

The Difference Between Moths and Cockroaches

(The Anatomy and Importance of Desire)

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What is it that you want the most? What are you irresistibly drawn to? What do you prefer over everything else? These are not inconsequential questions. The answers reveal who (or what) you really are.

Believe it or not, the importance of these questions can be illustrated by looking at one obvious difference between moths and cockroaches.

Moths are drawn to light. I don't know why (and I'm not sure the moths know either), but on warm summer evenings they flee from darkness to flutter and dance by the thousands around whatever light they can find. They seem happy there, close to the light.



Cockroaches, on the other hand, are repulsed by light. If you have ever lived in roach-infested quarters (like my apartment during college), you know that when you come home at night and turn on the lights, the roaches abandon the pizza crumbs and scatter for whatever dark place they can find. Light disturbs them. They seem happy only when they are safely hidden from it.



“That’s nice to know,” you’re thinking, “but what’s your point?”

Well, first of all, the Bible says a lot about light, darkness, and the people who prefer one over the other. John wrote, “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Paul described Jesus as “the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (2 Cor. 4:6). Jesus described Himself and His followers like this: “I am the Light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).

Darkness is a common biblical metaphor for sin. Paul wrote to Christians, saying, “Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness.” Elsewhere he said that “[God] has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col. 1:12). Jesus also spoke of darkness as that which the natural, sinful person prefers, even above Him. He said, “The Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed” (John 3:19-21).

You are either like a moth or a cockroach. You either love the Light and find yourself satisfied in His presence, or you are repulsed by the Light and prefer hiding in the darkness of your sin.

Please forgive the non-technical term I’m about to use, but it all depends on which direction your “wanter” is pointing. You either want Jesus more than sin, or you want sin more than Jesus. It really is just that simple.

The non-Christian’s “wanter” is like a defective compass. Rather than helping him find his way to safety and security, it makes him more lost. By desiring the world more than Christ, the lusts of his flesh more than holiness, he’s becoming more and more enslaved to these things. He is so fond of what he values the most—he esteems them so highly and pursues them so earnestly—that he cannot make himself move in the opposite direction. Just as a cockroach *by nature* prefers darkness over light, fallen man *by nature* prefers sin over Jesus (Eph. 2:3). His broken “wanter” tells him that sin is better. He has been blinded spiritually so that he cannot see “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4). If he truly saw Jesus, he would learn to hate sin and run from it.

The true Christian, on the other hand, is the person whose “wanter” has been renewed by God. The Holy Spirit dwells in him, giving him new desires which lead him away from sin and toward righteousness. No matter what the world insists is better, this person knows there is nothing better than Jesus Christ. He knows this because God has shined the light of truth into his heart so that he actually sees “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). Seeing Jesus in this way, he *enjoys* Jesus’ excellence as it is displayed in the Bible. He finds Jesus desirable *above all other things*. To him, Jesus is completely satisfying, and as a result, sin has an ever-decreasing appeal.

The deciding factor, then, in determining whether you are like a moth or a cockroach is your desire—the direction in which your “wanter” is pointing. You will be satisfied most completely by that which you find most desirable.

If you honestly assess yourself and conclude that you desire sin more than Jesus, you need to be delivered—set free from sin—saved! I don’t want you to be delivered *from* desire, because desire is not inherently evil. I want you to be delivered *by* desire. I want your desire for Christ to overshadow and overcome your desire for sin. I want you to see and enjoy Him in such a way that it becomes impossible for you to genuinely be satisfied any longer by pursuing “things,” by seeking the approval of ungodly people, by fostering pride, or by delving into sexual immorality.

I want you to experience the truth that Jesus is simply *better*.

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