



I WAKE UP EACH MORNING REMINDED THAT ALL I need to face the day is to breathe deeply of fresh air and to find my way to the nearest Starbucks. Well, actually I live in LA, so I really can live without the fresh air (my lungs have finally adapted to the smog). The caffeine, on the other hand, is essential. Each morning demands its Venti skinny “extra hot,” wet cappuccino.

Before you condemn me, let me assure you it’s not an addiction but an appreciation. I can quit anytime, and so I don’t need to. I’m convinced coffee is an acquired taste. The aroma is better than the flavor, not to mention the compelling nature of the effect.

Science is only now discovering the medicinal value of the sacred bean. If all goes well, it will soon be its own food group. I’ve never been pregnant (my wife volunteered both times), but I do know the power of cravings. Is my relationship to java a problem? No, espresso is a guilty pleasure, and I am grateful for my dealer ... um ... barista.

There are cravings within me, though, that pull on me like an addiction.

They have always been with me and have even at times tormented me.

They go far deeper than any physical addiction ever could.
Beyond my flesh,

beyond my mind,
beyond my heart,
there seems to be a place where my deepest and
most powerful cravings lie.

And they do not lie silently.

My soul, it seems, always desires and demands, and no matter how I try to satisfy it, **it always craves more**. No, not more, but something I can't seem to understand.

My soul craves, but for what I don't know.

And there I tell you is at least half my problem. I've tried so many things and done so many things, certain they would satisfy my soul, but they never did.

Most of the time it was worse than leaving me empty. Not only did I find myself unsatisfied, but the craterlike vacuum inside me was now deeper than it was before.

It seems as if I've spent my whole life trying to satisfy this insatiable part of my being.

If you interviewed my soul, it would probably describe me as sadistic or masochistic. My soul would tell you I find some dark pleasure in leaving it unsatisfied. Before you jump to a conclusion, though, you need to hear both sides. It's not like I wanted to starve my soul to death. I never purposely withheld from it what it needed.

If I saw a guy crawling in the desert desperate for water, I would share whatever I had with him. If I knew where the well was, I would point the way. Heck, I'd even drag him there.

How can I be held responsible when my soul doesn't even know what it really needs?

But what if we could know? What if we must know?

We're all struggling to figure ourselves out. We're all afraid to expose our souls to those who might judge us, and at the same time, we desperately need help to guide us on this journey. If we're not careful, we might find ourselves with everything this world has to offer and later find we have lost ourselves in the clutter.

We are all searching for ourselves, trying to understand who we are, hoping that we might discover our unique place in this world. We are all sojourners on a common quest.

Jesus once said that the kingdom of God is within us. Yet most of us don't even bother to explore the possibility that this might be true.

It seems that what he is implying is that we have a better chance of finding God in the universe within us than in the one that surrounds us.

And it is on this path that I invite you to walk with me. I invite you to engage in an exploration of the human spirit, to journey deep inside yourself and search out the mystery of the universe that exists within you.

This is the question I was asked to face years ago when I found myself desperately struggling to understand myself, trying to measure the weight of this one life. There I was, making my personal contribution to the extensive research being done on the meaning of ink blots.

“What do you see?”

Even at twelve I knew this was a trick question.

He wanted to know what I saw so that he could see inside me. It really is a good question, though. Your retina may be