

JAMES

A FAITH THAT WORKS

PART FOUR: JAMES 1:12-15

GIVE ME STEADFAST OR GIVE ME DEATH

While God allows us to go through trials (so that He would be glorified and we would grow in wisdom), He never tempts us to sin in those circumstances. All trials inherently test us in how we respond. Will we respond out of our own foolishness or in the wisdom God offers? Every trial and difficult circumstance ultimately exposes our own desires.

To see what we truly desire, we must look at what we do (or how we live). The truth is we will most often do what we most desire. We do what we want to do; that can be liberating and humbling when we understand this fact. By trying to blame our decisions on someone/something else we try to take the burden of responsibility off of ourselves, and in so doing we destroy our humanity. It is dignity to show ourselves or others that we bear responsibility. The bible says when we are tempted **and** sin, it is because we desired to do it.

Desires are not always bad in and of themselves. However, it is problematic when a desire for something/someone other than God roots itself in our hearts and runs rampant. This leads to sin, and ultimately, death. The Biblical answer is not to just "say no" to these desires; rather, we need a passion in our hearts—a desire—for Jesus that is powerful enough to displace these idols we tend to create. Focusing on the Gospel and the glory of who God is helps us maintain a healthy perspective on the things that could otherwise capture our hearts.

Read James 1:12-15.

- How do trials/temptations expose our desires?
- Do you have any personal examples?
- What is the relationship among desire, sin, and death?
- What examples are you willing to share about our "evil desire" of conception, birth and death?
- What things have become the author of your self-esteem other than Jesus?
- How does sin lead to death?
- How are Godly desires cultivated within us?
- How are desires and idolatry related?
- What idols have emerged in your heart?
- Why do we need more than behaviorism (just saying no to desires)?
- How does the Gospel address our desires?
- How do tests (positive or negative) show our true character and help us see ourselves for who we truly are?
- What is the difference between an "occasion" and "cause" of sin?
- Why would loving Jesus more than creation change our hearts?
- How can we fall in love with Jesus more?
- Why is it so important to look at Jesus?