

# How to Undeceive a Desire

## Suffering, Tests, and Temptation Part 9

James 1:15-17 12-7-2014

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Summary: Desires are good in their place, but when one of them stages a coup and takes the throne, it will direct you to sin in pursuit of fulfillment. That happens through deception – deception about sin (thinking it will bring life instead of death), deception about good gifts (thinking you can get them from a source other than God), and deception about God (failing to see Him as a generous Father, glorious Creator, and willing Life-giver).

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**James 1:13** When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; **14** but each one is tempted when, by his own desire, he is dragged away and enticed. **15** Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. **16** Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. **17** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. **18** He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

## Our Desire: Life and Good Days

Every tear you have ever shed in your life has been because of your deep, profound desire for what 1 Peter 3:10 calls **life and good days** going unfulfilled.

### **1 Peter 3:10** Whoever would love life and see good days must...

And he goes on to describe how to get it. Way down deep, deep inside you, right near the core of your being, is a profound desire for life and good days. And all the sorrow and sadness and hurt and pain and disappointment you ever feel are due to that desire going unfulfilled in some way. Peter's phrase is **life and good days**. James' way of saying the same thing is the **crown of life** and **good and perfect** gifts from above. Everything we want, we want because we see it as some version of life and good days (or good gifts).

**Life** refers to life as it should be. Increasing and flourishing in strength, health, growth, energy, and sensation. Good days (or good and perfect gifts) is a very similar concept. It refers to that which brings joy, fulfillment, satisfaction, delight, benefit, profit - fullness of life. Your desire for all that is what steers and governs the direction of your life. It is why you do everything you do. It is why you feel what you

feel in your emotions. When your craving for life and good days is not fulfilled right now, that causes sadness or anger. When it looks like your craving for life and good days is not going to be fulfilled in the future, that causes depression or fear. When your desire for life and good days went unfulfilled in the past, that causes ingratitude and a feeling of emptiness or missing out. And whatever it is you are doing in your life right now (whether it be pleasing people, pleasing self, or pleasing God), you are doing it because your heart is convinced that is the best way to get life and good gifts. Everyone is on a mission to have a life of good gifts.

### **Psalm 4:6 Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?"**

Your answer to that question dictates what you will spend your life running after. Your soul is always on the prowl for life and good gifts. And if you think the source of good for your soul is over there somewhere, no matter what direction you try to steer your life, it will end up going over there. Nothing is more important for deciding the outcome of your life than what your heart thinks is the source of good gifts and the best life.

## **Our Problem: Deception of Desire**

We found in the last study that the source of our sin is not the devil or other people or circumstances or God, but rather it is our own desires. So step 1 in overcoming sin is to stop trying to pass the blame. Every sin you ever commit is an inside job. No one else made you sin – all sin comes from the heart.

And the thing that gives power to temptation – the thing that makes a particular temptation seemingly impossible to resist, is *deceived* desires. Our desires start out as our friends. They are wonderful gifts from God that keep us moving through life. But when they get deceived about the source of good they become our worst enemy, because in our quest for good gifts and real life, deceived desires point us in the wrong direction.

The way temptation works is like bait on a hook. The only purpose of bait is deception – deceiving the animal into thinking it's getting something good when it is really getting death.

“Go ahead - bite down on that – that big, juicy worm. It will give you life and good days.”

But in reality all it gives is death. The normal reflex of the heart at sin is shock and disgust and horror. But when we are deceived by the bait, the shock reflex gets broken and we are attracted instead of repulsed by it. We are naturally repulsed by death and attracted to life, and so the only way to be attracted to sin is through deception – a desire being deceived into thinking that the sin is a source of life rather than what it really is, a source of death.

That is why some temptations don't affect you at all, and others seem impossible to resist. The ones that are easy to resist are easy because your soul is not deceived about those. The ones that are hard are the ones your soul is deceived about. Your mind looks at it and says, “That's evil – you should be repulsed by this,” but your soul isn't repulsed. Your mind says, “You should be afraid of this,” but your heart isn't afraid. Your heart is convinced that committing this sin might be the best pathway to happiness. Once your desires get tricked into believing that the way to get something good is through some sin, temptation will be impossible to resist.

