

DEATH CYCLE

Tammy and I were driving in St Louis the other day and we saw a homeless man who appeared to be an addict and that addiction and lifestyle had his body twisted up like a pretzel and still searching for his next fix

It broke my heart. I told my wife you know, the enemy never shows you the final chapter of a life that's been wrecked by sin. If he had shown then the ending at the beginning, you would never give into temptation

James 1:12-16 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Today are you stuck in that death cycle?

Do you like to deflect flame from your own poor choices?

The reality is you cannot blame God or others. God didn't make it impossible for you to resist temptation

V. 13

Temptation is never the doing of God, it's when our own desires entice us to take what we want when we want it

My friend, you're being baited. God said it's wrong, yet you want it. But there will be consequences for giving into what we want

That's the beginning of the death cycle. We have a choice in that moment – take the bait or run away

Always remember this, God's gifts are always good and give life and purpose and significance

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Listen, things that seem to be so small have big consequences

That temptation will lead to sin that will only be pleasurable for a brief moment

The tempter is also the father of lies

What looks so attractive about the temptation? What appears to be more pleasurable than what God has and will give you?

It's a lie, a trap and you're about to take the shiny bait that will leave you in a death cycle

v. 14,15

Listen, the promises of pleasure cause temporary blindness

v. 16

James says be not deceived, God's gifts are infinitely better than the tempters

This morning are you in a death cycle? Have you or you about to take the tempters bait?

Tell about the man whose leg was almost pointed backwards and a video I saw of the addict on the street that addiction has both possessed them and totally distorted their life beyond recognition

v. 12 God rewards those who endure temptation

God calls the person happy and blessed when they don't quit when life gets hard. When they pass the test of faith, God approves you

God only gives a crown of life to those who truly love Him

v. 13,14 Where does temptation come from?

Not from God, that's impossible because He is pure and perfect

Our temptation is an inside problem, it starts deep in your heart, but like a fishing lure, it seems good but there's a hook in it

It will only pull you into the hands of the one who wants to destroy your life

John 10:10

v. 15 The death cycle is sin

Desires give birth to sin, wrong thoughts turn into wrong desires

When you act on those desires it becomes active sin and with open sin it produces a harvest of death and destruction

Listen, full-grown sin cuts you off from God and brings spiritual death

Lies deceive you into believing that your sin isn't that dangerous

v. 15

Today if it's only still a temptation, cut the chain before your small wish turns into a very destructive action

Maybe it's time you begin to really value the life God has given you

Some of you are either in the death cycle or about to make decisions that will lead you there

I'm warning you this morning, flee from temptation and from even the very appearance of evil

What's the best way to fight temptation? Is it self-discipline or just pure grit? It might help, but I believe the best way is to simply say yes to the life God wants for you!

Will you be another statistic like that man I saw the other day, trapped in a death cycle, or will you accept God's good gifts for you?

v. 16-18