



Amos

*An
Invitation
to the
Good Life*

JENNIFER ROTHSCHILD

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amos: An Invitation to the Good Life is Jennifer's eighth video-based Bible study with Lifeway. It follows her popular Bible studies, *Take Courage: A Study of Haggai*; *Psalm 23: The Shepherd with Me*; *Hosea: Unfailing Love Changes Everything*; and *Me, Myself, and Lies: A Thought-Closet Makeover*.

Jennifer has shared her inspiring messages to audiences across the country and through media outlets including *Dr. Phil*, *Good Morning America*, the *Today Show*, and the *Billy Graham Television Special*. She's the featured teacher and founder of Fresh Grounded Faith Women's Events and hosts the *4:13 Podcast* where she offers practical encouragement and biblical wisdom to help women live the "I can" life. Jennifer is also the publisher of the popular online leadership library called womensministry.net.

Jennifer is known for her substance, signature wit, and down-to-earth style. A unique mix of profound and playful, she weaves biblical truth with relatable stories, making God's Word accessible to those just starting out in Scripture and endearing to those who have walked with Christ for years.

She's a C. S. Lewis junkie, an obsessive audiobook listener, a dark chocolate lover, and she drinks way too much strong coffee.

She's been blind since age fifteen and says the greatest lesson she's learned in the dark is that it doesn't have to be well with your circumstances to be well with your soul. Jennifer is a boy mom who lives in Missouri with her husband, whom she affectionately calls her very own Dr. Phil, and their little diva dog, Lucy!

Connect with Jennifer at jenniferrothschild.com/amos.



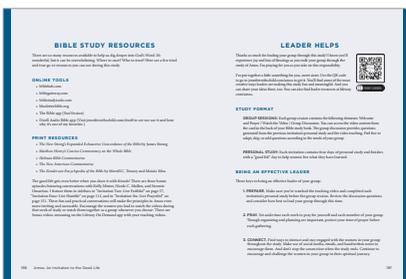
HOW TO USE THIS STUDY



GROUP GUIDE: In addition to the Leader Helps in the back of this book, I've provided a simple group plan. Each session begins with a two-page group guide. I suggest you divide your group time into three parts: 1. Welcome and prayer; 2. Watch the video; 3. Group discussion of the personal study for the past session and the video you just watched.



PERSONAL STUDY: Each invitation, you'll have five days of personal study. (It will be fun—I promise!) Plan to spend a few minutes completing each day's study. Don't worry if some days you don't get it all done. This isn't a race, and you can come back later. Day Five of each invitation is a personal reflection day.



GROUP RESOURCES: If you're leading the group, you'll find an additional word to leaders on page 197.

If you're doing this study on your own, I encourage you to invite a friend or two to join you. This will give you study buddies to pray with and connect with over coffee or through text or email so you can chat about what you're learning.



TO ACCESS THE VIDEO TEACHING SESSIONS, USE THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE BACK OF YOUR BIBLE STUDY BOOK.

WHY YOU WANT TO READ AMOS

My charming little niece pretzeled her long skinny legs into a brown plastic chair in her grandpa's hospital room. I sat near her on the edge of his bed. We were keeping vigil over this man we both loved. She was trying to read her assigned seventh grade English book, and her Aunt Jennifer was constantly interrupting her.

“What’s your favorite subject?”

“Do you like to read?”

“What’s the book about?”

She finally rested her book on the lap of her tattered jeans and gave in to my questions.

“It’s about a horse.”

Evidently, her Aunt Jennifer has a thing about stress chatter. Do you know what that is? It’s that thing in me that will engage my mouth as much as possible so my heart doesn’t have to feel and my brain will stop doing the “what if” calculations. We were in the hard middle of losing our hero dad/grandpa, and the process was terribly painful and full of stress. So evidently, I was overcompensating by chattering on and on in his hospital room that day.

“I don’t like to read books about animals because they usually get hurt or lost or die, and I just can’t handle it,” I said.

Juliet loves animals, and I figured she may feel the same way about reading the horse book, so I continued.

“I don’t like reading books full of bad news or sad outcomes. How about you?”

From that brilliant little brain of hers, hidden beneath sunshiny blond hair, she said, “Well, Aunt Jennifer, I’m not afraid to read it because the horse is the narrator.”

Now, any woman who has been through menopause knows that more pauses come with it! There is a reason some call it “mental pause.” It can sure stop stress chatter, though!

I just sat there on the end of the bed pondering her conclusion.

Evidently, my pause made her think she needed to clarify what she meant. She figured out that Aunt Jennifer was a little slow to connect the dots!

“If the horse is the narrator,” she explained, “then the book will end OK.”

Juliet’s point was well taken. The horse didn’t die if he was the one telling the story. (It’s OK if you’re saying “duh” about now! Maybe that should have been more obvious to me!)

