



Christian Resources for Your Journey

## WATCH OUT FOR THE THORNS! Devotion for January 2012

*“Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.” Mark 4:18-19*

Are you making New Year’s Resolutions this year? It can be easy to make resolutions, but in order to actually make them happen, we have to choose to take action. We may have a choice between different activities and how we spend our time, or who we spend time with, or even what we think about. Each day, sometimes each hour and minute, we have opportunities to make choices.

One of our choices can be a resolution to deepen our relationship with God. As with all resolutions, this is not a one-time choice, but a series of ongoing choices each day. And unlike the helpless seeds of the Parable of the Sower that are described by Jesus in these verses, which were sown among thorns and had no choice but to be choked by them, we as humans have a responsibility to exercise our ability to make choices.

As Jesus says, we can choose worries, or to be beguiled by the promise of wealth, or to fix our attention on many other desires. Or – we can choose to spend time with God each day, letting his word penetrate our spirit and influence our behavior. Will these temptations to worry or to be swayed by earthly distractions ever completely go away? No, we will always need to choose.

No matter how well we feel we have established habits of prayer, worship, and attentiveness to God, these are always choices we make. God constantly provides us with messages and encouragement – through the Bible, through Christian friends and family members, through news items, and through nature. And just as constantly the distractions of false gods are also bombarding us.

We need to be alert to the dangers of letting these ‘thorns’ have influence on us. By the power of the Holy Spirit we can make the right choices, and not be ‘choked’ as the seeds were by the thorns. Then we can be fruitful and of service to God in all that he would have us do in this New Year!

*Lord, strengthen us to choose to hear and follow you; recognizing any ‘thorns’ in our lives for what they are, and instead of being ‘choked’ by them, continue to grow closer to you. Amen.*