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Notes & Group Questions for May 1 - 31 readings (*Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below*)

2 SAMUEL 22:1 - PROVERBS 16:33 (Daily reading schedule at: www.ChronologicalBibleBlog.com)

5/1 - Today in Second Samuel chapter 22 we read David's Song of Praise to God! This is an incredible chapter and certainly reminds us why David composed so many powerful Psalms as well. In fact, you will notice that this song of praise from David today is, oh, the same as [Psalm 18](#)... :) It is thought that this Song was composed shortly after David's victory over an enemy, but before his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. The Song starts off with David using the metaphor of a rock in verses 2 & 3: *"The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection."* The metaphor of a rock is very appropriate for David, as he often had taken refuge among the rocks of the desert (when fleeing from Saul, for example), but David realized that his true security was found only in God. In verses 31 through 33 of David's Song of Praise to God in today's readings we read these incredible words: *"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect."* Can you imagine yourself saying these words to God in praise? Can you say these words now to God? It is interesting to think about the word "perfect" – used twice in these verses. I don't know about you, but sometimes I have been accused of being a "perfectionist." But, really, can you or I be perfect or create anything perfect? I don't think so. I do think we can live in a loving, growing relationship with God who will arm us with strength and make our way "perfect." But, it is not us making us perfect. It is God. God's way is perfect. His word – the Bible – is flawless. This is why we study the Bible. We are flawed people looking for flawlessness. God and the Bible deliver this to us. **Q: Is God a shield for you? When the storms of life come, do you take refuge in God? Do you believe there is any other God besides the Living God of the Bible? Is there anything else out there?** I don't think so. I've looked. I have never found anything else besides our Heavenly Father, Son & Holy Spirit. He is the Rock whose way is perfect. Who arms us with strength and makes our way perfect.

5/1 - Psalm 18 is an amazing one! Verse 1 today is so beautiful: *"I love you, LORD; you are my strength."* **Q: How often do you tell God that you love him?** One thing that one of my former pastors does when he prays publicly, which absolutely moves me, is that he closes out just about every prayer with "God we love you. And we pray all of this in the name of your son Jesus." The last line of course is the powerful line! But, that second to last line... is just beautiful. Just telling God that we love him. I'm not sure I tell God that I love him often enough. God may not "need" to hear it. But I think that I need to say it more often. **I love you God! Q: Why do you think it might be important for us to say "I love you God?"**

5/1 - There are so many great verses today for us to meditate upon in Psalm 18! I love verses 25 through 27: *"To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity you show integrity. To the pure you show yourself pure, but to the wicked you show yourself hostile. You rescue those who are humble, but you humiliate the proud."* **Q: How are you showing yourself to be faithful to God? How are you living with integrity? How you showing yourself to be pure? How is God showing you these things as well?**

5/1 - I really love Psalm 18 verse 28: *"LORD, you have brought light to my life; my God, you light up my darkness."* **Q: How has Jesus brought light into your life? How does God light up your darkness?**

5/1 - The closing verse 50 of Psalm 18 today is powerful - and I believe can apply to both David and Jesus: *"You give great victories to your king; you show unfailing love to your anointed, to David and all his descendants forever."* **Q: How are you a spiritual descendent of David? How do you believe that God shows you unfailing love? How do you think that God's Word, the Bible, shows His unfailing love for you?**

5/2 - Second Samuel 24 today finishes up with David taking a census, then judgment upon Israel for this sin, and then closing up the book with David building an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. A few things to point out here. First, you'll note verse 1 starts out with: *"Once again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel.."* Commentaries suggest that God was likely upset with Israel because of their support of Absalom's & Sheba's rebellions. This is why it is thought the plague in this chapter affected Israel and not just David's house for the sin of the census. The census was a sin because it was not needed at this time in Israel's history. Censuses were taken in the past for military conscription

& review of number of men before a war. But this was not a time of war. The census was a sin because David may have been taking this census just for his own glory & pride - to see how many people were under his reign. Even Joab asked David why he was doing this as we see in verse 3. The overall interesting thing to me about this chapter is that many commentaries suggest that it was placed at the end of the book of Second Samuel for the primary reason of setting the stage for the building of the Temple by Solomon in First Kings. The very interesting note about Araunah's threshing floor that we read about today is that it is believed to have been located on Mount Moriah! Yes, the same Mt. Moriah where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac. And the same spot where the Temple was to be built by Solomon! So, this brings to light the importance of David actually buying the threshing floor from Araunah and not just taking it for free, as was offered. David not only bought the threshing floor to build the altar for the burnt & peace offerings, but he bought the land for the Temple of the Lord to soon be built on by his son Solomon! Pretty interesting to note as we close out this amazing book of Second Samuel.

5/2- In First Chronicles 21 we read about David taking a census after being tempted by Satan. Satan didn't force David to do this - Satan tempted him and David fell prey to the temptation. This census was a sin because David was seeking to demonstrate how mighty "his" army was - when he should have realized all that he had came from God and that David's true strength came from God and not his army. The census was a sin of pride. (And it is very interesting to note that Joab, who is not one known for his scruples, realizes this census is a sin!) And so we read in verses 14 & 15 - *"So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand people died as a result. And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But just as the angel was preparing to destroy it, the LORD relented and said to the death angel, "Stop! That is enough!" At that moment the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."* Q: Have you ever struggled with the sin of pride? Have you seen how destructive this sin can be?

5/2 - In 1 Chronicles 21 we read about David buying Araunah's threshing floor to build an altar to the Lord to offer sacrifices on to stop the plague (which occurred due to the sin of the census). Well, in First Chronicles 22 verse 1 we read this: *"Then David said, "This will be the location for the Temple of the LORD God and the place of the altar for Israel's burnt offerings!"* This is Araunah's threshing floor that is going to be the location for the Temple. The very interesting note about Araunah's threshing floor is that it is believed to have been located on Mount Moriah! Yes, the same Mt. Moriah where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac. And the same spot where the Temple was to be built by Solomon! So, this brings to light the importance of David actually buying the threshing floor from Araunah and not just taking it for free, as was offered in yesterday's readings. David not only bought the threshing floor to build the altar for the burnt & peace offerings, but he bought the land for the Temple of the Lord to soon be built on by his son Solomon!

5/3 - In First Chronicles chapter 24 today we read about the divisions of the priests and the Levites. It is important to note that the priests and Levites had differing roles. The priests actually performed the sacrifices whereas the Levites assisted the priests in their duties - including assisting in the sacrifices, playing music, baking goods, and care of the Tabernacle/ Temple (to name a few things the Levites did). Both priests and Levites were from the tribe of Levi, but the priests also had to be descendants of Aaron, the first high priest of Israel. More details on the duties of the priests and Levites are [at this link](#). Ever wonder why we have music in church today? First Chronicles 25 verse 1 could be where the stage is set for the tradition of music in our worship services! *"David and the army commanders then appointed men from the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun to proclaim God's messages to the accompaniment of harps, lyres, and cymbals."* Q: **Do you find music in church to be inspiring? Do you worship God with music in church? Why do you suppose music moves people so profoundly in church? Do you think music can bring people closer to Jesus? Has music brought you closer to Jesus?**

5/4 - It is interesting to read about the various gatekeepers, treasurers, officials, military commanders and leaders in today's First Chronicle readings! In some ways it is sad to read about how well organized things were - knowing that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the exile to Babylon is coming up. All of this organization will be destroyed. Why? Because of sin. Sin destroys. Sin kills. So sad. It is true that the lineage from Abraham to Judah to David will of course continue through to Jesus and now to us as spiritual descendants. But, the nation of Israel at this time of First Chronicles, with all of its great organization, will later fall because the leaders and people will turn their backs on God in sin. In disobedience. Q: **Is there a lesson for us in this today? Do you see the dangers of sin? Of how it can destroy everything you hold dear?** Please - flee from sin. Jesus can set you free from the bondage of sin. Don't lose everything you hold dear to something as stupid as sin. Sin will sell you lies and leave you with nothing.

5/4 - Today's readings are a nice transition from the reign of King David to his son Solomon. Our readings today set the transition scene nicely in First Chronicles 28 verses 1 & 2: *"David summoned all his officials to Jerusalem--the leaders*

of the tribes, the commanders of the twelve army divisions, the other generals and captains, the overseers of the royal property and livestock, the palace officials, the mighty men, and all the other warriors in the kingdom. David rose and stood before them and addressed them as follows: "My brothers and my people!" One thing that really stood out to me in David's address to his officials today was his absolute passion for God's Temple! David was so passionate about making sure the Temple was prepared for his son Solomon to build it. Yes, true, God gave David the plans for the Temple. :) **Q: But... what about us in our lives today... does God give us any "plans" for our lives today? What about the Bible? Is the Bible a "plan" for our lives today that we should follow?**

5/5 - I love David's prayer of praise to God today in 1 Chronicles 29 verses 10 through 12: "O LORD, the God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Riches and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength." **Q: Have you ever prayed a prayer of praise like this to God? Would you like to?** You could do so right now!

5/5 - Today we begin First Kings! First Kings is an amazing book of the Bible. We'll be diving into David's son Solomon's reign and the building of the First Temple in Jerusalem. You'll recall that Solomon wrote many of the Proverbs, and in chapter 3 of First Kings this week we will learn why Solomon had the wisdom to be able to write such amazing proverbs that have stood the test of time for some 3,000 years!

Book: First Kings

Author: Unknown

Date: Sixth century B.C.

Content: First and Second Kings form one book in the Hebrew Bible and are considered to be prophetic literature, probably because a prophet put the books together. The two books cover a period of approximately 350 years, when kings ruled the land, hence the name of the book. First Kings begins with the death of David, followed by a description of Solomon's reign, including the building of the first Temple in Jerusalem. The split of the kingdom into Israel (North) and Judah (South) is described, ending with the great conflict between Elijah the prophet, and Ahab, the king of Israel.

Theme: The fact that a history book is considered to be prophetic is important. It shows that God speaks to us from the past, as well as from the present experience of others. These events are recorded so that we will not make the same mistakes again. The conflict between Elijah and Ahab shows God's immediate involvement in human life and his concern for human affairs. First Kings particularly shows the disastrous effects of social evil upon the spiritual life of a nation. (Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 6)

5/5 - First Kings chapter 1 is quite a chapter today! David is old! Adonijah claims the throne! David makes Solomon King! Quite a dramatic chapter, eh? Adonijah was David's 4th oldest son, and probably the eldest son living at this time. First son Amnon was killed by Absalom. Second son Daniel was probably not living at this time. Third son Absalom was killed in his rebellion. So, fourth son Adonijah thought now was his moment to shine. Well, as Paul Harvey would say, "now for the rest of the story..." The chapter tells us the story well. Solomon was clearly God and David's choice for the kingship. **Q: What is your reaction to reading about the struggle for the Kingship of Israel? Any similarities to our struggles for power today?**

5/6 - Dramatic readings in First Kings chapter 2 today! David's final instructions to Solomon include some strong words about how Joab & Shimei should die. And later in First King's, these words come to fruition. It is an interesting thing to read about the blood and deaths caused by some of our fathers of our faith - David & Solomon and the list will go on. I think the thing I take away from all of this is that in the B.C. age, "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" ruled the day. People "got what they deserved" so to speak... It essentially kept the peace in a barbaric age. But, we were fortunate to have Jesus Christ come into our world and be the final sacrifice and change the rules. Jesus died on a cross. Jesus got what WE deserved. He changed the whole eye for an eye Law to a higher law of love & grace. We deserve condemnation. Thanks to Jesus, we are given eternal life through the free gift of faith in his life, death and resurrection. I think it is always important for us to remember that Jesus got what we deserved... this is why Jesus is called Savior! **Q: How are you seeing the need for Jesus in our Old Testament readings? Do you see that Jesus is needed to redeem us?**

5/6 - Psalm 4 is a wonderful Davidic Psalm. Verse 7 stands out: "You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and wine." **Q: How has God's Spirit given you greater joy than any amount of money or material goods or even human love can give? How are you experiencing God's holy joy in your life currently?**

5/6 - Psalm 5 verse 3 reads: *"Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly."* This is a great reminder to pray in the mornings - before we start the hustle and bustle of the day. I know that many of you are reading the One Year Bible readings in the morning, which I think is a great way to start your day! I do see a huge positive difference in my day if I do pray to God in the morning and pray specifically about the upcoming day - and pray for others that I will interact with that day as well. Praise God for the morning! **Q: what do you do in the morning to set your mind and heart on God? Is it prayer, reading the Bible, reading other devotions?**

5/6 - As I read Psalm 6, it seems very penitential to me - like David was making a confession of sins and praying for forgiveness from God. **As you read through these verses, have you ever felt like this?** I have. And it ain't fun. But, it's part of the healing process. I do think we need to allow ourselves to get fully broken before God before we get fully healed. We can't mask over or hide from God what's really going on - we have got to put it all out there on the table before God, for him to be able to truly fix it. However - there is great encouragement and confidence from David in this Psalm in verse 9: *"The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD will answer my prayer."* The Lord will hear your plea! The Lord will answer your prayer! Please plea and pray to him if you need to. He will listen and answer.

