



THE UNMET LONGINGS THAT DRIVE US TO SIN

with Ben Bennett

▶ FOCUS VERSES

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.
Romans 8:1-2

▶ DISCUSSION

1. In their book *Free to Thrive*, Ben Bennett and Josh McDowell discuss the “seven unmet longings” that can drive us to sinful behaviors.

- Acceptance—the longing to be included, loved, and approved of for who you are no matter what
- Appreciation—the longing to be thanked or encouraged for good things we’ve done
- Affection—the longing to be cared for with gentle touch and emotional engagement
- Access—the longing for the consistent presence of key people in one’s life
- Attention—the longing to be known and understood by someone entering your world
- Affirmation of Feelings—the longing to have our feelings validated by others
- Assurance of Safety—the longing to feel safe and secure in all aspects of our lives

- a. Looking back on your childhood, do you recall feeling particularly unfulfilled in any of those areas?
- b. Did you ever voice those feelings of unfulfillment?
- c. If not, how did you deal with those feelings?

2. Do you still feel any of those “unmet longings” as an adult today?

- a. If so, what steps have you taken—healthy or unhealthy—to fill them?
- b. Have those actions caused problems in any areas of your life?



3. What are your personal beliefs with respect to how God views your sins?

- a. Do you envision God as forgiving and compassionate, or do you envision Him as turning His back on you or desiring to see you suffer?
- b. Why do you feel that way?

4. Have you ever thought about the deep-seated reasons why you might be continually drawn to addictive or otherwise unhealthy behaviors?

- a. Are there any people in your life right now with whom you would feel comfortable discussing this topic?

5. In a few words, sum up your general feelings about therapy.

- a. Is it something that's accepted or even encouraged in your family or amongst your group of friends?
- b. Or is it something that's discouraged or deemed unnecessary?
- c. If it's the latter, what reasons do people give for feeling that way?

6. Were you surprised to hear Ben talk about how there are specific neuroscientific reasons for some of our addictive or sinful behaviors—that sin, as some of his counselors put it, wasn't necessarily a moral problem, but a “brain problem”?

- a. Does that make you feel any more hopeful that you can overcome some of your own unhealthy behaviors?

7. In what ways are you consistent about presenting the “authentic you” to the world?

- a. In what ways do you frequently put up a front or deny your true personality or feelings?
- b. Why do you feel like the world will like or accept that artificial version better?

