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

OLD TESTAMENT (daily reading schedule at: www.OneYearBibleBlog.com)

10/1 - Isaiah chapter 64 verses 5 through 7 stood out to me as a stark reminder of why Jesus came into our world as our Savior eight centuries after this was written by Isaiah - and why we still need Jesus today as our Savior... - *"But we are not godly. We are constant sinners, so your anger is heavy on us. How can people like us be saved? We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away. Yet no one calls on your name or pleads with you for mercy. Therefore, you have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins."* **Do these verses remind you of your need for Jesus? Has Jesus saved you from your constant sinning? Have you been saved from the "infection" of sin?** This is great wording in these verses by Isaiah - we are all "infected" with sin... praise God that Jesus saves us from this infection!

10/2 - Today we finish up the book of the prophet Isaiah! What a great read this book has been for me this year! I hope it has been a blessing for you as well. Tomorrow we begin the book of the prophet Jeremiah! We read powerful words from God in Isaiah chapter 66 verses 2 & 3 today: *"I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word. But those who choose their own ways, delighting in their sins, are cursed. Their offerings will not be accepted."* **Q: Have you ever literally trembled at God's Word, the Bible?** I am not 100% sure if I have. I hope so. I have certainly read portions of God's Word where I have felt very convicted. Where I have realized I must change my ways. So, I suppose in this regard I have trembled at God's Word. **Do you have a humble and contrite heart?** Again, I hope I do. I know I do sometimes... **But do we have a humble and contrite heart all of the time?** I pray that we learn to. Let us not choose our own ways. Let us not delight in our sins. Let us instead tremble at God's Word.

10/3 - Today we begin the book of the prophet Jeremiah!

~ **Jeremiah** ~

Author: Jeremiah

Date: Sixth century B.C.

Content: Jeremiah's life covered the last forty years of Judah's existence. The burden of his message was for God's people to accept the judgment of God so that a new beginning could be made. He lived through the invasions by the Babylonian armies, the deportations of his people by the enemy, the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the Temple of God. He warned the people concerning these events, pleading with them to turn from their sins, but to no avail. He received only scorn and persecution. Jeremiah's life is described in some detail, thus making him the best known of the Old Testament prophets.

Theme: In the crisis days during which Jeremiah lived, he had but one message for the people: Repent and turn to God. All false hopes must be abandoned and God must be given his rightful place in the nation. Nothing can save the people – neither their wealth, their armies, their diplomats, nor even their religion – only God can save. The destruction of Jerusalem stands as a memorial for all time that when a nation rejects God, the inevitable result will be ruin. Jeremiah also has a message of hope. Although Judah had abandoned God, God had not abandoned them and would once again show himself mightily on their behalf. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 13*)

10/3 - Today in Jeremiah chapter 2 verse 26 we read this sad statement - *"Like a thief, Israel feels shame only when she gets caught. Kings, officials, priests, and prophets--all are alike in this."* **Q: How about us in our lives today? Do we only feel shame when we get caught? Do we realize that God knows exactly what we are doing even if we think we might be doing something in "secret"? Do you realize there are absolutely no secrets with God?**

10/4 - We read some harsh words today from God to Israel in Jeremiah chapters 2 & 3 - calling the nation a prostitute and an adulteress. These are not words a person wants to hear from God - much less an entire nation hearing these words! Jeremiah wrote this book during the last 40 years of Judah's existence, which is not surprising to consider when we read this in chapter 3 verses 8 through 10 - *"But now Judah, too, has left me and given herself to prostitution. Israel treated it all so lightly--she thought nothing of committing adultery by worshiping idols made of wood and stone. So now the land has been greatly defiled. But in spite of all this, her faithless sister Judah has never sincerely returned to me. She has only*