5/6 - Psalm 8, verses 3 & 4 I love: *"When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers-- the moon and the stars you have set in place-- what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us?"* What I love about this verse is that before I had faith in Jesus, and even God, I used to always look toward the night sky and just be amazed by the stars! I would always think to myself - there is no way that this all just happened by chance. There's gotta be something bigger going on making all of this happen. The night sky was evangelizing me!! :) What a beautiful thing. **Q: How have you ever had the experience of nature, God's creation, evangelizing you? When you are out in nature, how do you offer up praise and thanks to God for His amazingly beautiful creation?**

5/6 - Psalm 9 verse 9 stood out at me today: *"The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble."* **Q: When we are in trouble, do we run to God for shelter? Or do we look elsewhere? Where will we ultimately find true peace and rest from the storms of life? Do you believe that the Bible is a haven for you in the midst of the storms of life?**

5/6 - Psalm 9 verse 18 is so true and powerful: *"For the needy will not be forgotten forever; the hopes of the poor will not always be crushed."* This is a great reminder that God's heart is for the poor in this world! **Q: If God's heart is for the poor - should our heart be for the poor too? How is your heart for the poor these days? How do you remember the poor and their hopes? TOPICAL: How do you see God's heart for the poor in Haiti today?**

5/6 - Today we read Psalm 11, which is one that you might miss the full meaning of if you didn't know some of the commentary behind this Psalm. Basically in this Psalm King David is expressing his unshakable trust in God to other people around him who are very scared of enemy attacks. Knowing this - check out verse 1: *"I trust in the LORD for protection. So why do you say to me, "Fly to the mountains for safety!"* **Q: Like David, do we really trust in God for our protection? Or do we sometimes rely on others or our own cunning - or, our own fear - for protection? Are there times when we are faced with a challenging situation that we feel like running away from it? "Fleeing to the mountains" for safety? When, instead, should we simply trust in God for our protection and move forward in spite of the fear within us? Is there an area of your life where you need to turn over more trust in God for ultimate protection?**

5/7 - Psalm 12 verses 1 & 2 are intriguing verses for me - *"Help, O LORD, for the godly are fast disappearing! The faithful have vanished from the earth! Neighbors lie to each other, speaking with flattering lips and insincere hearts."* **Q: Are there days when you feel like this?** I think there are some days when I do... but not too many. I guess I sometimes wonder about the state of my heart - or if I've gotten enough sleep the night before :) - when I feel like this Psalmist does. It is interesting how this verse goes into people talking with "flattering lips and insincere hearts". I do notice right away when that's happening... particularly the insincerity. **Q: Maybe this is something we should ask of ourselves - do we talk at times with flattering lips or insincere hearts? Or are we sincere people?** I like that thought... being a sincere person. I pray that we all are and can become more and more "sincere" in our dealings with each other and that we would just simply be sincere people. **Q: Are you a sincere person? Do you want to be sincere? Was Jesus a sincere person?**

5/7 - Psalm 13 is thought to be a prayer by David for recovery from a grave illness, based on verse 3: *"Restore the light to my eyes, or I will die."* Yet, even in the midst of this serious illness, David amazingly proclaims in verse 5: *"But I trust in*

your unfailing love." **Q: How about you? When you are sick or in the midst of a very challenging or sad situation, do you trust in God's unfailing love? Always? No matter what is going on around you? Do you trust that God will ultimately restore the light to your eyes?**

5/7 - Psalm 14 could be seen at first glance as a discouraging Psalm...Particularly as we look at verse 3: *"But no, all have turned away from God; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not even one!"* I think it is important to keep in mind that there is truth in this verse (particularly if we ever start thinking we're "good" and others around us are not...). But also I think it's good to keep in mind that this verse was written before Jesus came to the earth. Jesus was perfect. And through His resurrection we are called toward greater holiness and ultimately perfect goodness once we meet Jesus face to face in heaven. Jesus gives us the hope spoken of in the closing of this Psalm in verse 7: *"Oh, that salvation would come from Mount Zion to rescue Israel! For when the LORD restores his people, Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will rejoice."* **Q: Do you recognize the salvation that has come to us? Are you shouting for joy for this salvation? Are you rejoicing!?**

5/7 - Psalm 15 verses 1 & 2 today are awesome: *"Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts."* Psalm 15 was written for those that wished to have access to God in his Temple in Jerusalem. However, I do believe that today, through Jesus, anyone can worship God anywhere - in a church or in our homes or wherever we find ourselves. However, I do think there is truth in these Psalm verses in that we can worship God beautifully by living a blameless life (not perfect life - only Jesus was perfect this side of heaven - we will need to confess sins & repent), doing what is right, and speaking the truth from sincere hearts. I do believe these are acts of worship that demonstrate our friendship with God and our growth in becoming more like his son Jesus in our lifetimes. **Q: How do you seek to lead a blameless life? How do you seek to do what is right? How do you speak the truth from a sincere heart? How do you seek to worship God in some way each and every day?**

5/7 - Today we read Psalm 16, which I absolutely love! I could probably share with you some thoughts on just about every verse in this Psalm. Verse 1 tells us: *"Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge."* **Q: When has God kept you safe when you've come to Him for refuge?** And verse 2 is so true: *"I said to the LORD, "You are my Master! All the good things I have are from you.""* Everything good thing in our life - absolutely everything good thing in our life - comes from God. **Q: How have you experienced this?** Verse 3 reminds me to rejoice for and pray for our pastors and spiritual mentors: *"The godly people in the land are my true heroes! I take pleasure in them!"* **Q: How do you appreciate your pastors / ministers / priests and spiritual mentors? How do you appreciate other godly people you know too? Are they true heroes? Do you pray for these folks regularly?**

5/7 - In Psalm 17 David appeals to God as Judge when he is being attacked by foes. Verse 7 is a great prayer and comfort! *"Show me your unfailing love in wonderful ways. You save with your strength those who seek refuge from their enemies."* **Q: How do you seek refuge with God from whatever might attacking you? How do you believe that God will show you his unfailing love in wonderful ways? How have you been saved by God's strength? How have you sought refuge with God from your "enemies"?**

5/7 - Psalm 19 – I do encourage everyone to really read through and meditate on every verse in this Psalm of David and how this Psalm might be speaking to you this week. Please do take a few minutes to go through the Psalm twice if possible and really reflect upon it. You may even want to journal to God some thoughts or ideas or prayers that come to you through reading this Psalm. I find verse 14 in this Psalm to be so powerful – again in large part because one of my former pastors often sang a worship song that simply repeats this verse over and over again – and what a beautiful prayer it is for each of us to repeat over and over again as well: *"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."* **Q: How are the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart pleasing in God's sight? How is God your Rock? How is God your Redeemer?**

5/7 - Psalm 20 is a prayer for a king as he goes out into battle - check out verses 1 through 5 again and you can imagine a group of people saying these words to the king. Maybe another way to read this Psalm, personally, is as a prayer for yourself as you go out into battle against a sin or a struggle in your life. And this verse 5 then is for you as you go into this battle: *"May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory, flying banners to honor our God. May the LORD answer all your prayers."* Amen! Let the banners fly soon in your life! **Q: How do you invite God into the "battles" in your life? Is there a battle in your life right now that you can share with the group? How can they pray for you in this battle?**

5/7 - Psalm 21 today follows up Psalm 20 from yesterday - yesterday's being a prayer for victory for the king as he goes out to battle - and today's being a psalm of praise for victories granted to the king. I like the credit given to God in verse 1: *"How the king rejoices in your strength, O LORD! He shouts with joy because of your victory."* The king is not rejoicing in his own strength. He is not claiming victory as his. He is giving credit to God! How about you in your life today? **Q: How do you give credit to God for the blessings and gifts he has given you? What is a time in your life when you shouted for joy and rejoiced because of God?**

5/8 - Psalm 22 is an amazing Psalm! This Psalm is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. Re-read this Psalm again and see if you see parallels to Jesus' crucifixion? There are a lot in this Psalm. I realize that reading Psalm 22 and seeing some of the images I posted up can evoke a lot of emotions. **Q: I am wondering, how often do you meditate upon Jesus' passion and death? Do you do this just around Good Friday / Resurrection Sunday each year? Or more often? How do you meditate upon the Lord's passion and death? Are passion plays, movies, or books helpful for you to do this? Or are their other things you read or watch or do? Do you think we should or should not meditate upon Jesus' passion and death more often than once a year? Why or why not?**

5/8 - What's one good reason to go to church at all? Check out Psalm 22 verse 22: *"Then I will declare the wonder of your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among all your people."* Praising God with other brothers and sisters through worship, tithing, learning, serving and being in community in church is a great reason to go to church! To declare the wonder of God's name! To praise God among all his people. Wow... yes... this is church! **Q: How important is your church in your life today? How has church grown (or not grown) in importance in your life over time?**

5/8 - Psalm 23! What a Psalm!! This is the first Psalm for sure that I ever really read and was comforted by without a doubt. Psalm 23 is a profession of joyful trust in God as the good Shepherd-King by David. **Q: How has Psalm 23 ever comforted you in your life? What has this Psalm meant to you?**

5/8 - Psalm 24 is a beautiful Psalm! Check out this brief snippet of commentary on this Psalm from bible.org: "The Israelites have returned from a battle with the Canaanites. They are proceeding up to the sanctuary on the holy mount to give praise to Yahweh for the great and mighty victory in battle, carrying with them the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of Yahweh's presence with them. As they approach the gate, they are met by the Levites who function as gatekeepers. It is their part to ask who may enter the sanctuary of the Lord; and it is the priests' part to answer with the stipulations from the Law. Whoever meets these qualifications may enter and fellowship with Yahweh... The psalm then concludes with the worshipers calling to the gates to make way for Yahweh to come in to His sanctuary, for why should the King of Glory stoop to go under a doorway?" This quote is from, and there is much more commentary on Psalm 24, at bible.org [at this link](#).

5/8- Psalm 25 has some amazing verses today! I think I could write some reflections and questions on each of the verses today... Maybe a good thing for each of us to do is to re-read this Psalm today and really reflect on what the verses are saying to our hearts. David wrote this Psalm as a prayer for God's mercies when he was suffering affliction for his sins and when enemies were seizing this occasion to attack him. It's a very penitential Psalm. One that we might need to pray to God from time to time as David did. I do like verse 5 a lot and I believe it will speak to each of you going through the One Year Bible this year - *"Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you."* **Do you believe that reading God's Word each day is allowing you to be led by God's truth? Are you being taught each day?** Then - that last sentence in verse 5 is amazing. I cannot honestly say that all day long I put my hope in God. I pray that I do... but I think sometimes I drift away from putting my hope in God and I put my hope in myself - or maybe even sometimes I lose hope! I get discouraged about a situation. I get stressed. I worry. **Q: If we put our hope all day long in God, do you think we would get discouraged, stressed, or worried?** I don't think we would...

5/8 - Psalm 25 verse 15 really stood out to me today - *"My eyes are always looking to the LORD for help, for he alone can rescue me from the traps of my enemies."* I have come to realize more and more lately that the Enemy is indeed constantly setting traps for us. I don't mean to scare anyone here - but I think this is something very important for us to realize. It has been said that the greatest trick the Devil can play on us is to make us think that he does not exist. If we don't think the Devil exists, then we logically won't think that he's setting any traps for us. Let me assure you - this is clearly Biblical - the Devil exists. Evil exists in this world. Temptation exists. And evil does not rest. However - the good news - God is so much bigger and stronger and brighter (and this list can go on) than the Devil - the Enemy. David says in this Psalm that his eyes are ALWAYS looking to the Lord for help. Why? Because God, Jesus, and the Holy

Spirit alone can rescue us from the traps of the Enemy. Again, the traps are out there for us in this modern world. The temptations and dark alleys and wrong turns call to us unceasingly. But - again, great news here - we can be saved from all of that nonsense; all of that darkness; indeed all of that death, through a relationship with Jesus. Jesus saves. Jesus saves us from ourselves. From our sin. And from the Enemy that sets traps for us. **Q: Like David in this Psalm, are your eyes always looking to the Lord for help?** Please don't ever take your eyes off God and His mercies, power, and strength.

5/8 - Today in Psalm 26 verse 2 we read: *"Put me on trial, LORD, and cross-examine me. Test my motives and affections."* What a powerful reflection from David - God, test my motives and affections. **Q: What are your motives? Why do you do what you do in life? Whom are you doing it all for? What are your affections? Who do you pledge your loyalties to? Who do you give your heart to? Where are you investing your time, treasure and talents? Have you ever asked God to test your motives and affections?** Verse 8 of this Psalm reminds me of my church and I pray it reminds you of your church as well: *"I love your sanctuary, LORD, the place where your glory shines."* Wow... the place where God's glory shines! Yes, I do believe this happens in our churches - even if we maybe don't notice it sometimes. When we come together as the body of Christ each week, God's glory shines! **Q: What are some examples of ways you see God's glory shining in your church?**

5/9 - Psalm 27 verse 13 is so beautiful - *"Yet I am confident that I will see the LORD's goodness while I am here in the land of the living."* **Q: Do you have this same confidence? What are some examples of how you have seen God's goodness here in the land of the living? What are some examples of how you are sharing God's goodness with others here in the land of the living?**

5/9 - I love verse 11 today - *"Teach me how to live, O LORD. Lead me along the path of honesty."* Teach me how to live... what a beautiful prayer! God - Teach us how to live! Lead us along the path of honesty! Teach us how to live... And Psalm 27 verse 14 today is wonderful for us to meditate upon: *"Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD."* **Q: Is there an area of your life where you feel like you are waiting for the Lord to show up? How do you believe that the Lord will show up?** I pray that this Psalm will encourage within you the virtue of patience. The Lord will show up. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.