But the bigger point was that Juliet didn’t need to hesitate. She didn’t need to quit reading to protect her heart. She didn’t need to fear discouragement as she went through each chapter because no matter how bad it got, no matter how bleak or sad or awful the chapter, she knew the story would end well.

Years later I sit at my desk listening to my computer read the book of Amos to me. (By the way, if we’re new friends, this is a good time to let you know I’m blind. That’s why my computer reads to me.)

With every chapter, it’s just bad news after bad news. Every chapter makes me feel discouraged or want to quit reading. At the very least, I wonder, *And why am I thinking a woman would want to do a Bible study on Amos with all its bad news?*

Then I remember Juliet’s sage words in the hospital that day: “I’m not afraid to read it because the horse is the narrator. If the horse is the narrator, then the book will end OK.”

So I keep reading Amos and thinking, *If hope is the narrator, then the book will end OK.*

And that is why you want to read Amos, too. Hope is the narrator of Amos.

Even though there are harsh words, bleak outcomes, scary condemnations, and all-around bad news, hope is still hidden in every word. Hope carries the narrative, and hope wins in the end.

So as we read Amos together, we’re going to turn each condemnation into an invitation. Amos is full of invitations to seek God and live. It’s full of invitations to feel assured by God, live humbly and justly for Him, and receive hope of renewal and restoration. So don’t let the bad news or sad outcomes keep you from reading. “If hope is the narrator, then the book will end OK.”

And it will, sister! I promise. Besides that, along the way your heart may just explode with the possibilities, joy, and assurance old Amos will bring. Open your heart big to receive these seven invitations from the heart of God through the pen of Amos. They are for you. And once accepted, they will flow through you. You’re about to learn that what you long for—the good life—is wrapped up in living the God life and, girl, what a life it is!

So ready, set, receive!

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennife". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.



To access the video teaching sessions, use the instructions in the back of your Bible study book.

INTRODUCTION:

*The Good Life
Is the God Life*

BEFORE THE VIDEO

Welcome and Prayer

VIDEO NOTES

The good life disappears unless we know how to _____ it correctly.

The Israelites weren't really living the good life because they had rejected the _____ life.

FOUR THEMES IN AMOS:

1. Privilege brings _____.
2. Past history is not a substitute for present _____.
3. Religious ritual is not the same as true _____.
4. God is _____ in judgment and restoration.

If you want to review what you just experienced, go to jenniferrothschild.com/amos to get a written summary of this video message.



CONVERSATION GUIDE

- ▶ Why did you choose to do this study of Amos?
- ▶ How do you think most people in our culture would define the good life? How would you define it?
- ▶ This study will repeatedly state that the God life is the true good life. But why are we sometimes tempted to not believe that truth?
- ▶ Amos was just a common guy called to a God-sized task. How has that also been your story? In what ways is that the story for all of us who follow Christ?
- ▶ Which of the four themes prevalent in the book of Amos intrigues you the most and why?
- ▶ What do you hope to get out of this study of Amos?





INVITATION ONE

YOU ARE INVITED TO

Live
Assured

#AMOSSTUDY



Day One

NOT SO FAMOUS AMOS

... any one who reads him with due attention will find him, though a herdsman, not a whit behind the very chiefest prophets; almost equal to the greatest in the loftiness of his sentiments; and not inferior to any in the splendor of his diction, and the elegance of his composition. And it, is well observed, that the same heavenly Spirit which inspired Isaiah and Daniel in the palace, inspired David and Amos in their shepherds' tents.¹

Bishop Robert Lowth

Hey, my friend! Pull up a chair and let's talk Amos! I've poured my coffee, but I will admit first thing that I would much rather sit here with this hot dark coffee and munch my way through a bag of, you guessed it, Famous Amos® chocolate chip cookies. Ever had one—or one hundred? (Because you just can't stop at one cookie.)

Oh. My. Goodness.

I do have a fondness for the famous cookie maker because he was born in Tallahassee, Florida, where I lived for many years. He baked the tastiest little cookies and tucked them into the perfectly sized bags. Each bag of bite-sized delights used to have a picture of a smiling Famous Amos spinning a chocolate chip cookie on the tip of his finger like a Globetrotter® with a basketball.

All I can say is every time I think of Amos, I can't get Famous Amos and his cookies off my mind!

So we need to get to know this Amos—Not So Famous Amos—with whom we'll be spending lots of time.

Let's ask God to guide us as we get started. *Lord, open our hearts as we open Your Word. Amen.*

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO! OPEN YOUR BIBLE TO AMOS 1:1. A ton of information is packed in this one little verse. Read it and use the following questions to dig out all the juicy info on old Amos.

Who was Amos?

Where was Amos from?

