

COME TO ME BIBLE STUDY
THE BOOK OF JAMES--A DIFFERENT THOUGHT

TRIAL BY CHOICE
WEEK 4

We all know by now, if not by studying James 1:1-2, surely by living and breathing, that we have, and will have, trials in our lives. It is a "given", a fact, a reality. The reasons are many and varied, and only God knows and only God can perfect us through them. We usually believe that troubles are the result of God allowing them, giving Satan permission to "sift us like wheat" just as He did Peter. However, there is another category of trials that we need to discuss: trial by choice. There are some trials that come our way simply because we choose to sin. Time and again God gives warnings to us not to sin, not to commit evil or wrongdoing. It's the old "sow and reap" rule. Choose to sin---reap the consequences. These are the trials we are going to study this week: avoidable trials; trials for which we have no one to blame but ourselves. God has definite commands about the choices we make between good and evil. Let's look at a few of them: Read Amos 5:14-15, Romans 12:9, Psalm 34:14.

All three of these passages have the same two words in each of them. What are they?
_____ and _____

What are we to do with evil? _____

What are we to do with good? _____

These verses tell us that there are consequences to our actions, our choices.

Now read Psalm 37:1-40. THAT'S RIGHT!!! I want you to read 40 verses---rich, exhorting, warning, life-giving verses! Now get to it!!! (I'm really smiling right now, not being harsh at all.)

In your own words, write what you believe God is saying in these verses about the consequences/benefits of our actions. Does it seem to you that we can bring trials on ourselves by our actions?

Now, re-read verses 37-38, please. What is the future of the blameless and upright?

What is the future of the transgressors and the wicked?

Re-read verses 39-40 and write them out.

Verse 39 says the Lord is the "strength for the righteous in their time of trouble." Is this trouble that which is "brought on" by our bad choices, or is it the occurrence of life's varied trials?

How does this verse relate to James 1:1-4?

Daily, sometimes many times during our waking hours, we are faced with choices to make. The decisions we make regarding these choices bring either life or death, peace or anxiety, acceptance or shame. Our inclination is to want to blame someone else, especially God, for the hard place we find ourselves in. But there comes a time, if we want to go forward, that we have to "pay the piper", own up to the fact that we have no one else to blame but ourselves. Read the following verses and state the consequences of the sinful choices we make:

I Corinthians 6:14-20

Romans 1:18-32

Today, in a broken and sinful world, what is right to the world is actually wrong to God, and what is wrong to the world, is actually right to God. Today, homosexuality is not only accepted, but celebrated. Yet disease is a direct result of this sin.

Read Romans 1:27.

Likewise, sexual promiscuity among many partners is totally acceptable to the world, and even in some who are professing Christians. But sexually transmitted diseases are rampant, despite the promoted and encouraged use of "protection". The old idea of "they're going to do it anyway, so let's teach them how to be safe", has served to condemn our youth to lives of sex before marriage, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and self worth so scarred and battered that they come to believe they deserve abuse at the hands of others. God help us to teach our children, our families, our churches, our nation, the truth. Sinful choices bring destruction and pain.

God has very harsh words for those who willfully choose evil over good. Read the following passage: I Corinthians 6:9-10.

But God---oh sweet Jesus-----makes a way of escape---even the redemption of our own trials brought on by bad choices. I am not referring only to sexual bad choices, but all types of evil choices: lying, backbiting, stealing, cheating, adultery, fornication, drunkenness, pouting, uncontrolled anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, rebellion, disrespecting husbands, drug abuse, idolatry, the "secret sins" we think no one sees, you fill in the blank_____.

God also warns us against even looking like we are in sin. I Thessalonians 5:21 & 22 tell us "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain (hold off, keep oneself off, keep oneself from) every form (appearance) of evil. He tells us to NOT do ANYTHING that even resembles sin!

The absolute wonderful news is that we have been given a way to escape these sin situations that we face.

Read and write I Corinthians 6:11. _____

Praise His Holy Name! He makes a way of escape for us through His Son Jesus Christ.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. I Corinthians 10:13.

No matter what we are tempted by, no matter how strong the pull or how enticing the sin, God makes a way of escape for us, that we will be able to choose good and not evil. That way is through the power and strength of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.

We can do this thing, sisters! We can choose good and not evil, but only as we allow the Lord to help us. There is enough trouble and pain without our bringing it on ourselves, so let's don't do it! Instead, let's choose GOOD!!

"Jesus, author of salvation! He is mighty to save! My God is mighty to save!"

Count it all JOY, JOY, JOY!!!