5/9 - Psalm 28 verse 2 stood out to me today - *"Listen to my prayer for mercy as I cry out to you for help, as I lift my hands toward your holy sanctuary."* The thing that stood out to me is the image of the Psalmist "lifting his hands" in prayer. **Q: Do you periodically lift your hands in prayer? Do you kneel when you pray? Close your eyes? Bow your head? What do you do to really signify your worship and praise of God? Do you think lifting our hands or doing other body movements can change the way we pray to God - rather than doing nothing unique with our body?** My quick thoughts are that we can absolutely pray at any time in any place without lifting our hands or closing our eyes or bowing, etc. I think this gets toward the idea of "praying unceasingly." However - I do think there is something special about the times in our day when we can really spend some quality quiet time with God in prayer. And the best way for me to personally do this is by really changing my body language first - by kneeling down, closing my eyes, bowing my head, maybe lifting my hands, etc. This somehow I think brings me closer to God - it doesn't bring God closer to me - he's always close. But, somehow, what I do with my body before & during prayer can definitely make a difference in how long I will actually pray to God and how deep into prayer & listening I will go. **How about for you?**

5/9 - I read an interesting commentary on Psalm 29 verse 2 today - *"Give honor to the LORD for the glory of his name. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness."* This commentary suggested that possibly "worshiping God in the splendor of his holiness" may have been a call for the ancient worshipers to basically dress up before going to the Temple. To wear the proper white robes or garb for worship. And this made me think about how we dress for church today. **Q: I'm wondering if maybe we're getting too casual in the way we dress for church these days? I know in my grandparents' day, you were in a suit / nice dress. Today, it seems like we can go to church in just about whatever we want to wear - jeans, T-shirts, flip-flops, etc. And maybe this is okay? Maybe this is a good thing? Or maybe not?** Dennis Prager on his radio show talks about this very topic and says that if we were going to meet with the Queen of England, how would we dress? Obviously, we'd dress nicely. Well, if in church we're going to meet with the King of all creation, how then should we dress? At least as nicely as we'd dress for meeting with the Queen of England? Or no...? Please let me know your thoughts on this topic. **Q: Do you dress up for church? Why or why not? (I'll confess - I wear jeans to church... and sometimes even sandals in the summer...)** **Are we getting too casual with what we wear to church these days? Should we maybe learn something from this Psalm and "worship God in the splendor of his holiness"?**

5/9- Today in Psalm 30 verses 4 through 5 we read: *"Sing to the Lord; you saints of his; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."* **Q: How does this verse speak to you? Do you believe that God's anger can last only a moment, but his favor last a lifetime? If you are weeping now in some area of your life, do you believe that God can bring rejoicing to you? Will you pray to God to grant you favor in this life and in life everlasting? Will you pray to God to heal any situation that you are weeping over today, and to bring you rejoicing tomorrow? Do you look forward to this rejoicing that will allow you to sing to the Lord as a saint and to praise his holy name?**

5/9 - Psalm 31 verse 1 is such a powerful start to this powerful Psalm of David's - *"O LORD, I have come to you for protection; don't let me be put to shame. Rescue me, for you always do what is right."* **Q: In your life today, do you need protection from something? If so, will you run to God for your protection? Do you believe that God can rescue you? Do you believe that God can save you from shame? Do you believe that God always does what is right?**

5/9 - Have you ever felt like Psalm 31 verse 10... *"I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness. Misery has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within."* I recently read C.S. Lewis' book ["A Grief Observed"](#). Have you read this? It is a very short book. But, wow, it is a powerful short book! It is a memoir C.S. Lewis wrote after the death of his wife and it is so incredibly thoughtful and moving as C.S. Lewis works through his grief and his questions for and about God. Psalm 31:10 reminds me of this book... though not really... it seems like C.S. Lewis didn't quite get as down as the level of this verse. Anyhow - great book I think for any Christian who has lost a loved one. **Q: What has been consoling for you during a time of loss? Do you have any other book recommendations for people who might be going through grief? Books that were helpful to you when you went through a time of grief?**

5/9 - This is a wonderful look at God's goodness in Psalm 31 verse 19: *"Your goodness is so great! You have stored up great blessings for those who honor you. You have done so much for those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world."* **Q: Do you believe that God's goodness is indeed great? Are you honoring God with your life and your actions and your thoughts each day? Do you believe that God is storing up blessings for you? Do you believe that God will bless you if you go to him for protection?**

5/9 - Today we read Psalm 32, which is a wonderful testimony of joy about God's gift of forgiveness to us when we confess our sins to God! In Psalm 32 verses 1 & 2 we read: *"Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!"* **Q: Do you agree with this Psalmist that there is joy in forgiveness? How do you confess your sins these days? Do you confess them verbally to someone else - a pastor / minister / priest / mentor / friend / accountability partner? Why do you confess them verbally? Do you confess your sins to God in prayer? After confessing your sins verbally or in prayer do you feel any different? Do you think confession is relevant? Do you think confession is a spiritual discipline that should be practiced regularly?**

5/10 - Per the NIV Study Bible, Psalm 35 today is an appeal to the heavenly King, as divine Warrior and Judge, to come to the defense of his servant David who is being maliciously slandered by those toward whom he had shown only the most tender friendship. I like verse 10 a lot: *"I will praise him from the bottom of my heart: "LORD, who can compare with you? Who else rescues the weak and helpless from the strong? Who else protects the poor and needy from those who want to rob them?""* **Q: Have you recently praised God from the bottom of your heart? Do you think that anyone/ anything compares with God? Do you believe that God has rescued you and protected you? Perhaps many times when you have not even realized it?** I think about this on occasion. It is my hunch that God literally rescues us and protects us dozens if not hundreds if not thousands of times each and every day. And I think we typically miss it.... If we knew it, I am sure we would be praising Him from the bottom of our heart very frequently!

5/10 - Psalm 35 verses 22 & 23 are two very impassioned verses that I think we should take note of: *"O LORD, you know all about this. Do not stay silent. Don't abandon me now, O Lord. Wake up! Rise to my defense! Take up my case, my God and my Lord."* I think what these verses do is remind me that we don't have to always speak to God in "hushed" tones or in our "church voices". We can interact with God at any moment as we really are. I don't think we should try to hide our emotions from God. We should come before God at any time - as we are - and let Him take us from there... and heal us from there... **Q: When is the last time you literally cried out to God? Do you think it is healthy to cry out to God?**

5/10 - I love Psalm 36 today! There are some powerful verses in this Psalm... Starting off with verse 1 being a scary & true verse... *"Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them."* Wow. I'll admit - I've been there. I know what it is like to have sin whispering deep within my heart. Thank God for the gift of Jesus - the savior of my world... Thank God for the gift of the fear of God. And thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit who directs us along the narrow path - the path of life and light. I pray that verse 1 does not ring too true for you today - but if it does, please pray to Jesus to instead fill your heart with Jesus' Spirit, which is the only power that can truly dispel the whisper of sin within. **Q: Have you ever felt sin whispering to you? Do you think that sin can indeed whisper to our hearts? Can it whisper from within our hearts? Do we need more than just fear of God to restrain us from sin? How has Jesus freed you from the whisper of sin within your heart?**

5/10 - Today we read Psalm 37, which is most definitely a Wisdom Psalm! It's like we are reading Proverbs! I love verse 5: *"Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you."* **Q: Do you commit everything you do to God? EVERYTHING? Your waking life? Your sleeping life? Your job? Your relationships? Your family? Your finances? Your time? If so, do you trust that God will help you in everything you do in your life? Do you believe what verse 4 teaches? "Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires." I love that thought - take delight in God. Do you take delight in God each and every day? Do you believe that he will give you your heart's desires?**

5/10 - Psalm 37 verse 16 is powerful today - *"It is better to be godly and have little than to be evil and possess much."* I don't know what I can add to this.... I think you probably get it. :) Do you live it? Verse 23 is so amazing... *"The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives."* I don't mean to infer that I am godly here... but, I will admit that there are times in my life where I really sense that God is directing my steps - and taking care of every detail. And basically, it feels like I am sort of just going with God's flow. Things are just happening beautifully. And I do sense the Spirit often during these times. My sadness in this area is that I don't realize that God is directing my steps all of the time. And that he is delighting in every detail of my life - most of the time... :) I pray you and I will come to a greater awareness of this in our lives each and every moment: *"The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives."* **Q: How is God directing your steps today? Are you allowing God to lead your steps? Are there any areas of your life where you are not allowing God to lead your steps today?**

5/10 - Psalm 37 verses 30 & 31 read like amazing Proverbs: *"The godly offer good counsel; they know what is right from wrong. They fill their hearts with God's law, so they will never slip from his path."* **Q: How are you filling your heart with God's teachings? How are you doing this so that you will never slip from His path? How are you offering good counsel to those around you? When others around you see you, do they see someone that clearly knows what is right from wrong?**

5/10 - Psalm 38 is powerful. Verses 4 & 5 speak so much to our human condition - *"My guilt overwhelms me--it is a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and stink because of my foolish sins."* Does this verse speak to you in any way, shape or form? If so, please consider then verse 18 - *"But I confess my sins; I am deeply sorry for what I have done."* **Q: Have you ever had overwhelming guilt? How were you healed of this guilt? Has confession of your sins every helped you get beyond guilt?**

5/11 - Today we read in Psalm 39 verse 5 - *"My life is no longer than the width of my hand. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you; human existence is but a breath."* This verse is a powerful verse for each of us to meditate upon. **Q: How does this verse speak to you? Do you feel like life moves fast sometimes? If so, how are you spending your time? Are you being intentional about how you invest your time? Are you being intentional about your work? Your friends? Your finances? Volunteering? Serving others? Loving others? Watching TV - or not watching TV? (Have I gone off on my "Kill Your Television" soap-box yet this year? :) I'll save it for a future post...) Do you think life really is "but a breath"? Are you spending your breath wisely? With your breath are you constantly loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself?**

5/11- Today Psalm 40 verse 16 stood out to me for it's pure joy and praise - *"But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, "The LORD is great!""* **Q: Does this verse resonate with you today? How have you searched for God in your life? Are you filled with joy and gladness because of that search? Do you love God's salvation? Do you shout praises to God for all he has done for you? Maybe if verse 16 does not resonate for you today, hopefully verse 17 can encourage you - "As for me, I am poor and**

needy, but the Lord is thinking about me right now. You are my helper and my savior. Do not delay, O my God." **Q: Do you believe that Jesus is thinking about you right now? How do you believe that Jesus is your helper and your savior?**

5/11 - Today we read in Psalm 41 verse 1 – *"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble."* For some reason this verse really opens up my heart. Something about the word "weak." Maybe this verse really speaks to me because I myself feel weak at times. And yet, I am so blessed in so many ways. And I realize that there are so many others out there in this world who may not have the blessings that I have, and who are struggling through an extremely tough cycle of weakness. And I wonder – what am I doing to help those who are weak? Do I really have regard for the weak? **Q: Do you? What in your life really demonstrates that you have regard for the weak? How are you investing time or finances into the weak? Are you praying for the weak? Are you loving the weak?**

5/11 - If you've ever asked yourself - or ever been asked - **why do we need a Messiah? What is our need of Jesus?** Well, I think this question is clearly answered in verses 2 & 3 of Psalm 53 - *"God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if there is even one with real understanding, one who seeks for God. But no, all have turned away from God; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not even one!"* This is why we need Jesus. With Jesus, we indeed seek for God. With Jesus, we are blessed with the Holy Spirit to begin to have some real understanding. But without Jesus.... well, it reminds me of the old DC Talk song "In the Light" - "What's going on inside of me? I despise my own behavior. This only serves to confirm my suspicions, that I'm still a man in need of a Savior!" Amen...

