



# Teach Us to Want: Longing, Ambition and the Life of Faith

By Jen Pollock Michel

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In this five-session video companion to *Teach Us to Want*, Jen Pollock Michel guides us on a journey of understanding who we are when we want, and reintroduces us to a God who would give us the desires of our hearts. The story of each person is a story of want?desires unmet, hopes dashed, passions pursued and ambitions fulfilled. And yet why we want?and how we can want well?often eludes us. Our individual stories are set against a greater story: a good God creates us according to his good pleasure. That good God enters our reality and redeems us down to our soul for his good pleasure. And our desires have a role in the life of our faith. A free printable discussion guide to the DVD is available to download.

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## **Teach Us to Want: Longing, Ambition and the Life of Faith** By Jen Pollock Michel Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"Most of us have wanted something at some point in life. Some of us live with a deep void in our souls that never seems to be filled. How do we live with such desires? How do we respond to the emotions brought on by longing and wanting? With raw honesty and a scriptural foundation, Michel shows that our desires have a place in the journey of faith." (Courtney Reissig, Christianity Today's 2015 Book Awards (Book of the Year), January/February 2015)

"In *Teach Us to Want*, Toronto-based writer Jen Pollock Michel challenges conventional Christian notions about heeding desire. She helps us understand that what we want isn't our enemy, but can be one of God's most powerful tools for shaping and directing us. We might easily think of desire as all bad, but Michel argues that desire, rightly understood, should be followed." (Laura Turner, Christianity Today, July/August 2014)

"'Desire is primal: to be human is to want,' writes Jen Pollock Michel in the opening chapter of her praiseworthy new book *Teach Us to Want*. Certainly this is not new information, but in this compelling book that masterfully interweaves juicy personal narrative, scholarly research, and solid biblical exegesis, Michel builds a case for the importance of examining desire's many facets: 'Desire is the powerful subtext of our lives. It determines decisions. This is why we need to pay attention to it.' 'With grace and humor, she bravely bares her own stories of struggle with wanting and loss, hope and doubt. Her vulnerability elicits the reader's trust. Here is a worthy and compassionate guide to join on this important journey; Michel helps us distinguish between *What do I want?* and *What does God want for me?* 'Using the Lord's Prayer as a rubric to frame our naked wanting, the reader is invited to consider Jesus' language of prayer as a way of realigning our hearts with God's purposes and priorities. These 'are words we pray, not always because we believe them but because we want to believe them.' Our desires, though warped by our sin, have been placed in us by God, and it is *his* desire to recalibrate our hearts for the glory of his kingdom. Though it would be easy to float off in many divergent theoretical theological directions, the book stays grounded through relatable stories and practical application. . . . 'This is the kind of book you set down not because it has lost your interest, but because you need time to soak in its profound intricacy.'" (Aleah Marsden, Books & Culture, August 2014)

"Seriously, one of the most beautiful nonfiction books I have ever read." (Bethany Jenkins, founder, The Park Forum)

"Jen Pollock Michel's *Teach Us to Want* is a beautiful spiritual memoir that weaves the author's story with passages from Scripture that address?and even gracefully redress?her restless fears and questions. Intelligent, honest and inspiring, the book invites readers to understand their own stories of loss and "loving wrongly" in the light of that which is truly the antidote to our fears and dissatisfaction, the good news." (Jennifer Grant, author of *Love You More*, *MOMumental*, *Wholehearted Living* and *Disquiet Time*)

"In her debut book, Jen Pollock Michel offers a meditation on what it means to walk the line between dismissing our desires as evil and abandoning ourselves to them. The book's mix of narrative and biblical reflection nudges us into deeper contemplation of our desires, God and the ends toward which our desires are driving us." (Relevant Magazine, September-October 2014)

"'Lead me not into ambition,' I have prayed, sideways, with the weight of ambition on my shoulders. Who

has not wrestled with the tensions between what we desire and what (we think) God desires? Michel has brilliantly lit a way through our own dark, tangled brambles. I've been waiting for this book for a long time." (Leslie Leyland Fields, author of *Forgiving Our Fathers and Mothers*)

"Michel artfully weaves together Scripture and story to point us straight to the truth of God's love, grace and provision. This is not a Christian guide to success or a biblical condemnation of desire. This is a book that rightly resets our human desires into the context of God's good news." (Kathy Khang, coauthor of *More Than Serving Tea*)

"As women, we often feel the urge to hide our longings, especially in the church. Through her own story of fear, loss and God's goodness, Jen stirs us to recover and reshape these desires in light of the kingdom of God." (Rebekah Lyons, author of *Freefall to Fly*)

"Jen Pollock Michel fuses three things that make her book essential reading: deep insight, raw honesty and radiant prose. She's a terrific writer, an agile thinker and?if that were not enough?a fearless witness to her own heart's darkness and light. By inviting me deeply into the mess and beauty of her own story, she has given me courage to step into the mess and beauty of my own?and, with her, to meet afresh the One who awakens, names, purifies and meets all the desires of my heart." (Mark Buchanan, author of *Your Church Is Too Safe*)

"Jen Pollock Michel's latest book, *Teach Us to Want*, reflects on the Lord's Prayer as a way of knowing our desires. . . . This title guides women in understanding that when their desire is informed by Scripture and reformed by spiritual practices, it can invite them into active kingdom participation." (CBA Retailers + Resources, August 2014)

"This is an important and enjoyable work. In the end, Michel shows that desires are a divine gift?corrupted by sin, to be sure, but to be embraced as we seek their transformation by grace. Especially for those who consider happiness and holiness at odds, Michel wants to prove they have been friends all along. This is a book for anyone looking for an enjoyable and insightful read on a nuanced perspective of our desires and longings." (Drew Hunter, Themelios, April 2016)

"Probably the best praise for a book is the difference it makes in your own life. Michel makes a case for praying honestly: not self-editing as we go because we know perfectly well that many of our prayers are illegitimate, but just letting it come out because it behooves us to know what's in our own hearts. So I tried it and was surprised at some of what surfaced. God had never been fooled by my careful petitions, but I had been. I will try it again, and often. We don't always get what we want. And we don't always want what we get. Michel's book is a kindly, accessible guide to sorting through those realities in a Christian perspective." (Sarah Wilson, Lutheran Forum, April 8, 2015)

#### About the Author

Jen Pollock Michel is the author of *Teach Us to Want* and is a regular contributor to *Christianity Today* and Moody Bible Institute's *Today in the Word*. She earned her BA in French from Wheaton College and her MA in literature from Northwestern University, and she belongs to Redbud Writers Guild and INK. Wife and mother of five, Jen lives in Toronto, Canada, and is an enthusiastic supporter of HOPE International and Safe Families.

#### Users Review

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**Donald Gullett:**

Do you one of people who can't read satisfying if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This Teach Us to Want: Longing, Ambition and the Life of Faith book is readable simply by you who hate the straight word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving possibly decrease the knowledge that want to deliver to you. The writer regarding Teach Us to Want: Longing, Ambition and the Life of Faith content conveys prospect easily to understand by lots of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content but it just different in the form of it. So , do you nevertheless thinking Teach Us to Want: Longing, Ambition and the Life of Faith is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

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