pretended to be sorry," says the LORD." Again, not words you want to hear from God. **Q: Can you imagine a much worse insult from God? A prostitute? An adulteress? As harsh as these words are - I almost hesitate to ask this - But I think I should - Today, are we ourselves ever a "prostitute" or an "adulteress" to God? Do we give ourselves over to sins and lusts and false loves that break God's heart because of his love for us?** Well, when we act in such a bad way, we are fortunate that God says things like he did in verse 1 of chapter 3 of Jeremiah today - *"But you have prostituted yourself with many lovers, says the LORD. Yet I am still calling you to come back to me."* Even though we may sin gravely against God, he still calls us to come back to Him! Through Jesus today we can come back to Him! **Q: Do you need to come back to Him in any way in your life? Will you? Will you leave behind any and all "adulteress" or "prostitute" behaviors, and return to Him simply as the child of God that you were always made to be?**

10/5 - Today in Jeremiah chapter 5 verses 14 through 17 we read God's words to Israel about the coming of the armies of Babylon! Per Tyndale's One Year Bible Companion today - "Babylon was indeed an ancient nation. The old Babylonian empire had lasted from about 1900 B.C. to 1550 B.C., and earlier kingdoms had been on her soil as early as 3000 B.C. Babylon in Jeremiah's day would shortly rebel against Assyrian domination, form its own army, conquer Assyria, and become the next dominant world power." It is very interesting to see the rise of Babylon in history and how God foretold Israel that Babylon was coming. God gave Israel so many chances to repent, but Israel wouldn't. Jeremiah in chapter 6 verses 10 & 11 today tells us - *"To whom can I give warning? Who will listen when I speak? Their ears are closed, and they cannot hear. They scorn the word of the LORD. They don't want to listen at all. So now I am filled with the LORD's fury. Yes, I am weary of holding it in!"* **Q: What about us today - do we listen when God speaks?**

10/6 - Today in Jeremiah chapter 6 verse 16 we read - *"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."* I love these verses! It reminds me that on a daily basis each of us is standing at a crossroads. A crossroads of where the world would have us go and where God would have us go. Too often I am afraid we take the worldly path and not the ancient path. *"Ask where the good way is"* - **Q: Do you do this in your life? How often? I think we can best do this through prayer. "Ask, and you shall receive" we have learned from Jesus. Do we ask Jesus in prayer where the good way is? Then, do we walk in it? And the reward for walking in it is - "you will find rest for your souls."** I like this a lot! **Who doesn't want rest for our souls? Is your soul at rest today? Why or why not? If your soul is not at rest, is it possible that you are walking along the wrong path? The worldly path? Will you seek instead the ancient paths? The good Way? Will you find rest for your soul?**

10/7 - Jeremiah chapter 9 verses 23 & 24 definitely stood out to me today: *"This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man gloat in his wisdom, or the mighty man in his might, or the rich man in his riches. Let them boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who is just and righteous, whose love is unending, and that I delight in these things. I, the LORD, have spoken!"* **Q: Think God is serious when he follows something he says with "I, the LORD, have spoken!"? Do we ever gloat in our wisdom? Gloat in our might? Gloat in our riches? Instead, have you ever boasted that you truly know God and understand that God is just and righteous? Do you believe that God's love is unending?**

10/8 - Jeremiah chapter 10 today is a powerful look at "idols." Back in Jeremiah's days we're talking about little chiseled "gods" made out of wood & stone. But today? **Q: What are our idols? Perhaps our money, our jobs, our status, our relationships, our technology :), our lust - or perhaps even ourselves?** Jeremiah 10:10 reminds us: *"But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King."* All of our idols are not True, though we often hope they will be. Our idols will deliver us nothing. God and His Son will deliver life to the fullest!