5/11 - Today we read Psalm 55 verse 22, which is a beautiful reminder to all who believe in the risen Lord! *"Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall."* Please do meditate on this verse a bit. **Q: Do you make it a habit of giving your burdens to the Lord? Or do you try to carry your burdens on your own strength? Is there a burden you are carrying today that you can give to the Lord? Will you? And do you trust that he will take care of you and not permit you to slip and fall?**

5/11 - Psalm 58 verse 11 stood out to me today - *"There truly is a reward for those who live for God; surely there is a God who judges justly here on earth."* I think this is wise for us to remember that God indeed judges. We don't. We shouldn't. But God indeed judges justly. This verse also brings up the question – **Q: How are you living for God? What will your reward be? Are you looking forward to the reward?**

5/12 - Today we read Psalm 61, which has some powerful verses for us to meditate upon when the storms of life come crashing down upon us. This Psalm reminds us of who is indeed our true Rock – our true Refuge. **Q: Do you cry out to God in prayer during the storms in your life? When your heart grows faint, do you call on God's holy name, and allow him to lead you to his Rock? Do you believe that God can be your refuge? Your strong tower against the foe? Do you long to dwell in God's house forever? Do you long to take refuge in the shelter of God's wings?**

5/12 - Today we read in Psalm 62 verse 11 - *"God has spoken plainly, and I have heard it many times: Power, O God, belongs to you."* This is a powerful verse - no pun intended. . . :) Really, think about it. Where does power come from? Who gives power? Who takes it away? I think it is such a blessing when we truly understand this verse and then live it out. When we realize that we really have no power of our own. Any power - any thing - we have comes from God and God alone. And thank God for that. It's when we start believing we create or own or control power that we begin to get prideful or we'll misuse the power given to us. I think a great teaching on where power truly comes from comes from Jesus when he is before Pilate in John chapter 19 verses 10 & 11 - *"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above."* **Q: Where do you think your power to do anything at all comes from? Do you believe it was given to you from above? If so, how might truly realizing this change how you live your life? How might it change how you utilize the power given to you?**

5/12 - Psalm 64 verse 10 is beautiful - *"The godly will rejoice in the LORD and find shelter in him."* **Q: Do you consider God a shelter for your life? When storms come into your life, do you find shelter in God? How about the Bible? Is the Bible a sort of shelter in your life? Do you find refuge in the Bible?**

5/12 - Psalm 65 has some amazing verses about nature! I love verse 8 - *"Those who live at the ends of the earth stand in awe of your wonders. From where the sun rises to where it sets, you inspire shouts of joy."* **Q: When is the last time you have been inspired to shout for joy to God for the beautiful sunset he created?** Verse 7 of the Psalm says this

- *"You quieted the raging oceans with their pounding waves and silenced the shouting of the nations."* **When is the last time you have stood in complete silence before God because of his beautiful Creation?**

5/12 - Today in Luke chapter 5 verses 31 & 32 we read this teaching from Jesus: *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* **Q: How does this verse speak to you? Are you healthy or sick? Are you righteous or a sinner? Do you need Jesus? Are you heeding his call to repentance? Do you believe that Jesus is the one true Doctor who can heal you for eternity?**

5/12 - Psalm 67 verse 2 today sounds very Great Commission-ish: *"May your ways be known throughout the earth, your saving power among people everywhere."* It's interesting to read this verse when just recently I was reading a review in my local newspaper about a book that "exposes" evangelical Christians. (of which I am one) This book really dives into how "successful" evangelical Christians are in "recruiting" young adults ages 20 to 35 with their ministries. And this book reviewer - and the book author - were very disdainful of Christianity. Saying it threatened secular society... and this just made me realize that the more we do indeed make God's ways known throughout the earth - the more we introduce people to God's saving power among people everywhere - well, then the secular world will push back big time with books and reviews like the one I read. And the secular world will even push back in more severe ways as well. This makes me realize that indeed our efforts to make God's ways known - God's love, grace, mercy, salvation, call to repentance - are being noticed by others. But hopefully more than just being noticed by others, let us pray that our Kingdom work actually introduces others to God's only son Jesus, who transforms hearts and lives for eternity! **Q: How are you helping to make God's ways be known throughout the earth? Are you sharing with other's God's saving power? Do you want the life you live to reflect God's glory to others?**

5/13 - I always like the idea and reminder to sing to God! Do you sing to God at places other than church? Maybe in your car? Maybe at home with the headphones on? Do you "sing" to God with the way you live your life? Here's verse 4 in Psalm 68 today which I love - *"Sing praises to God and to his name! Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds. His name is the LORD-- rejoice in his presence!"* **Q: How do you sing your praises to the Lord each day? How many folks out there belt out worship tunes while driving in your car?? :) Feel free to fess up in the Comments below. I will confess here and now that I do belt out tunes from various worship CD's - Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin, Passion CD's, David Crowder lately. However, what's interesting is sometimes I feel a bit guilty spending so much time listening to music and singing along. I have one great friend who almost never listens to music - he thinks it's a waste of time and he wants to listen to news / preaching in the car instead. To try to learn something he says. And I can appreciate this... but I think it's still quite alright to sing our praises to the Lord on a frequent basis in the car! What say you?**

5/13 - Today in Psalm 68 verse 20 we read – *"Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death."* Do you believe God is a God who saves us? How did / does God do this saving? Do you believe that escape from death comes from God and his Son? I've been reflecting on this "death" aspect of our fallen world a bit lately, which has been sad to reflect upon. I had an experience with a few friends very recently where I was reminded of how self-destructive we can be in our lives. I think that without Jesus we can oftentimes not know where to turn for an escape from death – we do not know where to turn from an escape from our own self destructive behaviors. My friends need Jesus. I need Jesus. The world needs Jesus. Our God is a God who saves. From God and Jesus comes escape from death. May this season of Easter bring us, our friends, and families closer to the God who saves! **Q: How do tell people about our God who saves? How do you evangelize these days?**

5/13- Psalm 69 verse 16 today is such a true statement that maybe we need to be reminded of today - *"Answer my prayers, O LORD, for your unfailing love is wonderful. Turn and take care of me, for your mercy is so plentiful."* God does answer our prayers - perhaps not in the way we "want" Him to, but always in the way that is ultimately best for us and the Kingdom. His unfailing love is wonderful. His mercy is so plentiful. But, yet, somehow I think I sometimes forget all of this. Why? I think I forget about God's love & mercy when I am not praying to him. **Q: How about you? Are you needing a reminder today about God's unfailing love and his mercy? Are you praying to God for these very things? Will you allow God to demonstrate both his love and mercy to you today? Will you offer up prayers and allow God to answer in his perfect way?**

5/13 - I love Psalm 69 verse 33 today - *"For the LORD hears the cries of his needy ones; he does not despise his people who are oppressed."* God hears the cries of his needy ones. **Q: Perhaps the question is then, do we hear the cries of God's needy ones? Do we hear the cries of those starving today? Sick from lack of clean water? Suffering from**

HIV / AIDS? Spiritually poor? Needing a friend? How is the soil of our hearts if we are *not* hearing these cries? Should we be hearing these cries? And if we do hear them, what then should we do?

5/13- Psalm 70 verse 4 is awesome - *"But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, "God is great!"*" Indeed, I think as Christians we should be filled with joy & gladness! Yes, there will be tough times. And suffering. But overall, I pray that we are filled with joy and gladness. And then the second sentence in this verse reminds me of an older Relient K song with lyrics that go something like this - "Your voice has broken my defense. Let me embrace salvation!" I like that thought. **Q: How are you embracing your salvation today? How are you loving your salvation today? Do you ever take your salvation for granted? Why?**

5/13 - Wow. Today in Psalm 86 we read an amazingly wise prayer of David to God in verse 11 – *"Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name."* **Q: How do you think this verse works as a prayer? Can you imagine praying it to God? Do you want God to teach you his way? Do you want to walk in God's Truth? What does it mean to you to have an undivided heart? It is possible that your heart is now divided in some way? Will you pray to God for an undivided heart? What does it mean to fear God's name? Why would David pray to fear God's name?** I read an interesting commentary on this verse saying that David is wisely praying for God to save him from his frailty within himself. Oftentimes in the Psalms we will read about David praying for God to deliver him from his enemies. In this verse David is praying for deliverance from what is within. This is a critical point to consider. I think sometimes we always look toward "external" circumstances as the cause of all of our problems. When perhaps we need to look at some "internal" things going on inside of us as causes of some of our problems? And in realizing that there are some internal things that need to be fixed, perhaps we can humbly pray Psalm 86 verse 11 like David did thousands of years ago? *"Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name."*

5/13 - Psalm 101 is a great Psalm of David today! Great verses, all of them. I like verse 3 - *"I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar."* This seems to be a bit tougher and tougher to adhere to in our modern world where pornography is getting more and more into the mainstream. But, it is such a beautiful and true Psalm of David for us to adhere to! **Q: Do you refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar? Do you avoid watching TV shows, reading magazines or papers, or going to see movies where you know you'll end up looking at things vile & vulgar?** Don't get me wrong - I'm not saying avoid watching all TV, reading all mags & papers or avoid all movies. I'm just saying that there are some of these forms of media that we know in advance that what they "sell" us will be vile and vulgar. Why would we "buy" that garbage? Refuse to look at it. Don't give it one inch of power over you! (or your kids!) A portion of verse 2 stood out to me today - *"I will lead a life of integrity in my own home."* This is powerful. **Q: How often do we have integrity outside of our home - but then not display integrity within our own home? Think this is healthy? How do you lead a life of integrity within your own home?**

5/14 - Psalm 103 is a great Psalm today! Each verse is a powerful reminder of God's character and our relationship to God. Verse 8 definitely stands out today - *"The LORD is merciful and gracious. He is slow to get angry and full of unfailing love."* **Q: Do you believe that God is merciful and gracious? How have you experienced God's mercy? His grace? Do you believe that God is slow to get angry? When was the last time you experienced God's unfailing love?**

5/14 - Today in Psalm 103 verses 11 & 12 we read these verses about God – *"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."* I think these verses are a wonderful look at what it means to be spiritually reborn and living in relationship with God. These verses are a glimpse of the true freedom that is found in relationship with God - freedom of living in God's perfect love, and freedom from our slavery to sin. **Q: Do you believe that God's love for you is as high as the heavens are above the earth? Do you believe that God has removed your sins (transgressions) from you as far as the east is from the west? Do you thank God often for His love for you? Do you thank Jesus often for saving you from the bondage of sin?**

5/14- I love Psalm 108 verse 1 today: *"My heart is confident in you, O God; no wonder I can sing your praises! Wake up, my soul!"* **Q: Is your heart confident in God? Do you sing God's praises? Is your soul awake? Or does your soul need a wake up call? Where do you suppose you can find that wake up call for your soul? The Bible? Jesus? The Holy Spirit? God? Will you answer the call today? Will your soul wake up?**

5/14 - Today in Psalm 109 verse 4 in the NIV we read these words of David – *"I am a man of prayer."* Wow. I like that.

And I'm not sure I can honestly say that about myself right now. Sure, I will roll out of bed and offer up some prayers. Yeah, I'll try to say a prayer before meals. And yes, I'll pray briefly before going to sleep. Oh yeah, maybe in church once a week too I'll offer up some prayers. But, for me to say "I am a person of prayer" would probably not be truthful. Ouch. Don't worry – I'm not beating myself up too badly over it. But - if I really want to realize that God is holy and a Rock and if I really want to love God and other people, then I have a hunch that being a person of prayer is a critical part of the equation. I don't think that prayer is so much talking to God as it is really slowing down and listening to God. Sure, it's a conversation, but I think in our fast pace world today we would do well to really slow down in prayer and listen to God. Listen for that still small voice within our hearts leading us to God's kingdom and glory and peace. It's there. I think it takes prayer to really hear it oftentimes. **Q: How about you? Are you a person of prayer? Do you want to be a person of prayer? When you pray, do you talk more or listen more to God? Do you want to live your life as a person of prayer?**

5/14 - Psalm 122 is the third in this series of Psalms of pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This is a joyful Psalm today! Today in Psalm 122 verse 1 we read – *"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'"* **Q: Have you ever had this experience? Have you ever rejoiced when someone invited you to attend church? Have you ever given this experience to others? Have you said to others in your life, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"? Do you make it a regular habit to invite people to church? Does church bring joy to you? Do you think it might then also bring joy to others? Others who are waiting for you to simply invite them? Will you? Will you rejoice with those around you through the simple & graceful act of an invitation? Are you yourself part of a church community? Are you attending church on a regular basis? Do you believe that being in community with other Christians each week will help grow your relationship with God? If you are not part of a church community, will you seek one out this upcoming week?** And verse 6 is so true then as we've been reading in Daniel & Ezekiel recently - and still true now - *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."* **Q: Will you join me in praying for the peace of Jerusalem?**

5/14 - I read in a commentary that Psalm 124 was likely a call and response from a Levitical priest and worshipers. Verses 1 through 5 were likely spoken by the priest and verses 6 through 8 were the response of the people. Great way to read this Psalm! Even though this Psalm title says it is a "Psalm of David", some commentaries believe this Psalm is post-exile from Babylon based on verse 8: *"We escaped like a bird from a hunter's trap. The trap is broken, and we are free!"* Though, I could see that verse apply to Davidic times too. Verse 8 is a joyful response that hopefully each one of us can sing confidently: *"Our help is from the LORD, who made the heavens and the earth."* Amen and Amen! **Q: How is God your help today?**

5/15 - Psalm 131 verse 2 is a beautiful reflection! *"But I have stilled and quieted myself, just as a small child is quiet with its mother. Yes, like a small child is my soul within me."* What a great reflection and reminder to take 1 day a week as a Sabbath day of rest. A day to still and quiet yourself. Just like a small child is with its mother. **Q: Have you been still and quieted yourself recently? Why would David, the Psalmist, write about this? Why would this be a good thing to do?**

5/15 - Psalm 133 is a great short Davidic Psalm about harmony! Verse 1 sets the pace of this psalm nicely: *"How wonderful it is, how pleasant, when brothers live together in harmony!"* **Q: Do you consistently seek harmony in your interactions with others? Do you pray for peace?**

5/15 - Psalm 138 is an awesome Psalm of thanksgiving and praise to God from David! You'll note that the word Temple is used in verse 2 - and of course the Temple was built by David's son Solomon. It is thought that David used the word Temple in reference to the tent holding the Ark of the Covenant. Some have also thought that this Psalm possibly was written after David's time, in the post-exile period. Either way, it is a beautiful Psalm of praise. Psalm 138 begins a final collection of eight "Davidic" Psalms, which are framed by songs of Praise in Psalm 138 & Psalm 145 - and Psalms 139 through 144 are six prayers. In Psalm 138 today, verse 3 stood out to me - *"When I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me the strength I need."* **Q: Do you believe that God answers your prayers? Maybe not exactly in the way you'd expect, but that they are answered? Do you believe that God answers your prayers through encouragement and by giving you strength?**

5/15 - Verse 7 stood out to me as well - *"Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will preserve me against the anger of my enemies. You will clench your fist against my angry enemies! Your power will save me."* **Q: Do you believe that Jesus' power will save you in times of trouble? Or do you rely on your own power and maybe forget about Jesus during times of trouble? Will you rely on Jesus, realizing that only His power will ultimately save you?**

5/15 - Today we read Psalm 139! I LOVE this Psalm... and had somehow forgotten about it. Is this Psalm anyone's favorite Psalm out there? I would not doubt it if was. This is just an incredibly beautiful Psalm about how much God loves and cares for us. And just how well God knows us. Please read and re-read this Psalm this week if you can. And rejoice in how much God loves you and how much he knows you. Each of the verses in this Psalm are incredible. I'll highlight a few. Verse 3 - "*You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am.*"

Q: Do you believe that God charts out your path for you? Do you believe that God gives you true rest? Do you believe God knows where you are every single moment of your life?

