

Chasing Carrots - Week Four

THE ENDLESS PURSUIT OF COMFORT

Bottom Line: *Worldly comfort has never led to spiritual fruit*

Let's stand and read God's Word together

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father[d] is not in them. **16** For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. **17** The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2:15-17 NIV

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. **5** For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. **6** If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. **7** And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 NIV

It's time to break up with comfort!

What if the greatest threat to your fruitfulness is your love of comfort? - Bible says that we are the branches of the vine, and called to bear fruit that LASTS...can't do that if we are constantly in search of comfort!

If you think about it, comfort is one of humanity's most prized possessions! Where are we the most comfortable? 1) Home 2) Vacation 3) Family/Friends

We cling to comfort often because we're afraid of discomfort!

Revelation: Jesus never asked His disciples to do ANYTHING that made them comfortable

Neale Walsch: *"Life begins at the end of your comfort zone."*

Personal Story: Sharing Jesus at the mall - I was the youth pastor! But I still had to embrace discomfort so that I could bear fruit...and show the students how to do the same.

BREAKING IT DOWN (1 John 2:15-17)

- The world = the spirit and system of this world = **a life that doesn't need God**

- It's impossible to love both the world AND God - harsh reality!
- Where do lust and pride come from? The spirit of this world - 2 Cor. calls Satan the "god of this world," so of course he will use these to cause us to love the world!
- If you think about it, pride leads to a love of comfort. Our obsession with self causes us to obsess over comfort.
- But - the things of the world will pass away. Doing the will of God leads to eternal life!

COMFORT TRAPS:

1. Image (Pride)
 - a. We don't want to look bad, inept, wrong, silly, etc. This is so often why we choose comfort. We don't want to do anything that creates discomfort because we fear the opinions of man. But see, we don't exist for man, we exist for God. It's God's design that we forfeit comfort. **Isn't it interesting that most things we do that God loves make mankind uncomfortable and most things we do that God despises make mankind comfortable.** As we read earlier, the two sides will never agree.
2. Lack of faith
 - a. When we're comfortable, we don't need faith! We have to trust God in order to step out of our comfort zones. It's absolutely necessary!
 - b. **6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. - Hebrews 11:6 NIV**

God isn't asking you to live uncomfortable lives: who would sign up for a life of no comfort? He's just asking you to rest in His comfort instead of the world's. The world's comfort = counterfeit! What does this mean? **Means that it has the appearance of value and may closely resemble the real thing...but in reality, it's worthless.** I.E. counterfeit money.

How do we divorce worldly comfort and instead live in a place of Heavenly comfort?

1. Embrace what's authentic
 - a. 2 Cor. 1:4 (above) - He comforts us in all our troubles in order that we may comfort others. Whatever He does for you, He wants to do through you.
 - b. Verse 5 - You may have to suffer through worldly discomfort, but the tradeoff is you get God's comfort. It's a good deal!

- c. The result - patient endurance! In other words, God will give you the strength to face trials and sufferings because you'll be SUSTAINED by His comfort.

2. Embrace divine discomfort

- a. Fact: *worldly comfort has never led to spiritual fruit*. NEVER.
- b. Here are some things God has called all believers to do: 1) Preach the Gospel to all creation 2) Make disciples 3) Love everyone, everywhere, everyday 4) Take care of the sick, widows, and orphans 5) Set the captives free...I could go on. Not a single one of these will "feel" comfortable.

c. **30** For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. **31** He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance! - Acts 28:30-31 NIV

- d. With all boldness and without hindrance! He wouldn't have needed boldness if the world didn't want to talk him out of it. Lesson: get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

3. Embrace that this world isn't your home

- a. **Trying to fill an eternal longing with temporary comfort will lead to an empty life.** Quit taking your cues from the world and take them from Heaven. The counterfeit comfort the world is trying to sell us just won't cut it. We need a better solution.

b. **25** For whoever wants to save their life [f] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. - Matthew 16:25 NIV

- c. When we adopt an eternal perspective, the temporary discomforts of this life pale in comparison to the glory that awaits. Sense of urgency - Jesus is coming soon. The world will never be transformed by comfortable Christians - the stakes are too high.

Today, let's break up with worldly comfort, and replace it with God's. He is the source of all comfort.

Believers who lived uncomfortably: MLK, Billy Graham, Paul, and most of all, JESUS.

Consider the size of your imprint when you live uncomfortably vs. comfortably. You will do as Jesus said, and bear much fruit!