

How to Deal with Desires

Intro:

1. Most people's desires change as soon as time or circumstances change.
 - a. On Palm Sunday the people welcomed Lord Jesus as savior of the world with palm branches.
 - b. On Good Friday, 5 days later, these same people shouted to Pilate, "Crucify Him!"
2. We seem to go about life chasing our tails like playful puppies.
3. We don't know what we really want - because we are not focused on what really counts.
4. The problem is Satan uses our discontentment with the way things are to tempt us.
5. **ILL: The Serpent Tempting Eve.** (Gen 3:1-6)
6. So how does God want you to deal with your desires?

James 4:1-10

I. v1-3 - How You Do It Wrong

- A. **v2** - The "dog eat dog" way - You satisfy your desires by taking whatever you think will give you pleasure.
 1. You may try whatever it takes to get what you want to get to the top socially.
 2. **ILL: King of the Mountain.**
 3. But no matter what you obtain, it never really satisfies. Why?
 - a. There's a special place in your heart just for God.
 - b. When God isn't there, you long to fill the void with something.
 - c. That something is usually selfish desire.
- B. **v3** - How do you fill that emptiness? Asking God is the only way to fill the empty vacuum with fulfillment.
 1. But instead of asking God to fill you with His Holy Spirit - you ask Him for things you think will satisfy those selfish desires!
 2. So you don't get the things from God you ask for because only God can satisfy the desires - not the things!
 3. God really does hear & answer prayer - but He answers them following 2 criteria:
 - a. What is within the scope of His will for you. Paul asked God to relieve His suffering. The answer? II Cor 12:8-10 - Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
 - b. What is really in your best interests. Rom 8:28 - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

II. v4-6 - Why You Do It Wrong

- A. **v4 - The Surface Cause** - Your loyalty to the ways of this world instead of the ways of God.
 1. The world's standards are diametrically opposed to God's attitudes.
 2. When you orient your life to them, you are opposed to God & His ways.
- B. **v5-6 - The Root Cause** - Your pride! The choices you have available for living life:
 1. **Pride** (the unsuccessful but popular way of rebellion) : "Mother, I'd rather do it myself!"
 2. **Humbleness**: The HS dwelling in you wants desperately for you to change your life but He only gives His grace to the humble. (Prov 3:34)

III. v7-10 - How to Do It Right!

A. The Five Steps to returning to a victorious life in Christ!

1. v7 - Step # 1: Submit to God.
 - a. **Submit** (ὑποτάσσω) = Arrange yourself underneath someone else' authority.
 - b. If Jesus is to be your savior, He's really got to be your Lord as well!
2. v7 - Step # 2: Resist the devil.
 - a. **Eph 2:2** says that the prince of this world is the devil & He's out to get you!
 - b. **I Pet 5:8-9** - **Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith . . .**
 - c. God's promise is if you really resist him, he will flee from you!
3. v8 - Step # 3: Come near to God.
 - a. With the devil out of the way, access is available.
 - b. Lord Jesus went to the cross so that you could come near to God!
4. v8 - Step # 4: Wash & Purify.
 - a. Priests, preparing for temple service ("coming near to God"), went through a washing & purifying procedure.
 - b. A good way to wash & purify your thought life is to meditate on the word of God!
5. v9 - Step # 5: Grieve by repenting (changing your mind) & being sorry you have offended such a loving, forgiving God.

B. If you want real victory in your life - change your desires to God's desires for you.

1. Forsake the world & it's ways.
2. Cling to God & His ways.
3. Give up your pride & humbly surrender to Him.

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