5/15 - Verses 13 & 14 - "*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous--and how well I know it.*" **Q: Do you believe that God was loving and caring and creating you in your mother's womb? Are you amazed by the complexity and wonder of the human body? Could it be anything other than the marvelous workmanship of a loving and creative and living God?**

5/15 - And verses 23 & 24 to close out the Psalm: "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*" **Q: Do you consistently ask God to search your heart and mind? Do you confess to God what is not right in your heart and mind? What needs healing? Do you ask God to even point out to you things that you may not realize are destructive to you and others in your heart and mind? Do you believe that this process of confessing your sins to God and asking for forgiveness and healing will lead you along the path of everlasting life?**

5/15 - Psalm 140 is a prayer for deliverance from evil. And this Psalm certainly should be a good reminder of the Lord's Prayer, where we pray – "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." **Q: What is the one thing that can truly deliver us from evil? Can we deliver ourselves from evil on our own? Or do we need something beyond ourselves for this deliverance?** Verse 7 in this Psalm gives each of us something to consider and should be an encouragement: "*O Sovereign LORD, my strong savior, you protected me on the day of battle.*" **Do you believe God is your strong savior who will protect you from evil on the day of battle? Do you believe that perhaps every day is a day of battle? Do you believe that Satan or evil ever rests in attempting to tempt people? Should we pray for protection from evil on a very regular basis?** The Lord's Prayer / Our Father is one great way to do this each day...

5/15 - Psalm 141 is a beautiful prayer of David's - praying for deliverance from the wicked and their ways. Verse 4 is powerful - "*Don't let me lust for evil things; don't let me participate in acts of wickedness. Don't let me share in the delicacies of those who do evil.*" **Q: Is this a prayer you could incorporate into your prayer life? What might be some examples of "delicacies of those who do evil"? Will you pray to God to avoid these "delicacies" and "treasures" that will ultimately fail you?**

5/15 - Psalm 143 verse 8 stood out to me today - "*Let me hear of your unfailing love to me in the morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I have come to you in prayer.*" I read somewhere before - I think it was [Bruce Wilkinson's book "Secrets of the Vine"](#) - that many great men and women of our Christian faith connect with God in the morning through prayer, reading the Bible, and other quiet time activities. Bruce even suggested that this is the preferential way to go - to start your day by spending time with God in the morning, rather than at night. Because he said this would then transform the rest of your day - in terms of being more conscientious of our relationship with God. This does make sense to me - and in fact, I have started reading the One Year Bible now in the mornings, and it is a beautiful way to start the day! I like what this Psalmist says - "Let me hear of your unfailing love to me in the morning." And it reminds me that somehow, someday, it almost seems easier to me to connect with God in the morning. Actually - one other thing I used to do in the morning is read a page or two from [Oswald Chambers "My Utmost For His Highest."](#) And I am thankful that I did this in the morning for a season. **Q: How about you? Do you have some way that you connect with God in the morning? Are you able in some way to hear of God's unfailing love for you in the morning?**

5/16 - Psalm 144 verses 3 & 4 are fairly well known: "*O LORD, what are mortals that you should notice us, mere humans that you should care for us? For we are like a breath of air; our days are like a passing shadow.*" **Q: If our days are like a passing shadow, how then should we be spending our days? What types of things should we be investing our time & money into? What should we be investing our very hearts and minds into? Are you wisely spending your passing days in godly ways?**

5/16 - I love the imagery today in Psalm 145 verse 9! *"The LORD is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation."* **Q: Do you believe that God is good to everyone? Do you feel God's compassion being showered upon you right this very moment?**

5/16 - Psalm 88 is quite a Psalm! Interestingly many churches read this Psalm during their Good Friday liturgies, interpreting this Psalm as a prayer of Jesus suffering on the road to Golgotha. Take a read through this Psalm again with this perspective...

5/16 - Psalm 89 verse 11 is so powerful for us to remember - *"The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours--you created it all."* Everything in this world is God's. Everything. This means every single person we meet is God's. However... they might not realize it. But, I think it is important for us to remember that every single person we meet - no matter how "bad" they may seem or whatever - is still made in the image of God. And there is the possibility of that person getting to know they are God's. There is the possibility of redemption - not by our human power, but by the power of God. I think sometimes we go through our day thinking the world is bad. People are bad. It all is bad. And certainly, it is a fallen world. But it is still God's world - and yes, the devil is thrashing around his temptations as rapidly as he can in the hearts of men and women. This is the great spiritual battle. But, God is so much stronger than the devil. The name of Jesus expels the devil quicker than anything. So, know that while we are in a fallen world, it is God's world. Everything in this world is God's. **Q: What are you and I doing to let others know that they are God's - particularly if they don't know it? What are we doing to bless others with the knowledge that there is another Way than the devil's temptations in this world? What are we doing? Really. What are we doing with our lives to let others know about Jesus? Whew... this one gets to me for some reason. There are people suffering so much in our world. If only they knew there was another way.... Will you help to show them to the Way?**

5/16- I love Psalm 89:15 today: *"Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, Lord."* **Q: Do you hear the joyful call to worship in your life? Do you worship God with a community of believers each week? (i.e. at a church...) Will you choose to walk in the light of God's presence each week?**

5/16 - Psalm 89 verse 48 is something important to keep in mind as I think it does help us think about how we are really living our short earthly lives - *"No one can live forever; all will die. No one can escape the power of the grave."* **Q: Knowing this, how are you living your life? Are you living your life with love? Are you loving God and loving other people with all that you are? Are you living your life intentionally? Are you living your life as God would want you to live your life?** I heard someone once state: "Just keep in mind that we're not going to live forever. 100 years from now on this planet? It will be all new people." That is an interesting thing to keep in mind... 100 years from now... all new people. Hopefully this is a fact that encourages each of us not to waste our precious time here on things that are not of God! No one escapes the grave. Our condition is terminal. (But of course our condition can be eternal through faith in Jesus!)

5/17 - Psalm 50 verses 14 & 15 are beautiful words from God to Israel - *"What I want instead is your true thanks to God; I want you to fulfill your vows to the Most High. Trust me in your times of trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory."* **Q: Do you believe these words can apply to us today as well? Are you giving true thanks to God each day? Are you trusting in God in your times of trouble? Are you giving God glory for all that he has done for you? How often do you say "thank you" to God?**

5/17 - Wow... Psalm 73 today is amazing! I love it. I actually had lunch with a good friend who said to me verse 13 almost verbatim - *"Was it for nothing that I kept my heart pure and kept myself from doing wrong?"* It was so sad for me to hear him say this... but he obviously is not alone. The Psalmist thought this too, and I imagine each of us might feel like this is at times. Praise God that the Psalmist rallies, as hopefully do we, in verse 23 - *"Yet I still belong to you; you are holding my right hand."* And then I absolutely love where he goes with verse 26 - *"My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever."* I can quickly think of people in our world today where this verse 26 is so applicable... let us pray that those in time of failing health and spirit have God remain the strength of their heart! **Q: How are you keeping your heart pure? How are you keeping yourself from doing wrong? Is God yours forever?**

5/18 - Psalm 75 verse 7 is so powerful and so true... I need to hear this over and over again - *"It is God alone who judges; he decides who will rise and who will fall."* You and I do not judge. Well, we might try to judge, but it's all in vain if we do. And we risk turning judgment onto ourselves when we do. God alone judges. God alones decides who will rise and who

will fall. We do not. God is God. We are not. This is a very good thing to always remember! :)

5/18 - I love Psalm 76 verse 4's reflection on God! "*You are glorious and more majestic than the everlasting mountains.*" I wonder how often we look at nature and forget that God created nature? I think so often we can look at a beautiful sunset or a mountain or a forest or an ocean and temporarily forget that God created these beautiful things. If God created these beautiful things, then doesn't it stand to reason that God is more glorious and more majestic than all of his created things? I've said this one before on this blog: before I believed in Jesus or really even God, I honestly think I was evangelized by creation. Meaning - I would look at a starry night with my friends and say things like, "How could there be so many stars up there like that and there not be a God? Things like that can't just happen by chance!" Praise God for his creation that was evangelizing me toward Him! **Q: Has creation ever evangelized you? Do you think creation might be able to evangelize your friends who do not yet know God?** Let us pray that we don't ever end up worshiping creation instead of the Creator. Let us be impressed and thankful and admire creation - but let us give the glory and the worship to the Creator, God, who is more glorious and more majestic than the everlasting mountains...

5/18 - Today in Psalm 77 verses 11 and 12 we read – "*I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.*" I think these verses get at one of the amazing things about each of us reading the One Year Bible this year – both the Old & New Testaments. We are reading perhaps for the first time – or maybe the 17th time – about God's miracles of long ago. We are "remembering" God's miracles for our spiritual ancestors, for ourselves, and for those around us in our lives today whom we will teach about God's saving love. **Q: As you are reading through the One Year Bible this year, are you truly "remembering" God's miracles of long ago? Are you meditating on all of His mighty works and considering His mighty deeds? Are you being transformed by this process? And will you now go forth and help others in your life "remember" and meditate on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit's miracles of long ago?** Let us pray for "remembrance" today for ourselves and for others in our lives.

5/18 - Psalm 78 verse 4 is a wonderful reminder that we have an important opportunity to disciple and teach others in the generation coming up behind us - "*We will not hide these truths from our children but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD. We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did.*" **Q: How are you discipling or teaching someone about God's truth, deeds, and love? How are you helping the next generation learn about God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit?**

5/18 - Psalm 78 verses 41 & 42 stood out to me today - "*Again and again they tested God's patience and frustrated the Holy One of Israel. They forgot about his power and how he rescued them from their enemies.*" I am continually amazed at how similar we are today to the Israelites when they were wandering in the desert. I am sure that we can on occasion test God's patience and frustrate him. I would also venture a pretty good guess that many of us forget about God's power. And forget how God rescued us from our enemies - and continues to rescue us daily. **Q: How about you - do you ever forget about God's power? Do you ever forget about how he has rescued you? What can we do to help ourselves remember? How do we stop testing God's patience and forgetting about Him?**

5/18 - Psalm 78 verse 57 is a metaphor that I pray is never used upon any of us! :) "*They were as useless as a crooked bow.*" **Q: Can you imagine a worse insult? Well, yeah, I suppose there are worse. But coming from a Psalmist, this is no good. What does it mean to be a crooked bow? What does it mean to be a straight bow? How is your bow these days? Crooked, and perhaps focused on things of this world? (and thus basically useless) Or straight, and focused on advancing the Kingdom of God in your life and the lives of others around you? (and thus very useful)**

5/18 - Psalm 78 verse 71 is awesome - "*He took David from tending the ewes and lambs and made him the shepherd of Jacob's descendants--God's own people, Israel.*" This verse reminds me that we'll be reading about David later this year in the One Year Bible! It is interesting that the Psalmist refers to David as a shepherd and not king of Israel in this verse. The shepherd analogy seems like it might be foreshadowing Jesus, the Good Shepherd. **Q: How is Jesus your shepherd?**

5/19 - Psalm 79 verse 13 stood out to me today - "*Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will thank you forever and ever, praising your greatness from generation to generation.*" I like that imagery of being sheep in God's pasture. And Jesus, of course, is our Good Shepherd. **Q: Are you content with the idea of being a sheep in God's pasture?**