This is why it is so foolish to live by your feelings. So many people think, “If I feel this way, that must be the way things really are.” It is foolish to live that way because feelings are so often deceived. A beginner pilot flies into some fog and crashes because he feels like he is flying level when in reality he is tilted downward. Experienced pilots know that if you go with your feelings when your instruments say one thing and your gut feeling says something else, you will soon become one with the ground. Trust the instrument panel in God's Word, not your feelings because they are easily deceived.

## **How Deception Happens**

So how does a desire become deceived? Two ways: external suggestion, and internal experience. From the outside we are bombarded with 100 sermons a day from the world trying to convince us that sin

will make us happy. That sin is depicted on TV or in a movie in a way that makes it look desirable – no hook involved, no negative outcome – get drunk, have sex whenever you feel like it, get a divorce, obey all the impulses of the flesh, and it will all result in nothing but life and good days. That is the world’s message.

But even that message is just the first step in the deception. What really convinces the soul is experience. You try that sin once, and it feels really good, and your soul says, “Yep. Sure enough - this is the way to happiness.”

And it works in a vicious cycle. After you have an experience of the pleasure of the sin, you are that much more susceptible to the world’s preaching. Now their commercials really hook in to your desires. Now their blogs, movies, TV shows, magazines, novels, university lectures, textbooks, conversations at the water cooler at work, kids at school – unrelenting, unceasing sermon after sermon after sermon cramming the message down our throat – “Happiness is found in sin” - every one of those messages throws a little more fuel on the smoldering fire of desire that started when you first experienced that pleasure. And your desires sink further and further down into the trap of deception.

### ***Avoid Temptation!***

That is why it is so foolish for us to expose ourselves to unnecessary temptation. Every time I do that, I allow the deceiving message to have an influence on me. Sometimes people think, “If I expose myself to a temptation and resist it, that strengthens me.” Not necessarily. If it is a temptation that I did not need to be exposed to, then I may have done harm by exposing myself to it even if I managed to resist it, because now that lust in my flesh is a little stronger. My desires for that sin are one step closer to being deceived. Yes, I resisted it, but the resisting didn’t feel good. So it just further persuaded my soul that to feel good I really need that sin.

That is why Scripture teaches us to *run* from temptation, not to try to manage it. 2 Timothy 2:22 does not say manage the desires of youth; it says...

### **2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

Run from temptation – like Joseph running from Potiphar’s wife. And join up with some saints who call on the Lord out of a pure heart and run hard with them in the direction of righteousness. John Owen has a good statement on this:

“Rise mightily against the first actings of your [temptation]; don’t give it the least ground. Do not say, “Thus far it shall go, and no farther.” If it’s allowed one step, it will take another. It is impossible to fix bounds to sin. It is like water in a channel, -- if it once breaks out, it will have its course. Preventing it is easier than stopping it. That is why James gives that [progression] of sin in James 1:14, 15, that we may stop at the entrance. Do you find your corruption to begin to entangle your thoughts? Rise up with all your strength against it, with no less indignation than if it had fully accomplished what it aims at. Consider what an unclean thought would have; it would have thee roll yourself in folly and filth. Ask envy what it would have ... -- murder and destruction is at the end of it. Set yourself against it with no less vigour than if it had utterly debased you to wickedness. Without this course you will not prevail.”

Wise words. Exactly the same counsel we get in Proverbs 7, where we read the story of the foolish young man who thought he could walk near the street of temptation and still be safe. And he gets sucked in and it ends in death.

Sometimes, if you tell people to avoid temptation, they cry, “legalism.”

“There’s no verse in the Bible that says I can’t walk down that street. There’s nothing in the Bible that says I can’t drive by a liquor store, or go to that movie, or be alone on the Internet.”

True – that thing might not be a sin, but for you it is a baited hook. And nothing will deceive your soul faster than swimming up to a baited hook and staring at the bait.