10/8 - Jeremiah's Prayer is 10:23-24 is such a beautiful prayer :

*"I know, O Lord , that a man's life is not his own;
it is not for man to direct his steps.
Correct me, Lord , but only with justice-
not in your anger,
lest you reduce me to nothing."*

I like that Jeremiah says in this prayer, "Correct me, Lord". He knows there is correction to be made in his life - even a prophet of God knew his need of correction! This is a nice example of humility to say the least. **Q: How often do you pray to God "correct me"? Why might this be a good prayer? Do you need God to correct you? Will you allow God to direct your steps?**

10/9 - Today's readings are a bit unique in that the Jeremiah chapters relate to Psalm 79! Psalm 79 is about the post-destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar et. al. It's interesting to see pre- & post- destruction. The Jeremiah readings today may seem to you a bit tough to read. It is certainly sad to read about the coming destruction. As I read through these chapters I think about Jeremiah and how tough it must have been on him to know what was coming. In fact, Jeremiah gives a passionate prayer for the people of Jerusalem in today's readings in chapter 14 verses 7 through 9. The question that I think sometimes can come up for some as they read chapters like this in the Old Testament is: "Is this the same God we read about in the New Testament?" And I of course believe that absolutely yes this is the same God! The life of Jesus on Earth was obviously in between the time of Jeremiah and the time of you and me today. Jesus' life, ministry, suffering, death on the cross, and His resurrection saved us from our sins - and this graceful life of Jesus' had obviously not taken place in Jeremiah's time. However, I do also believe that God is very graceful throughout history including all of the Old Testament. Keep in mind that God is often saying in these chapters in Jeremiah: "come back to me", "repent", "abandon your idols" - and no one listens. God was giving chance after chance after chance of repentance... **Q: What about you in your life today? Is God saying to you in any way to "come back to me", "repent", "abandon your idols"? And are you listening? Will you repent? Will you return to the Lord?**

10/10 - We have powerful readings in Jeremiah today! I love the exchanges between God and Jeremiah. Today in Jeremiah 15:16, we read these words of Jeremiah's to God: *"When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty."* **Q: What does this verse mean to you? Can you eat God's words? Can they feed you? Spiritually? Are you being fed by God's Word through the One Year Bible daily readings? Are God's words your joy and your heart's delight? Are you making it a practice to memorize scripture? Would this practice help you in making God's words your joy and heart's delight? What does it mean to bear God's name? Is God's name written on your heart? How else are you being fed by God, in addition to his Word? Are you being fed by attending and investing in a church each week? Do you think that church, the bride of Christ, can spiritually feed you? Is there any reason to refuse this spiritual food?**

10/11 - There are a lot of great verses in Jeremiah's readings today! Jeremiah 17:5 stands out: *"Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans and turn their hearts away from the Lord."* I think oftentimes we put more trust in others than the Lord - our spouses, our pastors, our friends, our family, and even ourselves. The risk here is that people are human and are not perfect. They will eventually disappoint at some point. God is the only perfect option to place our ultimate trust in. I do think we can still "trust" others to a degree - marriage of course being a prime example of this trust in another human. But, marriage will really only ultimately work if God is the "third cord" in the marriage (see [Ecclesiastes 4:12](#)). Overall, this verse wisely cautions that our highest level of trust should be reserved for God! Who will not fail us. Ever. **Q: Who do you trust these days the most? Do you trust God above anything or anyone else? Do you trust God more than you trust yourself?**

10/11 - Jeremiah 17:7-8 has some great imagery! *"But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they go right on producing delicious fruit."* These verses remind me a lot of [Psalm 1, verses 1 through 3](#). **Q: Is God your hope and confidence? If so, do you feel like a tree planted along a riverbank with roots that reach deep into the water? How deep are your roots in God's living water these days?**

10/11 - Jeremiah 17:19-27 are some powerful verses on the Sabbath! I talk a lot with my friends about taking Sabbaths. I am really bad at it... and I know I need it. And I know my friends need it too. I'll have to remember verse 27 next time I'm having the Sabbath discussions with my friends... :) *"But if you do not listen to me and refuse to keep the Sabbath holy, and if on the Sabbath day you bring loads of merchandise through the gates of Jerusalem just as on other days, then I will set fire to these gates. The fire will spread to the palaces, and no one will be able to put out the roaring flames."* **Q: How are you doing on taking a Sabbath each week? What would your response be to a modern day Jeremiah standing at the gate and telling you to keep one day a week as a holy day unto the Lord?**

10/12 - I read Jeremiah chapter 19 today and am reminded again of how tough it can be to be a prophet! Wow. **Can you imagine receiving these words from God to deliver to a nation?** It's tough duty - getting to the point of Jeremiah being whipped and put in stocks in chapter 20, verse 2. Jeremiah does get to complaining about his lifestyle as a prophet in chapter 20:7-18. In verse 9 he bursts out with: *"And I can't stop! If I say I'll never mention the Lord or speak in his name, his word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones!"* I really like this! "His word burns in my heart like a fire!"