What does his prophecy contain?

When did Amos prophesy?

Yep, those are the facts all in one verse! Amos was a shepherd and fig grower (you'll discover this later) who lived in Tekoa in Judah. He left home as a prophet to speak God's message to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. This was when Jeroboam II was on the throne of Israel, between 786–746 BC.²

Did you notice that in your answers about Amos, you didn't write "prophet" anywhere? You wrote "sheep herder" (or "shepherd" or "sheep breeder").

So what gives? Was he a shepherd or a prophet?

Well, for the most part, the people we know as prophets in the Bible didn't get a paycheck from the gig. It wasn't their profession. While they were doing their thing, like taking care of sheep, God called them out to speak for Him. And they weren't all cut from the same cloth either. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests when God raised them up as prophets. Like Amos, Moses was minding his own business tending sheep. And then there were the ladies! Deborah was a judge, and Huldah was likely a teacher.

What about you? What do you do? I'm a _____.

Or, I _____.

How would you feel if God plucked you from your thing and said, "Go here and do this and say that for Me"?

Scared? Excited? Hesitant? Under-qualified? Willing? All of the above?

In Amos 1:1, the ancient Hebrew literally means "sheep raiser."³ Perhaps Amos used that title instead of "shepherd" to communicate that he really was a shepherd but was emphasizing with humility and clarity that he wasn't a shepherd in the spiritual sense.

Did you wonder about the earthquake in Amos 1:1? “Geologists have measured disruptions in the layers of sediment in the Dead Sea that lay along a major fault line that indicate when major quakes occurred in the region.”⁴ They found the largest earthquake of the last several thousand years likely occurred around 760 BC, coinciding with the Amos account. This biblical quake was also mentioned by the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 14:5) and the Jewish historian Josephus.⁵

Me? All. Of. The. Above! I want us to pause together and really think about this because Amos was as ordinary as you and me. He was far more familiar with sheep husbandry than Torah scholarship. He didn’t dress the part or have a prophet pedigree. I wonder if he was hesitant. I wonder if he plucked a ripe fig from one of those trees and thought, *Am I even qualified to do anything besides pick these things?*

We don’t often feel qualified to do what God calls us to do. We’re fearful or hesitant. But, sister girl, obedience isn’t fueled by feelings. Obedience is fueled by faith.

THE GOD LIFE IS A LIFE OF FAITH.

What did Amos say about himself and his qualifications in Amos 7:14-15?

How did Amos stating that he wasn’t a prophet or a prophet’s son (v. 14) inform your understanding of the importance of family history when it comes to following God’s call?

To me, that says your family history does not dictate the if, how, or when you will step into “His” story. It says that no matter where your family tree is planted, you can still blossom! No matter how bent and broken the branches on your family tree may be, God can still pluck you out and plant you anywhere He chooses. Girl, you do not need to be raised in the church to have a ministry in and to the church. You do not need to have a perfect history to help change history through your obedient, yielded life. Amos didn’t come from prophet pedigree, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t be a prophet.

Our present, our past, our problems, our personalities—none of those predict or preclude us from being and doing what God sets before us. We need to be willing, like Amos, to be who God is calling us to be and do what He is calling us to do.



Amos 7:15 explains that God took Amos “from” and sent him “to.” Let’s pray for the spirit of Amos. As you open your hands and heart to God in prayer, deeply consider where you are, what you do, and your willingness to be open to following God’s call as Amos did—even though it may look very different from his.

Dear God,

Amen.

I’m praying along with you. I want to have the courage Amos had to be who God calls me to be and do what He calls me to do—even if it feels out of my depth. Amos was a simple man, doing his thing, and God called him to minister. Answering that kind of call isn’t always easy, of course.

In fact, use your favorite Bible resource (or you can even use Google®) to find out what Amos’s name actually means.

Amos means: _____.

You’ll learn over the next few weeks that most of Amos’s prophecies were all about impending judgment on either Israel’s neighbors or Judah and Israel themselves. Pretty heavy stuff. Amos was a man who carried a heavy burden. So no wonder his name means “burden” or “burden bearer.”⁶ But he didn’t avoid the hard. He didn’t run from the heavy. I don’t want us to either, my friend. Amos ran toward what God called him to, even though it meant leaving home.

LOOK AGAIN AT AMOS 1:1. Remember where Amos lived? Amos was from Tekoa, a city about ten miles from Jerusalem.

Where does Amos 7:13 tell us Amos did most of his unpopular preaching?

Bethel was one of the southernmost cities of Israel—not very far from Tekoa. (Check out the map on p. 199 to locate this city.) But the people of Bethel were a million miles away from where God called them to be spiritually.

