



**SERIES: FEBRUARY** – James: Faith in Real Life

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**Monday, 02/07/2022**

**Scripture:** James 1:14-15

**TITLE:** Deadly Desires

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

James 1:14-15, ESV

One of the most difficult things for me to do at this point in my life is to consistently eat healthy. I can eat healthy for maybe 2-3 or 4 days in a row, maybe even a week. But then something unexpected happens in my schedule, some minor detail gets overlooked and presto, I'm back to eating unhealthily. I give in to eating deliciously, unhealthy food that's so conveniently positioned right before my eyes. Isn't that how it always plays out? I mean, if God didn't want me to eat 5,000 calories all at once, this very moment, then why would He give me this opportunity. Right?

Believe it or not, but this kind of thinking is what James is addressing in our passage. In fact, in verse 13, just one verse prior, James says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one." It's from this starting point, that James begins to explain the spiritual process of evil temptation that appeals to deadly desires.

First, James says, the problem begins with us. We all have evil, deadly desires, that sinful temptation appeals to. He even says we are lured and enticed by these deadly desires. There's a fishing metaphor in this reference from James. Every experienced fisherman knows exactly which lure to use to have the best chance of success in his fishing environment.

James makes it clear that God isn't the one trying to hook you on to sin. But rather, it's the power of sin in us and the devil. See, James doesn't mention Satan by name, perhaps he doesn't want us to use boneheaded cliches like, "The devil made me do it!" Maybe. Either way, the devil isn't mentioned, but it's implied that he plays a role in trying to lure you in, trying to get you hooked on sin by appealing to deadly desires. Of course, Satan and sin never advertises that these desires are deadly. They simply appeal to our desire for pleasure, comfort or even escape.

Again, from James, we get some spiritual insight into this process. In our moment of weakness or in a moment of unexpected surprise, Satan dangles before our eyes the thought of satisfying ourselves with some kind of sin. Now remember, we all have to battle sinful, deadly desire. And if we aren't diligent in the word, in prayer and in Christian community, our will to resist these deadly desires becomes weakened.

So, James teaches us that when the sinful temptation is presented to us, we have a responsibility to quickly resist it, move away from it, turn the channel, close the laptop or leave the room. If we don't, the more we allow our hearts to entertain the thoughts of pleasure, the higher the likelihood of conceiving and giving birth to sin. Jesus describes this same process in Matthew 5:28 [“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”](#) In other words, noticing a beautiful woman was not the sin, but allowing your sinful heart to entertain sinning with that woman is sinful.

Jesus and James are saying the same thing. Sin is birthed in the heart before it becomes sinful actions. And these repeated, unrepentant, sinful actions lead to spiritual death. For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). But death can be avoided. Practice killing deadly desires before deadly desires kill you. Daily pray and ask the Lord to deliver you from temptation. Ask Him for the grace to be diligent in the Word and prayer. Ask Him to help you find a church where you can both, be encouraged in the faith and encourage others. Make it your practice to pursue these things. Amen.