Q: Does God's word burn in your heart like a fire?? Should it? Could it? Will you let it?

10/13 - Other verses that stood out at me today included Jeremiah 22:15-16 - *"But a beautiful palace does not make a great king! Why did your father, Josiah, reign so long? Because he was just and right in all his dealings. That is why God blessed him. He made sure that justice and help were given to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know me?"* "Isn't that what it means to know me?" Justice and help were given to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him! **Q: Is that what it means to know God? Do you know God in this way?**

10/13 - Today in Jeremiah we read about one of the last Old Testament era kings to sit on the throne of David in Judah! This was King Jehoiachin and God makes it clear that this is one of Judah's last Davidic kings (with Zedekiah being governor/king of Judah briefly subsequently) in chapter 22 verse 30: *"This is what the Lord says: 'Let the record show that this man Jehoiachin was childless. He is a failure, for none of his children will succeed him on the throne of David to rule over Judah.'"* Immediately after reading about this king of Judah, Jeremiah 23:1-8 gives us a great Messianic foreshadowing of Jesus, the true and eternal Davidic king! Verses 5 & 6: *"For the time is coming," says the Lord, "when I will place a righteous Branch on King David's throne. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. And this is his name: 'The Lord Is Our Righteousness.' In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety."* Great stuff! A righteous branch on King David's throne.... rules with wisdom... will do what is just and right throughout the land... **Q: Think this is Jesus??**

10/13 - The remaining verses in Jeremiah 23 go after false prophets. I know in reading Jeremiah I've been pondering how hard it would be to be Jeremiah, a prophet with some tough messages. Well, in this chapter it looks like being a false prophet is really the wrong way to live. If you're gonna be a prophet, make sure you're prophesying the truth... :) **Q: Do you think there are any false prophets in our world today? Do you avoid listening to the teachings of false prophets in our world today? (other than if you need to listen to what they say to repudiate it) Can we sometimes even be false prophets to our own selves and others on occasion? Who can free us from the lies of false prophets?**

10/14 - Jeremiah 23 continues on from yesterday's readings with the problems of false prophets. Verses 21 & 22 really stood out to today: *"I have not sent these prophets, yet they claim to speak for me. I have given them no message, yet they prophesy. If they had listened to me, they would have spoken my words and turned my people from their evil ways."* I think the key word in these verses above is "listen". The false prophets' problems all started because they were not listening to God. **Q: How well do we listen to God today? Think we should slow down our lives a bit and create some time and space to listen? When we pray - are we speaking or listening more?** Let us have ears to listen! Verse 29 is a great one! *"Does not my word burn like fire?" asks the Lord. "Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes rock to pieces?"* **In your life today does God's Word burn like fire? In your life today is God's Word like a mighty hammer that smashes rock to pieces?**

10/14 - Jeremiah Chapter 25 is the bit of a tough read at first. I would certainly like to study more of the theology on the "cup of the Lord's anger." The best I can tell is that the land was so full of sin & rejection of God, that the cup of anger and the coming judgment was the only option for God. My thought is that God showed graciousness time and time and time again - and was ignored, and things got worse. So, keep in mind that God didn't just go ballistic here in Chapter 25 - it was a long time coming and I think a lot of grace & mercy & compassion was shown for a long time - but eventually this had to happen. Actually, this does remind me of a sermon I heard actually last year. The pastor was preaching from the "feast of the wedding banquet" in Matthew where a king (God) invites his townsfolk to attend the wedding feast for his son (Jesus). But people refuse the invitation - saying they have to work / they are too busy, etc. The 2nd time the king extends the invitation, the people even beat up his servants! Well, the pastor's point in preaching was that God does continue to show us grace and pursue us, but at some point we have to accept the invitation from God! We have to accept the invitation of faith in his son Jesus. We have to accept the invitation to repent of our sins. We have to accept the invitation... While God will extend his grace and the invitation time and time and time again - he won't do so forever for us if we keep rejecting him. Israel, leading up to chapter 25, did not accept the invitation from God to repent. **Q: In your life today, are you accepting the invitation from God to repent through faith in his son Jesus? Do you believe that you have been invited? Have you accepted the invitation?**