At the time Amos put on his prophet hat, God’s people had been divided into two nations for more than 150 years. Judah, Amos’s home, was the Southern Kingdom; Israel was the Northern Kingdom. Israel had only bad kings while Judah had a few good ones in her line of leaders. Amos 1:1 mentions two of them.

Look again at Amos 1:1 and write the names of the two kings mentioned:
_____ and _____.

Uzziah was Judah’s king at the time, but the other king mentioned is who I want us to get to know. Jeroboam II was king over the place you, Amos, and I will be spending the majority of our time.

Summarize the reign of Jeroboam II based on what you read in 2 Kings 14:23-29.

Jeroboam, the son of Jehoash, was one of the better kings among the bad kings that came before him—especially in a political and military sense. But that wasn’t saying much. He was still ungodly, doing “evil in the LORD’s sight” (v. 24, CSB). The blessing and curse of his reign was that Israel was prosperous but spiritually bankrupt and morally corrupt.

Let’s finish up by noting an important fact about Bethel that helps us understand the challenge of Amos’s ministry.

LOOK AGAIN AT AMOS 7:13. Jot down how Bethel is described.

Bethel was called “the king’s sanctuary and the national place of worship!” (NLT). Ahh, cue Handel’s *Messiah*! Sounds like Westminster Abbey or Notre Dame, a place where the nation collectively honors God with reverence. Not so much.

READ 1 KINGS 12:25-30 to get a clear view of the history of the temple in Bethel.

Imagine you are visiting the temple in Bethel at this time. Based on those verses, write a postcard to send home to your BFF or spouse about what's taking place there.



I bet you described some shiny idols. Sad, isn't it? Centuries before Amos, King Jeroboam I set up calf idols in Bethel. Really? Do we never learn? Anyway, by the time King Jeroboam II was on the throne and Amos was on the scene, the worship of God had descended into idolatry and empty ritualism. So Amos set up shop right there at that temple in the glow of the golden calf. He bore the burden of speaking truth to God's people who spiritually and morally were a wreck.

I imagine Not So Famous Amos standing by that temple, clad in a sheepskin tunic with a pocketful of dried figs, speaking God's words to God's people. But the ancient words of Amos are not just for an ancient audience. They are for now and for us. The themes of his messages echo in the New Testament words of the apostles and our Messiah.

Now that Not So Famous Amos is a little more familiar, let's finish up by getting a taste of Amos's message. I bet it will be more satisfying than those chocolate chip cookies!

Did you know Amos and Hosea prophesied at the same time? Amos lived in Judah but prophesied in Israel. Hosea lived in Israel and prophesied to his own people. The content of their messages was similar and the historical context was identical, but they communicated God’s message very differently. Hosea portrayed Israel as an unfaithful spouse. Amos portrayed Israel as an unjust hypocrite. Yet both portrayed God as just, faithful, and merciful.

Read each passage in Amos and jot down what it reveals or admonishes. Then read the corresponding passage listed from the New Testament and think about how it relates to Amos’s message. Choose one or two of the Scriptures to use as your finish-up prayer. (Or if you are more ambitious or have more time, instead of doing this activity, read through Amos and ask the Holy Spirit to show you passages that remind you of New Testament verses and jot them in the margin or a journal.)

	REVEALS OR ADMONISHES	NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES
AMOS 2:4		Romans 15:4
AMOS 3:1-2		Hebrews 12:6
AMOS 4:13		Romans 1:20
AMOS 5:4		Matthew 6:33
AMOS 6:8		1 Peter 5:6
AMOS 9:13		Ephesians 3:20

Friend, my prayer for you and me is that we seek God and live (Amos 5:4; Matt. 6:33). I pray that God will draw us to His Word, His kindness, and His hope and that we will seek Him and experience the abundance that comes from living the God life because that’s the good life!

Lord, make us like Your servant Amos. May we be willing to go, say, do, and live according to Your will. We open our hearts to receive Your invitation to seek You and live. Amen.

Well, we’re off to a good start! The Lord guided us as we studied His Word, and we give Him praise. *Thank You, Lord, for Your Word. Amen.*

Now, go eat a Famous Amos chocolate chip cookie and call it a day!

Day Two

HERE COMES THE JUDGE

Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.⁷

Alfred Lord Tennyson



Oh, my friend, things are heating up fast in Amos! I've got my coffee, and I'm ready.

For the rest of this week, we're going to look at Amos 1 and the first part of chapter 2 to examine how God, through Amos, pronounced judgment on six of Israel's enemy nations. The Israelites' sins caught up with them big time. Today we will look at God's judgment of three of them and discover how His condemnation is an invitation for us to live assured that God sees and cares about us, His children.

PAUSE AND ASK GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT TO GUIDE YOU. THEN READ AMOS 1:2-10. But brace yourself, it won't be pretty! And don't get overwhelmed by confusing syntax. I'll explain after you read.

