think that's what we all want most of our lives. This is actually practical, but it's also actually about being what you truly are. And that may come as a surprise. It's about being okay with who you are.

I used to have a little statement that I'd say to the prayer chaplains. And it was simply this, you are enough. And you spell enough 'E-N-U-F.' There's no special meaning to that other than it's easier to spell. [Congregants laugh]

But what happens when you realize that you are enough is: you begin to let things flow. And I don't think there's a one of them that would disagree with that. And as we learn to let things flow through us, we're not only able to heal our own lives, we are able to help other people heal their lives, as well.

And this is no way a simplistic thing to do. It is something that we have to do over and over and over and over again. But the more we do it over and over and over and over again, the more it will stay with us. And so then when challenges arise, we don't have to panic; we just go a little deeper inside

In closing, I would say that I was reminded this week in my last talk on this book, that I spoke about my admiration for Robert and the other seminary staff, and how that made an impression on me in my ministerial journey. But to be frank, I'm impressed with people, in general. And I believe in people.

I want to tell you about an experience I had yesterday. I went to see our insurance agent, because our Medicare program that we were on expired this year. And so, we were instructed that we needed to find another provider. And there's a young man that I met maybe 15, 16, 17 years ago. His name is Chris Fong. And he works for Medicare, and he helps people make the decisions as to what is the best Medicare program for them. And he's helped Mary and I a couple of times when our particular provider has stopped and we had to find new providers.

And his name always pops into my consciousness when I'm told that I need to find a new program. So I went to visit Chris, Mary and I went to visit him yesterday. And he used to do all of this work from his car. But now he has a tiny little office. And it's an interesting little cubicle, and he's got two employees.

And so, we were laughing and talking about how long it had been since we'd seen each other. And I was reminding him how important he was to us and making our insurance decisions and so forth. And so, he took care of us and got us into a new program and signed up; did everything that we needed to do.

And as we were leaving out of his cubicle there, there was a wall in front of me. And there was a little white plasterboard framed thing that had some writing -- personal writing -- in it. And I read it and was moved to tears. So I want to share this with you. It says:

As you move through this life, keep your mind always open to new and exciting things.

Listen with your whole heart and be kind to everyone you meet.

Seek the truth and speak of loving honesty.

Respect those who are different from you.

Always cherish the time you spend with family and friends.

Express gratitude for what you have and be happy for others' successes.

Know that you are treasured and adored.

Share your milestones.

Hug your elders.

Just a point: I don't have many elders. [Congregants laugh]

Play with the young ones.

Have grand and wild adventures.

Be creative.

Make art; make music.

Find joy and happiness in yourself as you move through life.

Post-Script: This is neither a comparison or a critique. This is just a single simple reminder that we all get to see the world, not as it is, but as we are. When I follow these simple little rules here, I don't see all this ... BS. [Laughs with congregants] Whoa! I was about to go a little too off-script there!

But seriously, when I'm living in the truth, none of the insanity that takes place in this world -- and there's a lot! -- has one iota of impact on me. And that's a huge truth.

So, I've come through a lot. I've seen a lot in my 82 years. A lot! And I've learned over time that, when I'm in my space -- when I'm following these simple little rules and guidelines that he's got printed on his wall -- that everything in my world is okay.

And here we are. Right at this point in time, everything in our world is okay. Now, we'll go out of here and we'll get in traffic and we can decide for ourselves whether it's hellish or we can decide for ourselves whether it's just a simple journey home. And it all begins in here [points to his heart].

I have no more to add to that. God bless!

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