10/15 - Today in Jeremiah 26 we are reminded again how tough it is to be a prophet - the people of Judah want to kill him! It is an interesting series of events with the courts and priests. It reminds me of some ways of Jesus and his last hours. Except that Jeremiah of course gets reprieved. However, at the end of the chapter we hear about the prophet Uriah

and he was not so fortunate. He was chased into Egypt (interesting escape into Egypt parallel w/ Christ's early life), captured and killed. **Q: The lesson for us in this chapter 26 may be this - when we are confronted with a call to repent from sins, do we? Or do we rage back and accuse the accuser of sins? Do we repent or do we deny? Do we return to the Lord?**

10/15 - Jeremiah Chapter 27 seems to be a chapter of "obedience" to me. Jeremiah is called once again to be obedient to preach - and to wear an ox yoke this time! And the people of Judah are called to be obedient to the Babylonian conquest. Let it happen. Be exiled. And eventually you will return. Fight this call to obedience - and you will die. I know obedience is not a very popular term in our culture today. But, I do think it is still so relevant to our relationship with God. In what area of your life is God calling you to be obedient? Will you be obedient?

10/16 - In our Jeremiah readings today we get two different declarations of how long the exile to Babylon will last - 2 years versus 70 years! Just a slight difference... Of course we simply need to look at which of the declarations are coming from a false prophet (Hananiah, 2 yrs) versus a true prophet of God's (Jeremiah, 70 yrs). Biblical scholars debate the exact dates of when this 70 years of captivity in Babylon took place: 1) 605 to 538 B.C. would cover the first deportation until the arrival of the first exiles back in Jerusalem. 2) 586 to 516 B.C. would cover the time between the destruction of the temple and its rebuilding. 3) Some believe the number 70 was an approximate number meant to signify a lifetime.

10/16 - Jeremiah chapter 28 has a good lesson for us in the false prophet Hananiah. I think we need to be careful when we use words like, "God says", or "this is God's will", or "I know God will do x, y, and z." Hananiah was using words like this... and he may have really thought this to be true... but he was wrong big-time. And paid a big price. I'm thinking in our lives it might be better to say, "God-willing, this hopefully will happen..." or "I believe God is leading me this way. I pray I'm right" - and then be prepared to adjust if we realize it wasn't quite the right way. I'm sure most of us are seeking God's will for our lives. **Q: We maybe should be cautious on making declarative statements on precisely what God's will is for our lives?** Let us instead simply try to follow God's lead in our life each and every day and trust that his lead will take us where he wants us to go.

10/16 - Jeremiah 29:8-9 today tells us: *"The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says, "Do not let the prophets and mediums who are there in Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams because they prophesy lies in my name. I have not sent them," says the Lord."* My thought on these verses is that often times I think that we too are tricked by lies that the world is often selling us. "Money, Power, Status, Sex-Appeal, etc. etc. are things to be strived for above all else" are the type of things that I think we often hear. But, are these True? Or are they tricks - are they lies? Will you find emptiness or happiness in what the world is selling you? Where can you find True happiness and peace? I think these questions are answered for us today in verses 11-13: *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me."* **Q: Are you looking for God in earnest? If you've found God, are you following Him alone and not the tricksters of this world? Do you believe that God has a beautiful plan for you and your life? A plan much better than any plan you could dream up on your own?**