OK, wow, right? You may want to top off your coffee or brew some tea now because what we're about to do will require you to use the most brainpower in our study today. But, sister, you've got this! We're going to make this passage easier to understand by filling out a chart.

First, write the name of the nation in the first column next to the corresponding verses. Then, in the second column, jot down the sin(s) Amos called out. Lastly, in the third column, write down the judgment—consequences for the sin. (Just make notes. No need to be verbatim or interpret the details. Sip your coffee and keep it simple, sister!)

	NATION	SINS	JUDGMENT
AMOS 1:3-5			
AMOS 1:6-8			
AMOS 1:9-10			

We'll unpack and apply the chart in a minute.

But first, did you notice how each judgment began? What opening statement did all the judgments have in common?

Amos used this phrase (or a similar phrase) eight times in his prophecy. It was his special way of communicating sin and judgment.

Look back at what you wrote in the second column of your chart. You probably found that “for three sins . . . even for four” is not followed by four specific sins (NIV). In fact, Amos’s typical style was to just mention one or two sins.

If he wasn’t listing three or four sins per nation, why do you think he used that phrase? What could it mean?

The “for three . . . even for four” phrase was Amos’s way of communicating excess. “Three sins” represents fullness or completeness; “four” represents the tipping point for God.⁸

Calling out “even for four” is like saying you’re overflowing—you’ve outdone yourself—and this thing is out of control! The word for *sins* (*crimes* in the CSB translation and *transgressions* in the ESV translation) used in Amos can also be translated as “rebellion.”⁹ Each condemned nation was in rebellion against God’s standard, not just against Judah or Israel.¹⁰ And the way Amos introduced these condemnations with the “for three . . . even for four” phrase just shows how self-defeating and self-sabotaging sin can be. Their rebellion was not going to end well.

So far, not so good.

Now to the judgment column. Go back and review that bleak list. When you read the way God responded, does it seem He took their sins seriously?

Well, yes, He did! So why does it matter to you that some ancient rogue nation misbehaved and paid the price for it? It matters right now in your real life because of who these nations were, who they were messing with, and what it says about God and you.



If you want to look up each city or nation in your favorite Bible resource, do it, sister! Take some notes about who they were and what they did. Or if the chart already wore you out, just sit back, sip your coffee, and let me do it for you!

DAMASCUS

Damascus is the capital of Syria. Damascus viciously attacked Gilead which belonged to Israel. The mention of “*threshing sledges* with iron prongs or teeth [is] probably a figure of speech implying extreme cruelty and utter thoroughness in the treatment of those who opposed the Damascan invasion.”¹¹

GAZA AND TYRE

Gaza was a city-state in Philistia, along with Ekron, Ashdod, and Ashkelon. Gaza kidnapped a whole community of innocent people and sold them into slavery to Edom. “Gaza did not even need the slaves. She merely sold them to Edom for more money.”¹²

And then there’s Tyre, the strongest of the Phoenician cities.¹³ Tyre did exactly what the Philistines did by selling God’s people to Edom. (Look for Tyre and Edom on the map on p. 199 of your Bible study book.)

What does God’s response to Gaza and Tyre tell you about what God cares about?

Sometimes, like the ancients, we are mistreated, taken advantage of by others, and left feeling powerless. This happens to whole communities like the persecuted church, and individuals, like you. God takes seriously those who mistreat and hold you captive by their selfishness, cruelty, or greed. You can live assured that God sees and cares when His children are mistreated. Opposition and enemies may surround you, but you are in the center of God’s care.

What element did God promise to use in meting out His punishment to each of these nations?

READ ZECHARIAH 2:4-5. I want you to see something so reassuring. How did God describe whom He would be to Jerusalem?

In context, God promised His people there would come a day when Jerusalem would be a city without walls because there would be so many people and animals inhabiting it. But on that day, the city wouldn't need walls because God would be their protection, their wall of fire.¹⁴

The principle of this promise applies to you and me today. This may make more sense as a visual. Funny, right? The blind woman is giving you a visual. Well, go with me. If you look at the map on page 199, you'll see the three places mentioned in our study today, plus the three nations Amos is about to call out, surround Israel. They literally form a circle around God's people. Now, imagine judgment falling all at once on those nations. What would you see? A ring of fire. If Michael W. Smith were there with Amos, we'd hear him singing, "It may look like I'm surrounded, but I'm surrounded by You!"¹⁵ God will be like a wall of fire around you. He is the One who will avenge and pronounce judgment on the enemies that surround you with hate or abuse. He will be the glory in your midst. His presence is forever with you.

(Pause for clarification here. This does not mean a woman should remain in an abusive relationship simply because God's presence surrounds her. If that's you, experience God's protection through confiding in a trusted friend and getting safe.)

