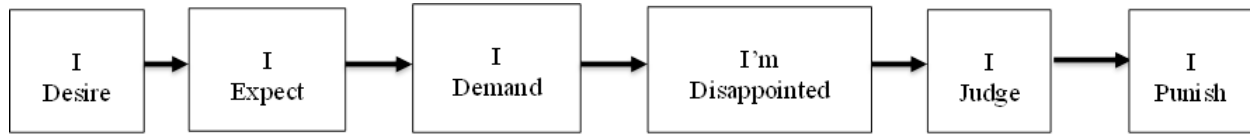


Desire to Punishment Diagram

Read James 4:1-4

Going from left to right, the diagram below shows how a good desire becomes sinful.



I Desire: let's say these are often good, God-given desires. At their basic desire, they're not sinful and that's the key in understanding idolatry. Things like love, respect, safety, security, acceptance, Godly family, marriage, children, provide for family, etc.

I Expect: a slippery slope occurs where we start thinking "I want" or "I need" these desires to be met in order to be happy, fulfilled, pleased, etc., in life. Right here, we have one foot in the world and one foot may still be firmly planted in God's will.

I Demand: here we say, "I must have" or "I deserve to have" my desires met. Both feet are in the quick sand now and idolatry is sucking you in.

I'm Disappointed: here's all the emotional energy when we don't get something that we really, really, want like anger or sadness. The harder we fight for it the deeper we sink. We question God's character, love and mercy, get angry, depressed, fearful, etc.

I Judge: because idols demand a sacrifice and we're living for our mini-kingdom, we play the judge and issue a verdict that needs to be carried out. We make up our mind that the other person or God is wrong, unfair, or withholding because our functional idol (desires) did not get satisfied.

I Punish: b/c our idol (desires) didn't get satisfied, we say, "because you did (or did not) meet my desires, I will respond by _____". We take things into our own hands and either lash out in anger to tear down the person or we go inflict self-harm to ourselves in the form of "addiction" or other ways.

So ask yourself:

1. What am I willing to sin to get?
2. What am I willing to sin in order to keep?
3. What would repenting, confessing, and forsaking this idol look like?
4. Who can help me to avoid this pattern in the future?