The deception starts in the mind. You enjoy the sin by thinking about it. It feels good, so you do it again, and each time you do it, your soul becomes that much more convinced. Or you enjoy that sin with

your eyes. And bit by bit it progresses. And each new experience of pleasure fortifies and reinforces that deception more and more until it is cemented in your heart.

### *Quiet Desire*

So between the world's preaching, and our dabbling, we deceive our desires. And there are two kinds of deceived desires – quiet ones and loud ones. The quiet ones fly under the radar. Deep down inside that desire is there, it is deceived, and it is ready to be activated. But until something activates it, you hardly even know it's there. You might think you are doing great – right up until that moment when a suitable temptation comes along, and then poof – it goes off like gunpowder and you're thinking, "Where did that come from?"

### *Boiling Desire*

The other kind of deceived desire is the boiling kind. The kind Paul calls **passionate desire** (1 Thes.4:5), or **burning desire** (1 Cor.7:9, Ro.1:27). The more a deceived desire gets fed, the bigger the fire gets until you can finally get to the point where you are like Amnon in 2 Samuel 13:2, whose desire for Tamar was so extreme that it made him physically ill when he saw that he couldn't have her. The same thing happened to Ahab in 1 Kings 21:4 because of his desire for a vineyard. And to Haman in Esther 5 because of his desire for revenge. Any sinful desire, if it is fed enough, can come to a boil.

**Jeremiah 5:8 They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife.**

They have no more command of themselves than an animal in heat. They are like the false teachers in 2 Peter 2:14 – **with eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning.** Take out the word **adultery** and replace it with whatever craving dominates your desires. Love of money, materialism, love of comfort, desire for affirmation of certain people, love of food (your god is your stomach), love of power – whichever particular desire has become deceived to the point of running after sin, if that desire gets fed enough it can go from being dry kindling to a raging forest fire. Eyes full of that sin means your heart is looking for it every day. And it does not even require that an opportunity to commit that sin be put in front of you. When your eyes are full of that sin you go searching for opportunities.

## **Desire Coup**

And whether it is quiet, smoldering desire that never even shows itself until just the right temptation arises, or it is raging, boiling, driving lust for some sin, either way, the reason it is happening is that desire has somehow made its way onto the throne of your heart. Your heart is the control center of your life, and so whatever is in control of your heart is in control of you. So if you allow a desire to become deceived – get ready to become enslaved by that desire, because it will take over the control center of your life – because a desire will do whatever it takes to obtain what it thinks will bring it life and good days. Titus 3:3 describes it as being **deceived and enslaved by all kinds of desires and pleasures.** First it deceives you, then it enslaves you. It tricks you into thinking some sin is the way to find life and good days, and that desire then starts giving you orders. It treats you like a slave, ordering you to run after that sin. So God commands us in **Romans 6:12 do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires.** When you became a Christian you were freed from sin. We are free, but when we allow a desire to become deceived we voluntarily re-enslave ourselves to sin.

### *Desire Taking Control of the Heart*

Since your heart is the control center for your whole being, whatever rules your heart will dictate all your thoughts, words, feelings, attitudes, and actions. As long as that control center is ruled by trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, all our desires remain under control. They don't push us into sin. But

when a desire for something other than God stages a coup and seizes control of your heart – that is when we fall into sin.

Our hearts are like a room full of cats, and one after another they keep trying to sneak up onto the throne, and the battle of the Christian life is the constant task of pushing them back down off that throne. Every time you fall into sin, check the throne. See if there is some desire that thinks it is God. And if there is, knock it back down where it belongs because Jesus will not share that throne.

**Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon.**

Whatever your soul thinks is the source of real life and good days, that is the thing you will ultimately worship.

**Habakkuk 1:16 The wicked foe ... sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food.**

Whatever it is that gives you the object of your desire, that thing becomes the god of your heart.

## **God's Solution: Do Not Be Deceived**

So that is a summary of our problem. In verses 13-15 James has described our problem. The solution to our problem is in verse 16.

**16 my dear brothers do not be deceived.**

That is the solution. The problem is deception, so the solution is to stop being deceived. And there are three areas where we tend to be deceived. So James sets us straight on all three.