Sometimes, like ancient Israel, we have been wronged. Meanies barge in and destroy our sense of security. They topple our sense of stability. They overwhelm, overtake, and overrun us. God takes it seriously. He wants you to know you are surrounded by His wall of fire. He is the glory in your midst.



You can live assured that no matter what the situation looks like to you, God sees and cares about you just like He did ancient Israel. And may I remind you: Israel wasn't on her best behavior at the time these prophecies were written, but God still held accountable those who mistreated her.

READ PSALM 3:3 and use it as a prayer prompt of assurance and thankfulness that you are surrounded by God.

Dear God,

Amen.

You are surrounded by the love and care of God, my friend. No matter what else surrounds you, God is greater.

Good stuff today. Tomorrow we are heading to Edom!

Start packing. See you there!





Day Three

ON THE HOOK

Bitterness does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than the vessel on which it is poured.

Author unknown

I'm at my standing desk today, walking in place while I write this. (I'm afraid I've eaten a few too many Famous Amos cookies, and it's only Invitation One!) I wonder where you are while you study Amos with me today. If you get a chance, post a pic and tag it with #AmosStudy so I can say, "Hi!"

Well, we're only dealing with one nation today, but you're familiar with it because the name came up twice yesterday. It's the fourth of the six enemy nations Amos was calling out. You can find it in Amos 1:11-12.

Before we get started, let's pause and ask God to guide our thoughts today.

Lord, we trust You to teach us Your truth. We are open to learning. Amen.

Let's get clear about the who, why, and what of today's nation. Read the verses and fill in the chart.

	NATION	SIN	JUDGMENT
AMOS 1:11-12			

Do you wonder why the nation Edom gets a whole day of study all to herself? Well, sister, the Edomites are like family. Yep, estranged, angry, bitter family! Let's do our own simplified version of Ancestry.com® because as we understand who the Edomites are, it will teach us a lot about who we are.

According to Genesis 36:1,8,19,43, from whom did the Edomites descend?

Esau was the progenitor of the Edomites. Seems it was pretty important for Moses to make this clear in Genesis 36 since God had him mention it so many times!

According to Genesis 25:20-26, who was Esau?

Esau and Jacob were twin brothers, the sons of Isaac, grandsons of Abraham. To trim up this family tree, Esau became the nation Edom, and Jacob became the nation Israel. Got it? *Whew!*

Based on Numbers 20:14-21, check the phrase that best describes what happened to propel them into constant conflict.

- Esau left a note in his will telling the generations to come to avoid the descendants of Jacob.
- The Israelites raided the Edomites and overtook their livestock and water supply.
- The Edomites wouldn't let the Israelites pass through their territory en route to the promised land.
- Esau and Jacob fought bitterly over the same girl, and the rivalry trickled down through the generations.

The Edomites refused the Israelites passage through their territory. It was petty and small. Evidently, this was where the conflict started, but it kept up for years. The Edomites fought against King Solomon (1 Kings 11:14), and they opposed King Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:2). Even in Psalm 83, Edom tops the list of enemies.

So now we have two nations that aren't getting along. And you thought your family gatherings were stressful!

Amos affirmed through Edom's judgment that God will avenge His children when they are treated with hostility, anger, or held hostage by hatred. But Edom also shows us that what we hold onto long and tightly enough eventually will hold us in its death grip. Amos's prophecy came true in the fifth century BC when Edom was removed from Petra.¹⁶ The Edomites would later disappear from history completely, marking their total destruction.

But the fire that eventually consumed them really just served as an outward picture of the daily heat that hate kindled in their hearts for years. Hate is a slow death. It kills relationships. It kills potential. It kills the good life. God judged them for their unwillingness to show brotherly responsiveness and forgiveness. He took it that seriously.

In fact, Amos wasn't the only one God used to pronounce judgment on Edom.

CHECK OUT OBADIAH 12. What were the Edomites accused of?

The Edomites gloated at Israel's misfortune. They got a buzz out of Israel's hardship. Instead of lifting Israel up when she really needed it, Edom stomped on her. The Edomites showed no brotherly compassion, and, eventually, they got what they gave.

Sister, if you have been wronged or held hostage by someone's bitterness, you can live assured that God will hold responsible those who hold you in contempt. Pause and pull out your mirror. Not literally! I mean, take a look into your own soul. Are you clinging to some bitterness, contempt, or anger toward someone?

When I look at myself, I have to ask, does God take it that seriously when I hold on to an offense, when I choose bitterness toward one of His children rather than brotherly love?

Oh, yeah, He does.

THE GOD LIFE IS ONE OF BROTHERLY LOVE.

Choosing unforgiveness and holding onto hate or bitterness against someone who sinned against me is wrong. It is just as wrong as the sin perpetrated on me. I am like Edom when I choose to hold onto bitterness and withhold sisterly love. How does that hit you?

