

The Deception of Instant Gratification

- It's a natural human urge to want good things and to want them NOW.
- The flip side of instant gratification is delayed gratification, or the decision to put off satisfying your desire in order to gain an even better reward or benefit in the future.
- At the heart of instant gratification is one of the most basic drives inherent in humans—the tendency to see pleasure and avoid pain. This tendency is known as the pleasure principle.
- Why is it so difficult to choose something better for the future over yielding to temptation now?

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- **A desire to avoid delay**: it's uncomfortable to engage in self-denial; all our instincts are to seize any opportunity for pleasure as it comes (cf. David)
- **Age**: younger people tend to be more impulsive, while older people with more life experience are usually better able to delay and temper their urges. (However, cf. Daniel, Joseph)
- **Imagination**: choosing delayed gratification requires the ability to envision your desired future if you forego your current desire; if you cannot paint a vivid picture of your future, you have little motivation to plan for it. (cf. Moses) 2 Cor. 4:16-18

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- **Impulsiveness**: some of us are simply more impulsive or spontaneous than others, which makes delaying gratification that much more difficult – but we can learn to control this! (cf. Peter)
- **Emotional regulation and Mood**: emotional distress makes us lean towards choices that will immediately improve our mood; we all experience bad moods, boredom, and impatience—all of which serve to make immediate desires that much more seductive. (cf. Lot, Ahab (& Jezebel))

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- **Addictive tendencies**: The brain responds to short-term desires of satisfaction by releasing dopamine, a pleasure hormone that we crave more and more. This chemical reaction combined with the loss of patience, due to having almost anything we want at our fingertips, creates a perfect formula for addictive tendencies and poor impulse control. (cf. Solomon, Simon the Sorcerer (?))
- **Instinct to yield to that which is easier**: appeals to the laziness in us or as a means of taking advantage of weariness of mind, body, or soul (cf. Job)
- **Satan can use any one of these against us!** - Eph. 6:11-13, 16; 4:26-27; I Pet. 5:8

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How can I overcome the temptation of instant gratification?

- **Pre-commitment: Heb. 11:24-27**
- **Know yourself: James 1:13-15**
- **Manage your environment: Eph. 5:15-17**
- **Remember why we are fighting the pleasures of this life: II Pet. 3:12-14**