5/19 - Psalm 80 verse 19 today is powerful - *"Turn us again to yourself, O LORD God Almighty. Make your face shine down upon us. Only then will we be saved."* I like that opening - "turn us again to you God." I don't believe that God turns himself away from us - but that we do indeed turn ourselves away from God. And like the Psalmist, maybe sometimes we literally need to pray that God will turn us back toward him. I kind of come up with the imagery of us maybe sometimes being like pouty kids with our arms folded and our backs toward God - and God is looking at us lovingly - all we simply need to do is turn our face toward God and his grace will heal that pout and whatever is troubling us immediately... **Q: Have you ever turned your back on God? How did you turn yourself again toward God? If you need to, will you turn yourself again toward God today?**

5/19 - I always like reading verses like 1 & 2 in Psalm 81 today - verses that speak of music & God - *"Sing praises to God, our strength. Sing to the God of Israel. Sing! Beat the tambourine. Play the sweet lyre and the harp."* Do you sing praises to God? Is God your strength? I'll go off on a tangent here, which is always a risky thing to do... :) I'll admit that I am a music junkie. Really. I have loved music immensely ever since I was a pre-teen and heard K-TEL's Hit Explosion with such songs as Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger." :) Well, ever since then music has played an interesting role in my life - both positive and negative. Bottom line is that I think God used music to bring me to Him. Seven years ago I ended up at a rock & roll postmodern evangelical church where I really first heard songs about Jesus in a rock song! It was a paradigm shifter for me... I ended up accepting Jesus as my Lord & Savior at that church two months later - thanks in large part to an amazing pastor there at the time and thanks in large part to the rock & roll worship. I have to confess that I do love any opportunity I can get to flat out worship God in a rock & roll worship way! :) I do realize the risks of high energy rock music... it can propel people to do very dumb things. But I think it can also propel people toward Jesus. Maybe music is like anything else - it's a double edged sword. I will share with you that a buddy of mine shared with me how he threw out every single one of his worldly / secular rock & rap CD's after becoming a Christian. He said he didn't want to be fed by that garbage anymore. I tried following his lead on this - and actually threw a few CD's in the trash... but I pulled them out before taking them to the dumpster. :) I'm starting to think though that I have a few CD's that need to get to that dumpster here sooner rather than later... I don't listen to them. **Q: But why keep them around at all? Hope you don't mind this long tangent. Does anyone else have any music / God experiences that you would be up for sharing with us all?**

5/19 - I love Psalm 82 verses 3 & 4 - *"Give fair judgment to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people."* I realize these verses were spoken to Israel's judges. But, I think they can speak to you and I today as well. Particularly, "rescue the poor and helpless" stands out to me today. What are some ways you are rescuing the poor and helpless in your life today? How are you delivering them from the grasp of evil people? This actually reminds me of a couple of friends of mine who are so passionate about rescuing young girls from the sex slave industry in some Asian countries - I think Thailand is where they do most of their work. Clearly, young girls that have to sell their bodies in this type of situation are under the grasp of evil people. And I am so humbled by my friends' work toward delivering girls from this grasp. My friends are only able to do this really well because of their relationship with Jesus. Jesus is the true rescuer - first of my friends and now through my friends to these young girls. But, wow, it makes me wonder if I am truly allowing Jesus to rescue the poor and helpless through me? **Q: How about you? How are you allowing Jesus to rescue the poor through you?**

5/20 – **Q: Ever feel like the Psalmist in Psalm 83 verse 1? - "O God, don't sit idly by, silent and inactive!"** I think the beauty of the Psalms is seeing some of our human emotions expressed so well. Considering this verse - I don't think that God is ever sitting idly by, silent or inactive. I believe God is a Living God who is always with us. But, perhaps sometimes God's perceived silence in our lives is for a purpose that we may not fully understand now, but will later. If God seems very "silent" to you now, I would encourage you to pray to God - and really listen in your prayers - don't just speak. I believe you'll soon hear Him...

5/20 - Today we begin the book of Second Chronicles! Are you ready to read about the reign of King Solomon? Let's go!
~**Second Chronicles**~

Author: Unknown

Date: Fifth century B.C.

Content: Second Chronicles contains the history of Judah that was begun in First Chronicles. It deals with the glory of Solomon's reign, with a special emphasis being placed upon the glory of the temple. This emphasis is made because a priest point of view pervades the book. The remaining kings of Judah are discussed, with a stress upon how the religious affairs of the nation were going. Hezekiah is given mention because during his reign an extended revival took place. The destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people to Babylon are described, and the book ends with the Persian king's decree to let the people return home.

Theme: Judah's history is described from a religious point of view in this book. The righteous kings are commented on and the evil kings are named so that all can see who is responsible for the rise and fall of the nation. The religious leaders and their ultimate failure to remain true to God added to the sin of Judah - until God allowed his own chosen people to plunge themselves into ruin, as an example for all time that God will not tolerate sin. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 7-8*)

5/20 - Today in 2 Chronicles chapter 1 we read about King Solomon asking for wisdom and knowledge from God. In verse 7 we read these words from God to Solomon - *"Ask for whatever you want me to give you."* In verse 10 we will read this amazing response from Solomon to God: *"Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?"* Solomon could have asked God for anything - more wealth, more power, more strength, more whatever, but he simply asked for wisdom and knowledge. Why? Because he wanted to lead God's people well and distinguish between right and wrong. Amazing. **Q: How would you or I answer this question today?** What if God came to you today and said the same thing to you from verse 5 - *"Ask for whatever you want me to give you."* **What would you ask for? Would you ask for Wisdom? Would you ask for Knowledge? If so, God offers these to you and me right now. Where?** I believe wisdom and knowledge is offered to us through study of the Bible and by living in a loving and right relationship with God. We can receive the gift of God's wisdom today! **If we would answer this question from God differently - maybe wanting more money, or power, or fame, or whatever - do you think we might forfeit gaining wisdom? So, again, what if God were to say to you right now this same statement he said to Solomon? "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."** What do you ask for?

5/21 - Wow. Big readings today in First Kings. Solomon builds the Temple of the Lord! 1 Kings 6 verse 7 tells us - *"The stones used in the construction of the Temple were prefinished at the quarry, so the entire structure was built without the sound of hammer, ax, or any other iron tool at the building site."* This shows how reverent the workers were in building the temple of the Lord. They felt it was honoring to build on the temple site without the sound of an iron tool. In 1 Kings 5 verses 13 & 14 I thought Solomon's wisdom was incredible - *"Then King Solomon enlisted 30,000 laborers from all Israel. He sent them to Lebanon in shifts, 10,000 every month, so that each man would be one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of this labor force."* He wisely cared for his workforce! **Q: What is your reaction to Solomon building the temple? Do you think we should appreciate grand building projects in our world today, like this grand building project of the temple?**

5/22 - Today we read about the building of King Solomon's Palace! Here is an interesting note in Tyndale's One Year Bible Companion on the Sea discussed in 1 Kings chapter 7 verse 23 - *"Then Hiram cast a large round tank, 15 feet across from rim to rim; it was called the Sea. It was 7 1/2 feet deep and about 45 feet in circumference."* Apparently the sea was a huge tank that could hold approximately 12,000 gallons of water. It was used by the priests for their ceremonial washings. **Q: What is your reaction to reading about Solomon's palace?**

5/22 - Today in Second Chronicles we read about the furnishings for the Temple, including the completion of the Sea in chapter 4 verses 4 & 5 - *"The Sea rested on a base of twelve bronze oxen, all facing outward. Three faced north, three faced west, three faced south, and three faced east. The walls of the Sea were about three inches thick, and its rim flared out like a cup and resembled a lily blossom. It could hold about 16,500 gallons of water."* The Sea was used by the priests for their ceremonial washings. Interestingly, the New Testament views these washing rituals as a foreshadowing of the cleansing provided to us by Jesus, as we will read later this year in Hebrews chapter 9 verses 11-14. **Q: Has Jesus cleansed you of your sins? When? How?**

5/23 - Today we read about the Ark of the Covenant being brought into the Temple! In 1 Kings 8:10-11 we read: *"As the priests came out of the inner sanctuary, a cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. The priests could not continue their work because the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple."* It is thought that the cloud of the presence of God here in the Temple was the same cloud of the presence of God that guided the Israelites by day through the desert as they left Egypt for the Promised Land. Solomon's prayer in today's readings is awesome! Verses 12 & 13 at the start of the prayer are interesting to contrast with a later verse: *"Then Solomon prayed, "O LORD, you have said that you would live in thick darkness. But I have built a glorious Temple for you, where you can live forever!"* These verses seem quite bold and confident... and maybe even seem to our modern ears that Solomon is trying to put God "in a box." But, then I was very pleased to read Solomon say this in verse 27 - *"But will God really live on earth? Why, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this Temple I have built!"* Clearly, Solomon gets it that God is bigger than the Temple and that God does not "need" the Temple for a home. But, as we read about the cloud of God's presence coming into the Temple, it is apparent that God is certainly pleased with the Temple. I think God was pleased that the Israelites were

building a Temple to honor God and his name & fame. It was a Temple for God. And though God did not "need" it, I think he appreciated it. I think God appreciated "King" Solomon and the Israelites praying to and honoring God as the true King of Israel. **Q: What was your reaction to reading about the Ark being brought into the Temple and then Solomon's prayer? Have you ever prayed a pray like Solomon prayed that day? In what way is your body today a temple?**

5/24 - Today we read about Solomon's dedication of the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem! I'd like to show an exterior and interior image below of what's now often referred to as "Solomon's Temple." Even though it was clearly the Temple of the Lord, it's referred to as Solomon's Temple based on Solomon building it - and we'll read about some more Temple's later on in our readings in the One Year Bible this year, including Ezekiel's Temple, which is fascinating! Let me also highly encourage you to take a few moments to check out all of the cool images of the interior and exterior of Solomon's Temple [at this link](#). (make sure you scroll down quite a bit on this link to see all the images) I think this link will help you visualize the Temple much better! Also, at the [home page](#) of that link above, you can read up on the Temple Mount area of Jerusalem today where Solomon's Temple was believed to have been located, along with the Second Temple. And now where the Dome of the Rock mosque is located. Very interesting stuff on that web page! And tons of links. Can't say I agree with it all... but it's a website worth exploring. **Q: Have you ever been to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem? What stood out to you? If not, do you want to visit it?**

5/25 - Well, we can gather from today's First Kings readings that Solomon was clearly wise and rich! I have to confess... when I was reading today's readings I briefly thought to myself, "well, it was just inherited wealth from his father David..." :) How wrong was this thinking! Yes, David was certainly wealthy and Solomon inherited the throne if you will. But Solomon had to administer the Kingdom, including the building of the Temple and the Palace, which were no small tasks! He was able to do this successfully I think because he asked God for wisdom - rather than riches or wealth - earlier in First Kings. Solomon sought God first and asked for wisdom, and I do think God blessed him with riches too. You'll recall that Jesus referred to "Solomon's splendor" in the Sermon on the Mount when he talked about the lilies of the field and his teachings on not worrying, from Matthew 6:29: *"Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these."* **Q: What was your reaction today to reading about "Solomon's splendor" in First Kings? Did you view this wealth of Solomon's as a blessing from God or perhaps as excess? What's your reaction to seeing this level of wealth of Solomon's versus Jesus' lack of wealth while walking the earth? What about in today's world - is there such a thing as too much wealth? Should we seek material wealth for our lives? Or should we be seeking other things? Should we seek to be like Solomon? Or like Jesus? Or perhaps like both?**

5/25 - These are very interesting readings today. The thing that I'm thinking about now, after reading about Solomon's wealth and wisdom - and also thinking back to David's warrior skills - is that it is not surprising to me that many people in Jesus' day were expecting a differing kind of Messiah. When Jesus came on the scene, people were reading these sacred texts of King David and King Solomon. They were reading about how wise and wealthy and what great warriors these Kings were. And these Kings were shown great favor by God. So - surely the coming Messiah would be all of this and more! Right?? Well... no. As we know Jesus was not a Warrior-Messiah. He did not come to set free the Jews from the Roman rule by the sword. Jesus did not come into the world with wealth - he came into the world in a stable with animals nearby. Now - in terms of wisdom, yes, obviously Jesus was wiser than David or Solomon of course. But in terms of being wealthy and being a warrior - Jesus was neither - on this earth. However - in the heavenly realm Jesus is obviously wealthy beyond all comprehension. And he is a warrior for you and for me. He is battling for the souls of men and women. He leads a legion of angels against a legion of darkness. Jesus is not meek. Nor is he eternally poor. But... what an interesting contrast of how Jesus was not a warrior nor wealthy during his time here on earth - and he warned us against both of these trappings. What to make of all of this? I'm not sure. I'm full-on going stream of consciousness writing here. :) I think the take-away for me is this - Solomon rightly sought after wisdom above all else. (He wrote many of the Proverbs!) And Jesus was of course wise beyond all measure. So, I think for you and I the key to life is first and foremost to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior - this is the wisest decision we will ever make. And after we have accepted Jesus, then we need to actually follow him. Follow his teachings. Follow his wisdom. And as we follow Jesus, we really should not be concerned about being wealthy or being a warrior. Perhaps these things will be part of our Walk in some regard. But they should not be the focus. Jesus should be the focus. Godly wisdom should be the focus. **Q: What is the focus in your life? Is it Jesus? Is it godly wisdom? Are you following Jesus with all that you are? Are taking up your cross daily? Are you following Jesus all the way up that hill?**