### **1) Don't Be Deceived about Sin**

First, we get deceived about sin. So James clears that up in verse 15. You think this sin will make you happy? You think breaking some command of God – divorcing your spouse, dishonest gain, sleeping with your girlfriend, telling a lie, people pleasing, giving in to whatever desire has climbed up on the throne of your life – you think that's going to make you happy?

**15 when desire has conceived it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.**

Sin results in death – not life and good days; death and bad days. And that includes both the dying process and death itself. The dying process is the opposite of life. Instead of spiritual strength and health and vigor and joy and hope and growth – you have the opposite of all that. Sin weakens you, makes you spiritually sick, saps your strength, kills your joy, stunts your growth, and steals your hope. You get a tiny little momentary shot of pleasure along with huge doses of all the various components of spiritual death, culminating in final spiritual death, which is hell.

James is speaking to brothers here, and he is warning about spiritual death. This is one of those passages that, whatever your views on eternal security, you need to make sure you have a way to take passages like this seriously.

When you have a strong desire for some sin, this is a very powerful way to change that messed up desire. People ask all the time – “How can I change my desires?” Imagine a nice, warm, delicious doughnut. You see the doughnut and you really, really want it. If someone walked up and asked you, “Is there anything I could say right now that would take away your desire for this doughnut and make you not want it anymore?” you might say, “No way!”

So you grab it, and you are just about to take a bite, and right before you put it in your mouth he says, “Oh – by the way – I put some rat poison in that doughnut. If you take a bite, you'll die.”

Now you don't want the doughnut anymore. What happened to your desire? It went away when you found out the truth about the doughnut. Step one to changing your desire for that sin is to be reminded about the poison, and what it will do to you when you take a bite. And that is what James is doing in verse 15 – showing us the poison. Proverbs 20:17 says that sin tastes like honey when you first taste it, but then you end up with a mouth full of gravel. Scripture warns us about this over and over and over.

**Proverbs 5:3 the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; 4 but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. ... 8 Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house ... 11 At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. 12 You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! ... 14 I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly." ... 22 The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. 23 He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.**

A little taste of honey at the beginning, followed by bitter gall, a sharp sword, groaning, a ruined, spent body, regret, utter ruin, enslavement, and death. Proverbs 7 is the sad story of the young fool who thought he could walk down the street near temptation and still be able to escape. But then temptation comes out and as soon as she touches him, he is a goner because her hands are chains (Eccl.7:26).

**Proverbs 7:21 With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. 22 All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose 23 ... little knowing it will cost him his life. ... 27 Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.**

Don't be deceived about sin. Don't get tricked into thinking sin won't really lead to death. James is pulling the bait away and exposing the hook, with all its barbs so we can see exactly what happens when we bite down. In fact, he doesn't just show us the hook – he shows us the reel and the flaying knife and the frying pan that we will end up in.

### *The Lies of Sin*

Sin promises good days, but delivers bad days.

**Proverbs 13:15 ... the way of the unfaithful is hard.**

**Proverbs 4:18 The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. 19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.**

It is not a happy life. How many times have you labored to get your hands on something you thought of as good, and it became a burden? Sins like gambling, substance abuse, over-eating, under-eating, pornography, lying – they promise you life and good days. But they quickly put you in chains and become harsh, demanding masters. Even the sin of laziness does that. It promises comfort and ease, and it does nothing but make your life more difficult, so that even the simplest tasks are burdensome.

**Jeremiah 9:5 ...they weary themselves with sinning.**

**Isaiah 57:6 The idols ... are your portion; they are your lot. ... 10 You were wearied by all your ways, but you would not say, It is hopeless. You found renewal of your strength, and so you did not faint.**

Their sin became wearying and exhausting, and yet they kept going in it. It is amazing the perseverance we tend to have in our sin. Even when it brings us no pleasure at all, we become so enslaved we just persist in it until it costs us everything. Once a desire gains control in your heart it can drive you to the point of absolute misery in pursuit of some sin. You hear the stories of people who are enslaved to gambling or sexual sin or drugs or alcohol, and they will literally give all their money, sacrifice their

body, their marriage – anything that craving demands they give, and it drives them like a merciless slave driver, constantly taking from them and never giving them the promised satisfaction. You think of the pathetic picture of the Sodomites in Genesis 19 who were all struck blind by the angels, and it did not even slow them down.