Maybe you need to pause, sit with the Lord for a moment, and ask yourself some hard questions:

Am I holding onto hate or bitterness toward someone who has wronged me?

Is it right for me to hold onto that wrong?

How does it hurt me to hold onto bitterness?

As you ponder those questions, ask God's Word to inform your feelings and thoughts. Read the passages on the next page and jot down what they say about brotherly love.



Mark 11:25

Romans 12:10

Ephesians 4:32

Hebrews 12:15

1 Peter 3:8

I know choosing kindness, compassion, and forgiveness is hard when you've been hurt. I get it. There's a human in my life with whom I am in constant forgiveness mode because in our relationship I so quickly choose bitterness and start writing out my "record of wrongs"! But the good life is one of brotherly love. And we can live assured that God cares and sees and will hold accountable those who wrong His children. Knowing this, we can let those who wrong us off the hook. That doesn't mean we have no boundaries or call wrong right—no way. As my friend Stormie Omartian says, "Forgiveness doesn't make the other person right, it makes you free."¹⁷

Review the list of the actions described in the brotherly love passages above.

Now ask God to give you grace to live out those actions! If there's a human whom you have held on the bitterness hook or a human whom you feel is holding you hostage to his/her own bitterness, ask God how you can show brotherly love—even if it's only in your attitude and prayer. Then as He shows you, live in obedience.

Ultimately, brotherly love looks like Jesus—like laying down your life for another.

That is what the God life does; it chooses brotherly love. And when we live assured that God has got us, we live the good life.

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 13:1 (NLT)

All right, I'm ready to go live what I've learned. Good job today! See you tomorrow!



Day Four

NEVER OVERLOOKED

The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
Watching the evil and the good.

Proverbs 15:3

Four nations down, two to go! Way to go, you! You've made it through almost all the judgments on the enemies of Judah, and I hope you've been as encouraged as I have. Today we will finish up Amos 1 and hit the start of Amos 2 as we learn about Ammon and Moab.

Lord, please guide our time with You in Your Word. Teach us, Holy Spirit. Amen.

READ AMOS 1:13-15; 2:1-3. Let's finish up our chart!

	NATION	SIN	JUDGMENT
AMOS 1:13-15			
AMOS 2:1-3			

Wow. These are the most graphic sins so far. Once again, not very pretty, is it? Let's examine each nation's sin to help us grow in assurance that God sees and cares.

AMMON

Do you remember on Day Two you read that Gilead, which belonged to Israel, was threshed by Damascus? Well, here they are in another enemy's sights. Ammon attacked Gilead, and the description Amos gave of what the enemy did was horrible. Their brutality included killing babies in the womb. In antiquity, this was a depraved practice of war intended to intimidate and strike terror in those being attacked.

Did you notice God didn't call out any other specific practice of war, though? Why do you think He led Amos to call out this one act?

God will avenge the helpless, unborn, voiceless, and vulnerable.

FIND PSALM 10. It echoes how we feel when evil seems to go unchecked, but it also affirms God's judgment will prevail. Read it, noting how often you read the words *helpless* or *innocent*.

After you read the whole psalm, focus on verses 8-10 and describe how the helpless are mistreated.

Sounds a lot like what Ammon did, doesn't it?

NOW FOCUS ON VERSES 14-18. Describe God's response to the helpless.

Psalm 10 probably sounds a lot like your prayers when you see the unborn so easily discarded and the physically defenseless disregarded. It sure echoes mine: "Why, LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? . . . Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless" (vv. 1,12, NIV).

My sister, God knows the hurts of the helpless, He hears their cries, and He will ultimately bring justice. When you feel discouraged over the state of the helpless, pray Psalm 10 and ask God how you can be an answer to that prayer. Ask Him for the courage of Amos to respond to what He calls you to do.

Before we move to the last nation, let's affirm our faith with what Psalm 10:16 says about God and the nations.

God is: _____ .

Nations will: _____ .

Girl, I know we can feel discouraged by the evil that goes on in our world and how it seems unchecked and unfettered. But injustice and evil will not be here forever. God is King forever! Nations will be obliterated. And Ammon is a good example of this. Ammon was taken down by King Nebuchadnezzar in the seventh century BC.

Thank You, Lord, that we can trust You to vindicate the helpless and unborn.

Now you may want to grab a diet soda or some strong coffee for our last nation. We're almost done!

MOAB

Review the chart you filled out earlier (see p. 28) to refresh your memory about Moab—what the Moabites did and what consequences they would suffer.

Did it strike you as odd, as it did me, that God, who had just condemned the Edomites a few verses ago, now looked like He was standing up for them concerning the treatment of their dead king? *Hmm*. Does this mean Edom was exonerated?