10/17 - Wow. These two chapters in Jeremiah today are the most hopeful we've read yet in the book of Jeremiah! These chapters give so much joy to my heart to read them, as the promises of deliverance and hope of restoration are given by God! In Jeremiah chapter 31 verses 15 through 17 today we read - *"This is what the LORD says: "A cry of anguish is heard in Ramah--mourning and weeping unrestrained. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted--for her children are dead." But now the LORD says, "Do not weep any longer, for I will reward you. Your children will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy. There is hope for your future," says the LORD. "Your children will come again to their own land."* **Q: Did you notice verse 15 above is also in the New Testament?** It is quoted in Matthew chapter 2 verse 18 based on Herod's orders to murder all of the male infants being a fulfillment of this verse. Here's verses 16 through 18 in Matthew chapter 2: *"When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."* **Q: Think these verses could be applied to abortions in our world today? Do you think God is weeping for His children?**

10/17 - Jeremiah 31:18 gives a great example of the true relationship we can have with God - *"I have heard Israel saying, 'You disciplined me severely, but I deserved it. I was like a calf that needed to be trained for the yoke and plow. Turn me*

again to you and restore me, for you alone are the Lord my God." Israel was finally beginning to repent and return to God. I know the word "discipline" can maybe be a tough one for us - we've probably all experienced some unjust discipline. I pray that you can see that God's discipline for us is ultimately very loving - training us, turning us, restoring us. **Q: If you feel that God is disciplining you in your life right now, will you let him? So that he can train you, turn you, restore you?**

10/17 - I love the last verse in Jeremiah's readings today! 31:26 - *"At this, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been very sweet."* Very sweet readings in Jeremiah today indeed! **Q: When is the last time you've had sweet sleep? Do you think sweet sleep is a gift from God?**

10/18 - Jeremiah chapter 31 today is encouraging reading! It seems we've rounded the corner from the coming destruction and captivity prophecies in the book of Jeremiah, and God is now speaking about rebuilding Jerusalem. We get a good Messianic foreshadowing today in verse 31: *"The day will come," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah."* The new covenant is coming!

10/18 - Today in Jeremiah 31:33 we read: *"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts."* This verse reminds me of the importance in memorizing scripture – not just reading scripture, but memorizing it and writing it upon our hearts. I have been amazed oftentimes how [Proverbs 3:5-6](#) comes to my mind and heart at some very needed and specific times. (if you can only memorize 2 scripture verses, please memorize these Proverbs verses) **Q: Do you memorize scripture? Do you not just memorize it, but internalize its teachings and meanings into your heart? Do you see the value in memorizing scripture and writing it upon your heart?**

10/18 - Jeremiah Chapter 32 is intriguing. God asks Jeremiah to buy land - even though all of the land of Jerusalem will soon fall under captivity. Jeremiah is - once again - obedient. God goes on in this chapter to indeed confirm that Jerusalem will fall - but that God will eventually restore the Israelites back to Jerusalem and buying and selling of land will occur again. Interesting chapter. The call to Jeremiah to buy land was to set the stage for reminding the Israelites that they will soon lose this ability, but it will come back to them again eventually. I like this example. **Q: What about you in your life today - is there anything God is asking you to be obedient in? Even if you perhaps won't see an "immediate" return on your investment of your obedience, will you obey God? Is the eternal return on your investment of obedience worth it?**

10/19 - Today in our readings we get the famous Jeremiah 33:3 verse: *"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."* (NIV) Verses 15 & 16 are powerful Messianic verses, harkening back to Jeremiah 23:6 (The Lord Our Righteousness): *"In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness."* Verse 22 is a great verse echoing the covenant promises to Abraham: *"I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore."* Verse 18 threw me for a loop initially, trying to figure out how this could still be - *"nor will the priests, who are Levites, ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices."* I wondered - where are the Levites today? Fortunately, I read a commentary that set me straight - Jesus is fulfilling this ministry for us today! Jesus is our Levitical priest standing before God continually. **Q: Beautiful, eh? Do you consider Jesus to be your High Priest?**

10/19 - Jeremiah chapter 34 is interesting with the freedom for the slaves - and then the reversal of that decision. **Q: Could this story remind us of our lives at times? Do we sometimes promise God that we'll do something he wants us to do? Maybe even start to do it? And then change our minds? Why are we not consistent with what we tell God we will do?** Let us pray for consistency in our spiritual walk!