5/25 - Today in Second Chronicles chapter 8 we learn that Solomon married the Egyptian Pharaoh's daughter, which was not pleasing to God and was contrary to God's Law of not marrying foreigners (in large part because they worshiped foreign gods) as you'll recall from [Deuteronomy 7:3-4](#). The Chronicler overall paints a very rosy portrait of both David and

Solomon, ignoring many aspects of their sins that we read about in Samuel and Kings. But, it's interesting the Chronicler mentioned this marriage. Solomon married likely for a military alliance with Egypt. Solomon's marrying of foreign wives ultimately led to his turning his heart away from God, as we read in [1 Kings 11:1-11](#). Interestingly, we see that Solomon won't allow his Egyptian wife to live in David's palace in verse 11: "*Solomon moved his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, from the City of David to the new palace he had built for her. He said, "My wife must not live in King David's palace, for the Ark of the LORD has been there, and it is holy ground."*" And so he builds her a brand new palace! **Q: Think Solomon knew something was amiss with this situation before God if he wouldn't let his Egyptian wife live in David's palace? What about us in our lives today - when we sin, do we try to "cover it up" or "build a pretty palace" to maybe try to distract ourselves or God from our sin? Should we instead just simply confess our sin to God and repent?**

5/26 - As we read 1 Kings 4 verses 29, 32 & 33 I am reminded that some say Solomon was the last person on earth (well besides Jesus of course) who knew everything there was to know about any and all subject's of the day - "*God gave Solomon great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge too vast to be measured. He composed some 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. He could speak with authority about all kinds of plants, from the great cedar of Lebanon to the tiny hyssop that grows from cracks in a wall. He could also speak about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish.*" Solomon was obviously one wise person. **Q: What do you think the wisest thing about Solomon was?** I think it was this - he was in relationship with God. That was the #1 wisest decision Solomon ever made. And it's the #1 wisest decision you or I could ever make - to be in relationship with God through his son Jesus. From this wise decision flows all other wisdom in our lives. But this decision is of primary importance... **Are you as wise as Solomon in this regard? Does your heart belong to God?**

5/26 - I'll admit. I pay attention every single time the Bible talks about serving the poor. And it is a lot. And I think it is for a reason. Here it is again in Psalm 72 verses 12 & 13, speaking about Israel's king - "*He will rescue the poor when they cry to him; he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them. He feels pity for the weak and the needy, and he will rescue them.*" **Q: What about us today? Does this Psalm speak to us? Do we rescue the poor when they cry to us? (do we even listen for their cry?) Do we help the oppressed and those who have no one to defend them? Do we feel pity for the weak and needy? Do we rescue them? Do I? Do you?**

5/26 - Psalm 127 verse 1 I think I heard for the first time verbally a couple of years ago on a Habitat for Humanity job site. Each morning the volunteers would take turns leading devotions before the day's build. One morning a volunteer read Psalm 127 verse 1 to all of us, which was absolutely fitting for working on a Habitat house - "*Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is useless. Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good.*" Great stuff and I believe this verse is not only applicable to working on Habitat houses, but is very applicable in our own lives as well. **Q: Are there things we are building or creating in our life that might be outside of God's will for our life? Are we building these things on our own? If so, should we be building these things? Will we take to prayer all that we build in our lives and seek God's guidance and blessing upon our work? Is God building our life or are we attempting to build with our own power? Is God protecting our life or are we attempting to protect ourselves with our own power?**

5/26 - Speaking of work, I also love verse 2 in this Psalm: "*It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.*" Great verse to combat our workaholic tendencies, no? :) **Q: Do you overwork yourself these days? What for? Is this pleasing to God? Are you taking a Sabbath day of rest once a week to simply be in relationship with God? To enjoy God's rest?**

5/27 -Today we begin the book of Proverbs!

Author: Principally Solomon; also many others **Date:** Tenth century B.C. and later

Content: The book of Proverbs contains practical instructions for successful living, given by God to supplement the teaching of the prophets, which was to call men to repentance, and the work of the priests, which was to direct the worship of the people. The book of Proverbs teaches that there is a divine wisdom given to man by God, but there is also a divinely given human wisdom, or common sense, and both must play a part in daily life. Practical sayings from many centuries are collected together in this book; it deals with such diverse matters as the discipline of children, social justice, foolish talk, and money. It ends significantly with a description of a truly good wife.

Theme: The theme of Proverbs is stated in 1:7 – The first step to wisdom is to trust and revere the Lord. This is to say that only when a man trusts in God will he be truly wise. Human wisdom is fine and necessary but no matter how skilled we might be, without humility in the presence of God and a willingness to learn from him, we will inevitably go astray. The

book also teaches the sanctity of human life. Everything that pertains to successful living is a concern to God and he has made provision for it. *(Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 10-11)*

Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M., with <http://www.bible.org> has a wonderful Introduction to Proverbs found on this link - <http://www.bible.org/seriespage/introduction-proverbs> I'll quote from Bob's article's 8 points on how we can benefit from a study of the Proverbs – but you'll need to go to the link above for further details on each of these following points:

1. Proverbs is a book that is concerned with the development of godly character.
2. Proverbs does away with the distinction between the sacred and the secular.
3. Proverbs offers to teach us to be wise.
4. Proverbs teaches us that what is good is also what is right.
5. Proverbs helps us to look at life realistically.
6. Proverbs is as concerned with the process of right thinking as with the product of it.
7. The method of teaching employed in Proverbs is most like the instructional method of Jesus.
8. Proverbs is a key book for obtaining divine guidance.

5/27 - Today we read in Proverbs chapter 1 verses 2 through 4 a great overview of why we should read and study the Proverbs: *"The purpose of these proverbs is to teach people wisdom and discipline, and to help them understand wise sayings. Through these proverbs, people will receive instruction in discipline, good conduct, and doing what is right, just, and fair. These proverbs will make the simpleminded clever. They will give knowledge and purpose to young people."* **Q: Do you want wisdom? Do you want discipline in your life? Do you want to do what is right, just and fair? Do you want purpose for your life? Do you believe this journey through the Bible this year will move you forward in these areas? Will you cling to the wisdom of the Proverbs this year?**

5/27 - Proverbs chapter 1 verse 7 is basically the mission statement for the entire book of Proverbs! *"Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline."* **Q: What does this proverb say to you? Do you believe we should fear God?** Bible commentaries define this fear of God as "a loving reverence for God that includes submission to his Lordship and to the commands of his words." **Do you believe that fear of God is the beginning of knowledge in our lives? Will you embrace wisdom and discipline in your life? Will you make wisdom and discipline top priorities in your life in this new year?**

5/27 - Proverbs chapter 1 verses 17 and 18 teach us this today: *"When a bird sees a trap being set, it stays away. But not these people! They set an ambush for themselves; they booby-trap their own lives!"* I think these verses basically say that birds are smarter than those who conspire to do harm to others - Are you with me on this thought?? :)

5/27 - Proverbs 1:23 is beautiful to think about: *"Come here and listen to me! I'll pour out the spirit of wisdom upon you and make you wise."* **Q: How do you plan to grow in a spirit of wisdom this year? Do you believe studying the Bible can give you the spirit of wisdom?**

5/27 - Our readings in Proverbs 1:24-28 today is a great reminder to not ignore an opportunity to gain wisdom when the opportunity comes, or we may regret it later. **Q: Is wisdom knocking on your door today? Will you let Wisdom enter in?**

5/27 - Proverbs 1 verse 31 is a strong teaching to consider: *"That is why they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way. They must experience the full terror of the path they have chosen."* I guess what jumped out at me is the simple word "path." Such a simple word... but a profound one. Every single day there seem to be various paths in front of us. Various options. Choices we can make. Paths we can take. Paths that can lead to light and life. Paths that can lead to full terror. **Q: What type of path are you on now? Are you on the right path? Who is leading you down this path? Is it God?** I'll close with one of my favorite Proverbs, that I have memorized and repeat to myself often, which also discusses paths - Proverbs 3:5-6: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."* Let us pray for straight paths today!

5/27 - Proverbs 2 verse 2 today is a fantastic teaching: *"Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding."* There is so much noise and static and distractions in our modern world today that I think it is often hard for us to "tune our ears to wisdom & understanding." With our 24 X 7 society, we can go 100mph and just kind of feel like we're doing fine... **but are we really doing fine when we are going that fast and moving all the time? Can you find ways in your life to slow down and "tune in" to God?** I think reading the Bible each day is one amazingly great way to do this! **What are some areas of your life that you can "tune out" this new year so that you can spend more time "tuning in" to**

God and His wisdom?

5/27 - Proverbs chapter 2 verse 10 is amazing: *"For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy."* I like that thought that wisdom will enter your heart and then knowledge will fill you with joy! What a great proverb! **Q: Do you believe that knowledge can fill you with joy? What type of knowledge? What type of wisdom should enter your heart? Today - are you filled with joy?**

5/28- Today we read in Proverbs chapter 5 verse 6: *"For she does not care about the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn't even realize where it leads."* For some reason this year, as we've been going through the One Year Bible, the idea of "paths" keeps jumping out at me over and over again. Every time we read about paths now in the Bible, it stands out to me. And here it does again. The idea of paths in the Bible seems to clearly indicate that there are good paths - straight paths - paths through the narrow gate - paths of life - that we can choose to take. Or, unfortunately, there are also crooked trails and we don't realize where they lead. Or we can take our eyes off the path. Or we can stumble on the path. How about for you? **Q: How do you keep on a straight path? How do you keep your eyes straight ahead on the path and focused on the prize? Have you ever veered off onto a crooked trail when taking your eyes off of God?**

5/28 - Proverbs chapter 5 verses 12-14 are some sad verses to imagine saying in our lives: *"How I hated discipline! If only I had not demanded my own way! Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers? Why didn't I pay attention to those who gave me instruction? I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and now I must face public disgrace."* **Q: Are there times in your life where you loved or hated discipline? Have you ever demand your own way? How are you listening to your teachers today? Who are your teachers today? Who is disciplining you?**

5/28 - Proverbs 5 verses 16 & 17 are powerful true Sex Education verses: *"Why spill the water of your springs in public, having sex with just anyone? You should reserve it for yourselves. Don't share it with strangers."* I like this a lot. Is this something we can teach young adults today? Is this something we can teach ourselves? Don't have sex with just anyone - it is degrading to you. Don't share something so holy as sex with just anyone. Save this holy bond for your spouse. I once heard a powerful sermon by John Ortberg at Willow Creek Community Church outside of Chicago. And John was preaching on "Don't Quench the Spirit". And it was a powerful sermon on how we are so blessed with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives as followers of Jesus. And yet, we can quench, temporarily, the power of the Spirit in our life when we sin. It is basically like turning our back on God when we sin. And then we need to turn our faces forward again toward God in repentance. And while we are sinning and turning our back on God, we have effectively quenched the Spirit. And as I heard this sermon, I realized that sexual sin is one sure-fire quick way to quench the spirit. We degrade ourselves through sexual sin and I believe we quench the spirit. I don't know if this line of thinking will help you at all if you are struggling with sexual sin. But, it helps me. It helps me to realize that the quick little temporary highs we think we might get off sexual sin are so not worth it. **Q: What is worth quenching the Spirit in our life? Is sexual sin? Nope... you know it's not. Living fully in communion with God and with the Holy Spirit is one of the most amazing things we can possibly experience this side of heaven. If you struggle with sexual sin, wil you please, please, no longer quench the Spirit for the cheap lies sexual sins sells? Does anyone have any resources, books, websites, that you can recommend to folks that are struggling with sexual temptation or sin? Have you seen people in your life be enslaved to sexual sin? Hopefully you have also seen people also be freed from that enslavement through Jesus? Do you think that sexual sin - lust, pornography, adultery, etc. - is a rampant issue in our society today? Do you think it's worse now than the past? Or do you think sexual sin has always been an issue in the past and will be until Jesus returns again?**

5/28 - Proverbs chapter 5 verses 22 & 23 are just amazing wisdom for each of us of why we should FLEE from sin... don't entertain it at all! *"An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his incredible folly."* Please know that if for some reason you are caught in the ropes of sin, please know that Jesus can truly set you free. Please pray for this freedom in Christ. Only in Christ are we truly set free! Please seek this freedom in Christ with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Don't die for lack of self-control. Don't be lost because of the folly of sin. **Q: What is a time in your life that you literally fled from sin?**

5/28 - Proverbs chapter 6 verses 1 through 5 were intriguing to me. I guess my first thought was that getting our own selves in debt is bad enough - but then to be a guarantor for our friends debt? Well, these verses certainly warn against doing this. Let us avoid debt! **Q: Does anyone have debt-relief resources, websites or books you could share with everyone? I've heard Financial Peace University is good and I hear there are some other good Christian financial**

management / debt relief books & seminars out there. It's amazing how wise it is to get out of debt and to save \$. I've often heard that it is wise to give 10% of your income and save 10% of your income with each check that comes in. What's your reaction to this type of formula?