Let me give you the brief backstory and then you can decide what all this means. Moab and Edom were entangled in a long-standing feud. They were sworn enemies. So the Moabites decided to dig up the bones of a long-dead Edomite king and throw his bones into a fire, torching them to ash. This was done out of pure spite and malice and, of course, was totally offensive to the Edomites.

Why was God calling this out? What do you think this sin represents?

If you're not sure, here's another question: Can a corpse fight back? Well, of course not. What do you think the principle is?

Like Ammon, Moab's actions were just one more ugly example of taking advantage of someone weak and defenseless. You can live assured that God doesn't take lightly those who hurt the vulnerable or destroy those who can't defend themselves. God's justice is no respecter of person or nation. He even avenged sin perpetrated on the enemy nation Edom because sin is sin; wrong is wrong. A righteous God must righteously respond to sin. These ancient nations bumped up against the righteousness and justice of God and were crushed by it.

Sister, even when it looks like evil flourishes, you can live assured God does not overlook sin.

Describe the principle communicated in Deuteronomy 32:32-35.

Vengeance belongs to God, and He alone determines the timing. That means we can live assured that He's got this! We can even lighten up, live the good life, and rejoice. Rejoice?

Skip down a few verses to verse 43 and list the three reasons for rejoicing that God gives.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

God will avenge the blood of His servants, take vengeance on His enemies, and cleanse the land for His people. I love that! I know this is in the context of what God will do for Israel, but the principle of God's goodness toward His people will be fully seen through the atoning work of Christ on our behalf.

How can you personalize the principle so it gives you assurance with what is going on in our land and in your own private world?

God will _____

God sees and cares about how the helpless, the defenseless, and all of His family are treated. We are His, and we can live assured that vengeance is God's. Our Lion of Judah "roars from Zion" (Amos 1:2), and He will make "justice roll out like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

Lord, may the stream of Your justice wash over us and cleanse us. May we be carried on the current of Your righteousness. Thank You that You see, care, and vindicate. May the care we receive from You flow through us to cleanse and carry the helpless and oppressed. Amen.

Well done, my friend! You made it through the first invitation of study. Tomorrow will be our first "Good Life Day." It's lighter and will help you live out what you learn.

Love,



Day Five

YOUR GOOD LIFE DAY

Lord, I receive Your invitation to live assured.

What would my life look like if I lived assured that God sees and vindicates His children?

What choices can I make to accept God's invitation to trust Him with my enemies or struggles?

This week, God taught me . . .

MY GOOD LIFE DECLARATION

To live the good life, I will live the God life and . . .

I will let go of:

I will trust God with:

I will take hold of:

To make your Good Life Day even better, listen to my #GoodLife playlist at jenniferrothschild.com/amos.



To access the video teaching sessions, use the instructions in the back of your Bible study book.

INVITATION ONE:

Live Assured

BEFORE THE VIDEO

Welcome and Prayer

VIDEO NOTES

Israel was surrounded by enemies, but God was assuring her of

His _____, _____, and _____.

FOUR THINGS WE CAN DO WHEN WE FEEL SURROUNDED:

1. Feel the _____ but focus on the _____.

2. Pray for _____.

When you feel surrounded, if you don't pray for _____, you'll miss seeing what's really going on.

3. Avoid _____.

4. Show _____.

Your happiness, your thriving in life is based _____ on how people treat you and _____ on how you treat others.¹⁸

You can get my written summary of this video message emailed to you by going to jenniferrothschild.com/amos.



CONVERSATION GUIDE

- DAY ONE:** Do you feel qualified to do what God has called you to do? Explain. What are some things you allow to hinder you from serving the Lord? How would you compare the religious climate in Amos's day to the spiritual climate in the church today? If you sense the church is drifting from true worship, are you confronting or contributing to that drift? Explain.
- DAY TWO:** How have you sensed God's protection and presence surrounding you in the last few days? How has He been the glory in your midst? What helps you leave vengeance and judgment to God when you deal with the wrong done to you and wrong inflicted upon the world?
- DAY THREE:** How have you seen hate wreak havoc in your own life and the lives of those around you? Why is it difficult to let go of the bitterness and hate we harbor? What steps can you take to express brotherly love to those you find difficult to show love?
- DAY FOUR:** Do you ever feel like God is far off and not paying attention to the injustices taking place around you? Explain. How can you know that's not true? How can you pray about these injustices? And how does God want you to be an answer to your prayer?
- VIDEO:** Why is focusing on the facts so important when you feel surrounded? Your happiness and ability to thrive in life is less about how you're treated and more about how you treat others. Do you agree or disagree? Explain. How have you seen this be true in your life? What is something God taught you this week? Why is it so important that you accept God's invitation to live assured?