10/20 - Jeremiah chapter 35 today is a fantastic example of obedience from the Recabites! Interestingly, the Recabites are being obedient to a human's word... This stands in stark contrast to the Israelites disobedience to God's Word... **Q: Do we do this sometimes in our lives? Obey human words and disobey God's Word?**

10/21 - We read about some very interesting dynamics in Jeremiah chapters 37 & 38 today... Jeremiah goes from dungeon to prison to cistern to prison to being the king's confidant. Being a prophet is quite a life!! I continue to admire Jeremiah's boldness in speaking the truth in these chapters. 37:17 stood out: *"Later King Zedekiah secretly requested that*

Jeremiah come to the palace, where the king asked him, "Do you have any messages from the Lord?" "Yes, I do!" said Jeremiah. "You will be defeated by the king of Babylon." Jeremiah goes right to the truth... no beating around the bush! And then 3 verses later he asks Zedekiah - "Listen, my lord the king, I beg you. Don't send me back to the dungeon in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for I will die there." He speaks a harsh truth to Zedekiah and then asks for a favor. I like that! **Q: Do we speak the truth in our lives? Even if we know we'll need to ask for a favor of someone later, will we still speak the truth? Or will we default to the un-truthful position of "hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil...."**

10/22 - Jeremiah chapter 39 brings the fall of Jerusalem! :(It is sad to read about king Zedekiah's fate. But, he was forewarned many times by Jeremiah of the coming destruction. It is interesting that King Nebuchadnezzar sought out Jeremiah and told his soldiers to free Jeremiah - and give him the option of staying in Judah or coming to Babylon, where he would be taken care of. **Almost seemed like Nebuchadnezzar feared God more than Zedekiah?** Actually, in Jeremiah 40:2, we do see that the Babylonians did have a good understanding of God's prophecies and they seemed to believe them: "*The captain of the guard called for Jeremiah and said, "The Lord your God has brought this disaster on this land, just as he said he would. For these people have sinned against the Lord and disobeyed him. That is why it happened."* **Q: Is it possible in our lives today that sometimes others can see more clearly than we can of how God is moving in our lives?**

10/22 - Jeremiah chapter 40 continues with Gedaliah being appointed governor of Judah by Babylon. Gedaliah seems to be a good sort, as he invites the people living in the country side to: "*Settle in any town you wish, and live off the land. Harvest the grapes and summer fruits and olives, and store them away.*" (v. 10). However, things don't go well too long for Gedaliah, which is sad... Ishmael enters the scene in chapter 40 and into chapter 41, and ultimately murders Gedaliah. This definitely made me sad! Things seemed to be getting a bit peaceful in Judah, and prosperous to a degree. And then evil enters the scene once again... **Q: How many times have we seen this scenario play out over history?**

10/23 - The three Jeremiah chapters today are quite eventful! It is intriguing that the Israelites ask Jeremiah for a message from God - and that whatever they hear back they will do and obey. But then they don't obey! **Q: Are we like this at times... ? We promise promise promise God that we'll listen & change... but then do we? If you are going through struggles in your life today will you call out to God? Do you trust that He will answer in His own unique and perfect way and timing? And then will you trust and obey?**

10/23 - Chapter 43 reminds me that when we are disobedient to God's will that our disobedience can affect not only ourselves, but others around us too. Mind you, Egypt was not a "house of the holy" - but the Israelites disobedience is going to bring destruction to themselves and Egypt. They're carrying their disobedience and curse on to others. Jeremiah 43's verses 9 & 10 stood out: "*While the people of Judah are watching, bury large rocks between the pavement stones at the entrance of Pharaoh's palace here in Tahpanhes. I will surely bring my servant Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, here to Egypt.*" Interesting that God calls Nebuchadnezzar his "servant". **Q: Would God have said this about the Israelites at this time? Called them his servants?**