## **2 Peter 2:19 a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.**

And even the things in this life that are not inherently sinful– if we seek good from those things themselves instead of using those things to seek closeness with God, even they become burdensome. You put yourself in all kinds of financial straits to get a certain vehicle, and it becomes a burden. The payments, the repairs, the insurance, the depreciation, the upkeep, the breakdowns – it started out good, but it is far from perfect. You worked hard to get your dream home, and later it becomes a burden. You finally find the person of your dreams and get married and you think from here on out it's going to be sheer bliss, but even your marriage can become a burden almost too heavy to bear. That great exercise machine that was going to turn you into a supermodel and solve all your problems – burden. All those really cute outfits that promise to make you so attractive, but now you need to build an addition just to store them all – burden. Wonderful, heart-warming holiday traditions can become a burden. No matter how good the thing is – if you try to get your happiness from that thing instead of from God through that thing, it becomes a burden.

Sin promises good days but gives you bad days. And sin promises life, but delivers death.

## **Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.**

Before we were saved, we lived according to the flesh. Deceived desires ruled our hearts completely. Then Jesus came and delivered us from that. And yet something inside us wants to return to the very things we were saved from.

## **Romans 6:21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!**

Don't be deceived about sin. Memorize passages of Scripture that expose the hook and the frying pan.

## **2) Don't Be Deceived about Good Gifts**

### **17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.<sup>1</sup>**

The lie of temptation is this: "I can get some good thing by sinning." And James is telling us here, "No you can't. The good things you are craving – life and good days – you can't get that from sin. Nor can you get them from yourself. They won't come to you through positive thinking or self-help. And they certainly won't ever come to you through breaking a command of God. You can only get them from God." There is one source and one source only of good gifts.

Think of the times when we are especially susceptible to temptation - Times of boredom, discouragement, stress, self-pity, loneliness, failure, etc. Those are times when we are most prone to the deception.

"You're bored? This sin would solve that problem."

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<sup>1</sup> Most commentaries take verse 17 as a further argument about how temptation cannot come from God. But for that to be the point James would have had to say, "Everything from God is a good and perfect gift." That isn't what he says. James is not making an assertion about God here; he is making an assertion about good and perfect gifts. To simply say that every good gift is from God would not prove the point about temptation not being from God, because someone could argue, "Perhaps everything is from God – all good and perfect gifts as well as temptations." James has already proved his point about temptation not coming from God. That is established. The goal of verse 17 is not to re-plow that ground, but rather to move on to a new point, namely, to correct the deception of temptation.

That's a lie.

"The reason God gave us potato chips is to cure boredom."

No. God gave us food to enjoy, but not to cure boredom.

"You are down and discouraged – looking at some impure images online will make you feel better."

No it won't. It will make you feel guilty and defeated and even more discouraged than you already are.

"You're stressed out. You need a release. This sin will give you that."

No, it won't. It will only add stress to your life.

"You're feeling lonely. Just do this sin and you'll feel better."

That is a lie. The cure for loneliness is drawing near to God. Sin puts distance between you and God and makes you even lonelier.

All those lies are just variations on the one lie: You can get the life and good days you are craving through sin. No you can't. You can get counterfeit versions of them from sin. Part of life and good days is pleasure. Can sin give you pleasure? It can give you a shallow, temporary, short-term counterfeit form of pleasure. But can it give you a life of pleasure? Can it give you deep, rich, enduring, soul-satisfying pleasure that can give you joy even in times of suffering? No – not even close. Sin can only give you a lame, very temporary counterfeit.

In the movie Crocodile Dundee there is a scene where a mugger pulls a switchblade on him, and his girlfriend says, "You'd better give him your wallet."

"What for?"

"Because he has a knife."

