

Desire

Scripture Reading — James 1:12-15

Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. James 1:14 —

In the movie *Vanished*, there's a showdown between a man who incarnates the devil and a man who wants knowledge. The man gives the "devil" a severe beating, and he asks, "Have you no weapons?" The "devil" replies, "I have no weapons but your obsessions." James would agree. We sin because the heart wants what it wants. Our text refers to "evil desire," but in the original Greek text this term is simply "desire"; it's the same word Paul uses in *Philippians 1:23*: "I desire to depart and be with Christ." James is not focusing on desiring bad things but on desiring things badly. In the Bible sin is never merely breaking a law; it is spiritual unfaithfulness to God. We long for the arms of a flourishing career, or a well-endowed portfolio, or plentiful leisure. And we sin when we desire these treasures more than we desire God and holiness. The Scottish preacher Thomas Chalmers observed in a sermon: "There are two ways ... to displace from the human heart its love of the world--either by a demonstration of the world's vanity ... or by setting forth another object, even God, as more worthy of its attachment." Chalmers concluded that the best way to rid the heart of one love is to replace it with another, far better one. He calls it "the expulsive power of a new affection." May our love of God in Christ trump all other loves.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the joy of our hearts. May we not seek this joy elsewhere. Keep us faithful, and help us to open our hearts to no love but yours. In your name, Amen.

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