5/28 - Proverbs chapter 7 verse 25 reminds us once again of the importance of guarding our hearts, the very wellspring of our lives: *"Don't let your hearts stray away..."* **Q: Is there anything in your life that is causing your heart to stray away from God's Truth? Will you not allow you heart to go down that dangerous path? Will you return your heart's allegiance wholly to your Maker and Provider? Will you allow your heart to be chained to God alone, and not to any temptations or sins?**

5/29 - I love the beginning of Proverbs chapter 8 with the imagery of Wisdom calling out to all humankind! Do you hear the call of wisdom in your life today?? Today we read in Proverbs chapter 8 verses 10 & 11: *"Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge over pure gold. For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can be compared with it."* **Q: How are you seeking God's instruction in your life above all else? Do you agree with this Proverb that wisdom is far more valuable than riches? Is reading the Bible each day in 2010 adding to your wisdom? Are you seeking to do more than just read the Bible this year? How are you diving into further study of the Bible? How are you allowing your study of the Bible to transform you? How are you allowing the Bible to change how you think, act, and live? How are you allowing the Bible to give you godly wisdom?**

5/29 - Proverbs 8 verse 13 is a powerful look at what Wisdom hates! *"That is why I hate pride, arrogance, corruption, and perverted speech."* **Q: When you look at your own life - do you hate pride, arrogance, corruption and perverted speech in your own behavior?**

5/29 - Proverbs chapter 8 verse 36 today tells us - *"But those who miss me have injured themselves. All who hate me love death."* This is a powerful reminder of why we should seek and love God's wisdom all of our lives. Let us not injure ourselves! Let us not hate wisdom. Let us not love death. **Q: How do you make sure that you don't miss God in your life?**

5/29 - Proverbs chapter 9 verses 5 & 6 are a reminder that not only does Temptation call us (as we've read earlier in Proverbs this year), but Wisdom calls out to us as well! *"Come, eat my food, and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your foolish ways behind, and begin to live; learn how to be wise."* **Q: Which voice are you listening to these days? Whose invitation are you accepting? Temptation's? Or Wisdom's? Whose call will you answer? I love all of our Proverbs readings about wisdom these days. And obviously I think most of us would agree that we are finding wisdom in the Bible. My question for today is this - can we find wisdom outside of the Bible? For example, I read Jim Collins famous business book "Good to Great" a few years ago, and I believe I found some business wisdom in this book. I listen to Dennis Prager's radio show and think that I gain some wisdom from his comments on occasion. I read the Wall Street Journal and think that gives me some wisdom periodically. I think the difference though between these 3 modern day sources and the Bible is that Good to Great, Dennis Prager, and the Wall Street journal are not 100% wisdom 100% of the time. Whereas the Bible I believe is 100% wisdom 100% of the time. How about you? Do you think you get wisdom in places outside of the Bible today? Where are those places?**

5/29 - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 27 teaches us - *"Fear of the LORD lengthens one's life, but the years of the wicked are cut short."* **Q: Do you agree that the fear of the Lord lengthens your life? Why or why not? How is the fear of the Lord is a good thing?**

5/29 - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 29 teaches us today: *"The way of the LORD is a refuge for the righteous."* This is a great teaching that those who trust in God are covered with a hedge of protection. Thank God for this protection! I know I need it. And I believe that God oftentimes protects us in ways that we do not even consciously realize... As we pray in the Lord's prayer - *"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* Amen. **Q: How is God your refuge?**

5/29 - Proverbs chapter 10 verses 31 & 32 are great reminders of how very important the words that come out of our mouths are! They reflect the condition of our hearts... **Q: What are the types of words that are coming out of your mouth these days? Are they helpful to others? Do they give wise advice?**

5/30 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 2 is so true and is something I personally need to be reminded of constantly - *"Pride*

leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom." Let us pray for humility... **Q: Have you ever struggled with pride issues? How did you overcome those issues? Do you agree with the Proverb today that pride can lead to disgrace? Do you think it's true that wisdom comes with humility? Do you ever pray to God to keep you humble? Do you think this might be a good prayer to pray on occasion? Or maybe even very often?**

5/30 - wow... this is a powerful Proverb in chapter 11 verse 4 today - *"Riches won't help on the day of judgment, but right living is a safeguard against death."* **Q: Based on our Proverb today, what are you focusing your life on? Is right living one of your focuses? Think it should be? (right living through your faith in Jesus of course - not "trying" or "working" to live right on your own will or power...)**

5/30 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 5 stands out at me today, mostly because I've caught myself telling a couple of "white lies" recently.... and I so regret that I did so! There was no value in them.... I want honesty and not lies to come out of my mouth! *"The godly are directed by their honesty."* **Q: how about you? Are you directed by honesty? Do you place honestly as a major guiding principle in your life? Do you ever catch yourself telling white lies? Do you confess these to God and to others? Do you think we should we confess white lies? Why or why not?**

5/30 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 7 today teaches us: *"When the wicked die, their hopes die with them, for they rely on their own feeble strength."* This is a great reminder of why we should not only not carry our burdens on our own, but we should also not rely on our own strength. Our strength is fleeting... **Q: Will you instead rely on the Eternal Strength that will never fail you? Have you seen in your life how your own strength can fail you? Have you ever been strengthened by the Holy Spirit? How are you able to discern when you are doing things from your own strength compared to when you are being strengthened by the Holy Spirit? How do you surrender your own strength and instead rely on God's strength?**

5/30 - Proverbs Chapter 11 verse 8 today teaches us: *"The godly are rescued from trouble, and it falls on the wicked instead."* This is a great reminder that God rescues those who trust in Him! **Q: Has God ever rescued you? More than once? Are you willing to share with us in the Comments section below a time that without a doubt God rescued you?**

5/30 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 11 today teaches us: *"Upright citizens bless a city and make it prosper."* This is a great reminder to each of us to be good citizens and to bless our cities! **Q: How are you striving to be an upright citizen blessing your city and helping to make it prosper? Do you see spiritual issues in your city today? How are you helping to right those spiritual wrongs in your city? Do you pray for your city regularly? Do you think you should? Will you join me in praying for our cities?**

5/30 - Proverbs chapter 11 verses 12 & 13 today talk about how foolish it is to belittle a neighbor or gossip about others: "It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor; a sensible person keeps quiet. A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence." I have to admit - these verses are convicting to me today - as I've been doing this recently. It makes me sad to realize that I have, but I have. I pray that instead of me thinking I am so righteous that I can talk behind someone's back that I will instead remain silent. I pray for silence upon my tongue when it comes to gossip or belittling others... **Q: Have you ever struggled with gossip? How did you overcome this temptation to gossip?**

5/30 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 14 teaches us today: *"Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers."* This is a great teaching that it is wise to seek the counsel of others! Whether it is a nation or in our own lives, this is wise advice. We can't figure it all out on our own. We need many others in our lives to help counsel us along The Way. We certainly need the Bible to help counsel us along The Way... **Q: Do you have advisers in your life today? Are there times that you try to figure things out just on your own rather than consulting advisers? Which way works better? Has the counsel of advisers in your life ever changed how you might have approached a situation on your own? If you don't have advisers in your life, do you think you should? Where do you think you can find wise advisers these days? In church? In a small group? In a Bible study?**

5/30 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 15 is saying one thing - which I get - but for some reason today, something else is being said to my heart. Here's the verse: *"Guaranteeing a loan for a stranger is dangerous; it is better to refuse than to suffer later."* It's that last half of this verse that is jumping out at me - and in a way unrelated to loan guarantees. :) Here's the tangent this verse brought to mind for me today. I am someone who does not do a very good job of "refusing" much

of anything. I say yes to way too much and take on way too much. And part of me really enjoys this - I feel wanted, loved, invited, needed, busy, etc. But then... I suffer later. I then feel overbooked, stretched thin, and just plain tired and grouchy. So, for me, the second half of this verse tonight is a good verse on boundaries - it's better to refuse than suffer later.... I like that.... I need that! **Q: How are you with setting boundaries? Do you know when to say No and when to say Yes? What are some disciplines you practice to make sure you set appropriate boundaries? Has anyone read the "[Boundaries](#)" book by Henry Cloud?** I hear it is fantastic from friends of mine that have read it! In fact, I heard it's great for small groups too. May be just what the doctor ordered for me...

5/30 - Today Proverbs chapter 11 verse 18 teaches us: *"Those who sow righteousness reap a sure reward."* **Q: How are you sowing righteousness in your life? Do you love others at the same level you love yourself? Are you working diligently for your employer? Are you serving the poor? Do you believe that the farming analogy of sowing and reaping in this Proverb is true? And like any good farming analogy, will you patiently sow and patiently await the time of reaping of your sure reward?**

5/31 - Today in Proverbs chapter 14 verse 2 we read – *"He whose walk is upright fears the LORD."* What does it mean to you to fear the Lord? Is it possible that for us to have some fear of the Lord is healthy? Why would fear of the Lord be healthy? Don't get me wrong – I'm not suggesting we live our lives in abject fear of God all of the time. But - this Proverb is in the Bible - and it says that someone whose walk is upright fears the Lord. So, I do humbly suggest that there is a healthy fear of God that each of us should recognize. (along with a raging LOVE of God as well of course) **Q: Based on our Proverb today, do you fear God at all? Do you think that you should have any fear God? Why or why not?**

5/31 - I once heard a pastor say a few words about Proverbs chapter 14 verse 4: *"An empty stable stays clean, but no income comes from an empty stable."* Basically this pastor was talking about how things were a little bit hectic around the church - due to church growth and related growing pains. And he brought up this verse, with the point being that it is a blessing that the church is not "clean" - in the spic & span sense - because this means a lot of things are happening. There is "income". There are people getting to know God and Jesus. And yes, there are some messes. But it's better than a spic & span clean stable / church where nothing is happen. I like that analogy. I also once heard this same pastor refer to church as a "majestic mess." I like that too! :) Church is not a spic & span clean place all the time. There are messes. There are humans on staff with the church - and humans coming to the church. We are not spic & span clean people all the time. And that's okay. Church is indeed a majestic mess, in the best sense of the word! Speaking of empty clean stables - let us not forget that our Lord Himself came to this world in a full & messy stable! **Q: Do you think it is okay for church to be a bit "messy" at times? How much mess is too much? Are you okay if the various "stables" in your life are not empty and clean all of the time? Do you see how a full & messy "stable" can demonstrate that "income" is being generated? Why do you suppose that Jesus came to this world in a full & messy stable?**

5/31 - Proverbs chapter 14 verse 8 is great wisdom - *"The wise look ahead to see what is coming, but fools deceive themselves."* Jesus taught that we should live our lives not worrying about tomorrow. However - this Proverb does show there is wisdom in looking ahead to see what is coming. Don't worry about it - but pay attention to it! For example, we shouldn't deceive ourselves into thinking that we can be reckless with our health today - we should know what this will do to us tomorrow. We should see what is coming. **Q: How do you think we should balance wisely looking ahead to see what is coming versus not worrying about tomorrow? Should we be looking toward the future on occasion? Or just try to stay focused on today?**

5/31 - Wow. Proverbs 14 verse 9 I don't think I've ever really noticed before - *"Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation."* How true is this? Wow... Guilt is real. Valid. And yes perhaps we can overdo it... but it's real and it's purpose is to call us to reconciliation with God. Great Proverb here... Let us not carry guilt around, but let us give our guilt over to Jesus! **Q: How do you acknowledge guilt? When you are guilty do you seek reconciliation with God?**

5/31 - How's this for a sobering Proverb in verse 12 today - *"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death."* Things that make you go hmmm.... **Q: think this Proverb is true? I do. I know it is. And I think it is a Proverb that should make each of us stop and think about the path we are on now. Is it the path God wants us to be on? Or is it perhaps a path that looks attractive to the world (remember the Fallen world info at the beginning of this post...)? We all have paths to choose in our life. Many times over we will have to choose which path to walk upon. Are you walking upon God's path for you toward light and life?**

5/31 - Proverbs chapter 14 verse 13 teaches us today: *"Laughter can conceal a heavy heart, but when the laughter ends, the grief remains."* This is an interesting look at laughter! Some say laughter is the best medicine... and oftentimes I agree. But, this Proverb tells us that laughter may not always heal a heavy heart... **Q: Perhaps something more than laughter is needed when we have a heavy heart? Perhaps - God is needed? Have you ever been healed of a heavy heart? How?**

Group discussions:

- Introductions.
- What were some of your favorite verses or passages from the readings?
- What are some questions that were generated for you based on the readings?
- What is something new you learned about God or the Bible from the readings?
- How did God speak to you through the readings?
- What is something you want to change or grow in your life based on the readings?
- **Discuss the bold Questions in the Study Notes**
- Any prayer requests for the group?

Each group is encouraged to close in prayer.

Daily questions for this next month's readings you may want to journal or pray through and discuss with your group:

- My favorite verses or passages:
- What I learned from the readings:
- My questions for further study:
- How God spoke to me through the Word:
- Something I want to change or grow in my life based on the Word:
- My prayer points based on the Word:

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