And he chuckles and says, "That's not a knife." Then he pulls out his giant bowie knife and says, "That's a knife," and the muggers go running off. When we are tempted with sin, and we say, "It's offering me so much pleasure. I just can't resist," God says, "Ha – that's not pleasure." Then He shows us His idea of life and good days and says, "Now *that's* pleasure." He draws near to us and gives deep, profound comfort to our souls, and peace and joy that are impervious to suffering. He gives us a clear conscience and a sense that we are totally accepted by Him and thoroughly pleasing to Him and says, "Now *that's* pleasure."

When you and I give in to temptation, we do it because we think it is going to give us something it cannot give. We think it's going to give us good, but it can't. There is only one source of the good your soul is craving, and it is the God **of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.**

So don't be deceived about life and good gifts. They never come from sin – only **from** God. That means if it is not from God then it is not going to be able to give you any good. Check the label on every pleasure. If it is not made in heaven, don't buy it.

### ***Perfect***

The great thing about God's gifts is they are both **good and perfect**. They accomplish their purpose. The good things we seek through other means become a burden. But grace from God is never a burden. Nobody ever has an experience with the presence of God and walks away saying, "Wow, that was draining." No one ever has an experience of fellowship with God and says, "I'm glad that's over with." Can reading the Bible and prayer and worship and service in the church become burdensome? Yes, but only when they don't result in fellowship with God. But real fellowship with God – real experiences of His presence - never burden the soul. They always strengthen and enliven the soul and fill it up with hope and joy and strength and life. It is an absolute impossibility for the favorable presence of God to fail to have a joy-giving, strengthening, life-giving, hope-giving effect on the heart.



### 3) Don't Be Deceived about God

This last one is the most important – by far. The most powerful thing you can ever do to overcome temptation and reduce the amount of sin in your life is always to know God better so that you love Him more. James is going to show us three crucially important truths about God that will help us:

- 1) God is a generous Father
- 2) God is the glorious Creator
- 3) God is the unchangeable Giver of Life

As our generous Father, He has enough love to give us life and good and perfect gifts – better than anything sin can offer. As the awesome, glorious Creator of the heavens, He has enough power to satisfy your soul better than any sin can. And as the unchangeable Giver of Life, He has the willingness to continue to give us more and more abundance of life. Do not be deceived about God. If we could really come to a point of believing those three things about God in relationship to a particular temptation, that temptation would lose its power over us. This is so important, I think I would be wrong to short-change it by trying to squeeze it in the last couple minutes of this sermon. So let's plan on picking it up right here next time so we can really look in depth at these amazing truths about our Creator and the true Source of life and good gifts.

### Conclusion

For now, let's just make sure we really understand what James has said so far. In this chapter, James is laying out two paths before us: the path of life and the path of death.

#### 1) The path of life

- You face a temptation – a situation where you can gain some pleasure or avoid some pain, but only through a forbidden path.
- The deception comes along and says, “This is a source of good for you,” and it attempts to get desire pregnant with sin, but that deception is sent away by perseverance in unwavering faith.
- A habit of doing that becomes a path of refinement that leads to passing the test and receiving the crown of life (vv.1-13).

#### 2) The path of death

- You face a situation where you can gain some pleasure or avoid some pain, but only through a forbidden path.
- The desire for that pleasure (or desire for the avoidance of pain) is deceived into thinking, “This will bring me good,” and becomes pregnant with sin.
- That sin is carried out in thoughts, attitudes, words, or actions.
- It happens much more easily the second time, and still more easily each successive time, and becomes a habit.
- That habit brings aspects of death into this life, and becomes a rut that leads into hell. It gives birth to death.

**Deuteronomy 30:19 This day I ... have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life.**

**Benediction: Romans 8:11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. **12** Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation...if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

### **Application Questions (James 1:25)**

1. Which aspects of life and good gifts are you most prone to seek outside of God?
2. Which desires in your life seem to be most prone to try to climb up on the throne of your heart?  
(Hint: You can usually spot them by looking at when you are most prone to get angry, fearful, worried, anxious, or depressed when they are unfulfilled.)