

## TROUBLE

We'll take a one-week break from our 5 Chapters of Life series to look at "trouble." (Lance will be teaching this Sunday).

### DAY 1: Expect It

*Job 5:7 Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.*

1. What is your usual attitude toward trouble?

2. When trouble comes knocking at your door, what is your usual:

a. Outward response?

b. Inward response?

3. The bible tells us that we live in a "fallen world." Which of the following "arenas of trouble" still "get to you," still catch you "blind-sided?"

\_\_\_ Things don't work the way they're "supposed to"

\_\_\_ "Acts of God" or "acts of nature"

\_\_\_ Sickness and death

\_\_\_ Others' sin against you

\_\_\_ Your own sin, and consequences thereof

\_\_\_ Satan's temptations

4. According to Job 5:7, what is the likelihood of trouble coming our way?

5. The likelihood is compared to a campfire. Once the flame gets hot what happens to the sparks?

6. If you expect life to have less trouble than it does, what is likely to happen to your attitude toward:

a. God?

b. People?

c. Life?

## **DAY 2: Accept It**

*John 9:1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

1. When trouble hits we like to come up with a "reason," or at least a reason that makes sense to us. In this episode, what were the "reasons" the disciples were attributing to the cause of the man's blindness?

2. Can you think of other possible reasons for the man's blindness?

3. There is another reason we often miss. It's what Jesus attributed *this man's* blindness to...

*John 9:3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."*

a. What strikes you about this reason for trouble?

b. What possible "work(s) of God" could happen in this episode?

4. Have you had trouble(s) that you cannot pinpoint to particular reasons?

5. When you cannot find a "reason" for trouble, you can *always* fall back on this reason. God is at work. He never wastes trouble. Maturity is learning to accept what I cannot change, and what God may never change until heaven. Do you sense God building maturity in you through trouble?

6. In *this* case, Jesus healed the man born blind. The man had an opportunity to testify about who Jesus was to the Jewish religious leaders--all of them!!

*John 9:25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"*

7. How does the knowledge that God *uses* trouble make it easier to *accept* it?

### **DAY 3: Avoid It**

*Proverbs 4:14-15 Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.*

<sup>15</sup> *Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way.*

1. The story of mankind is that, for the most part, we are really good at creating our own trouble! Solomon gives us some sage advice! What is his first warning?

2. Why do you think his first warning is so important?

*1 Cor. 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*

3. Proverbs 4:15 gives us four pieces of advice. What are they?

4. Let's take them one at a time. The first situation is to think of areas where you *already know* where you are vulnerable! "*Avoid it.*"

If you know you're going to be tempted by going in a certain direction, IN ADVANCE, avoid it! Can you think of an illustration where this is pertinent to you?

5. The other three pieces of advice have to do with situations you suddenly find yourself in.

a. "*Do not travel on it.*"

This is a decision you make *ahead of time*, and recall at the moment of temptation.

b. "*... turn from it...*"

It's not enough to just remember to not do what you shouldn't do. How would this piece of Solomon's advice be of help?

c. "*... and go on your way.*"

It's not enough to just say "no" to something. He says to say "yes" to something!

6. What strikes you most about today's warnings and advice?

#### **DAY 4: Welcome Help for It**

*Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

1. Some troubles that come our way are over our head. The psalmist gives us three things to remember when big trouble hits. What is the first thing we're to remember about God?

2. The Hebrew word for "refuge" is a "shelter from danger." We find safety and courage by trusting Him. Have you experienced God as a refuge? How?

3. The second thing to remember is that God is our "strength." When big trouble comes your way, why do you need God's strength?

4. What is the third thing to remember?

5. What does it mean that God is "ever-present?"

6. Can we ever say, "God is a million miles away?" Are you *ever* alone?

7. God also provides "help." Sometimes, "help" is obvious. Other times, God's "help" is harder to see. No matter what kind of help God provides, we believe God does provide help! Why would that be important?

8. These three things are of *no* use to you unless you exercise faith!

9. Are you open to God's protection? Presence? Help?

## **DAY 5: Grow From It**

*James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

1. God's greatest use of trouble is to build character in His kids. If we were more willing and open "students" perhaps God wouldn't have to use "trouble." We aren't. He does!

Why does James tell us to consider the arrival of trials as "pure joy?"

2. The Greek word for "trials" means, "temptations, affliction, persecution, or trials of any kind." Is there *any* trouble that would fall outside this word, trial?

3. What does the testing of our faith produce?

4. Why is perseverance important?

5. Perseverance is the gateway to maturity and character development. When perseverance is needed what is your normal attitude?

6. How would you turn a bad attitude toward trials into a joyful one?

7. How is God's process described in James 1:2-3 different than how you "think" life and trials ought to be?

8. We studied "trouble." Which of our 5 themes is your biggest takeaway?

a. Expect it.

b. Accept it.

c. Avoid it.

d. Welcome help.

e. Grow from it.