10/23 - Chapter 44 is a great reminder of why it's a bad idea to pursue idols in our life instead of God! Verse 7 asks "*Why are you destroying yourselves?*" I love this verse. **Why are we destroying ourselves?** We bring upon self-abuse, self-destruction, when we pursue things that are not of God. Think about it. **Q: They may bring a quick temporary pleasure, but in the long run are they building us up or destroying us? Why are we destroying ourselves?**

10/24 - Jeremiah 44:28 stood out to me in today's readings: "*Only a small number will escape death and return to Judah from Egypt.*" This verse reminds me that God is continuing to preserve the line - the house of David. God will destroy most of the Israelites in Egypt for their unfaithfulness & idol worship, but he will preserve a remnant! We see this over and over in the Bible - even Noah & the flood comes to mind, pre-David of course. Jeremiah 45 is a short chapter. Baruch is the person who has basically written this book of Jeremiah. He was Jeremiah's secretary and wrote down everything. However, apparently being secretary for a prophet is a high stress job too. Baruch is sounding a bit burdened in this chapter... To which God gives him words of comfort, along with a brief warning in verse 5 - "*Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it!*" **Q: Are we seeking great things for ourselves? Should we do it.... ? Whom should we be seeking great things for? Why do we seek great things for our own selves? Why do we sometimes even walk over others to try to prove our "greatness".... ? Think God likes to see this type of behavior from us?**

10/25 - Jeremiah chapter 48 is not a very happy chapter... at first glance it's tough to figure out what is going on in this chapter. Why is God so angry at Moab? I think verses 28 - 30 let us in on why: "*You people of Moab, flee from your cities*

and towns! Live in the caves like doves that nest in the clefts of the rocks. We have heard of the pride of Moab, for it is very great. We know of her loftiness, her arrogance, and her haughty heart. I know about her insolence," says the LORD, "but her boasts are false; they accomplish nothing." It sounds like pride and boasting was a major factor here obviously. Along with idol worship as we see in verse 13: "At last Moab will be ashamed of her idol Chemosh, as Israel was ashamed of her gold calf at Bethel." I do think we see sadness from God in this judgment upon Moab in verse 31: "Yes, I wail for Moab; my heart is broken for the men of Kir-hareseth." And ultimate redemption comes in the last verse, 47, of this chapter: "But in the latter days I will restore the fortunes of Moab," says the LORD." **Q: This chapter may give us the opportunity to pause and reflect on if there are areas in our life where we are boasting? Boasting in prideful ways? Are we arrogant, lofty, displaying a haughty heart toward others?**

10/25 - Chapter 49 does not bring good tidings to the Ammonites or Edomites. Verse 16 again gives us a good look into why this judgment is coming upon Edom: "You are proud that you inspire fear in others. And you are proud because you live in a rock fortress and hide high in the mountains. But don't fool yourselves!" Pride. Again. Pride. **Q: Think Pride is something that has been a temptation of humans since the Fall? Think this temptation continues today?**

10/26 - We have quite the readings in Jeremiah chapter 49 & 50 today! The prophecies have turned from Judah and Jerusalem and are now directed toward their neighbors and toward their captors, Babylon. Jeremiah 50 does not bode well for Babylon! It is interesting, in that King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon have played a large role in sacking Jerusalem & Judah - to discipline them for their sins. And now the tide is coming back toward Babylon. Verse 28 really stood out to me today as a clear indication that destroying the Temple in Jerusalem was a really really bad idea for Babylon... "Listen to the people who have escaped from Babylon, as they tell in Jerusalem how the Lord our God has taken vengeance against those who destroyed his Temple." Chapter 50 does bode well for Israel & Judah - verses 4 & 5 tell us: "Then the people of Israel and Judah will join together," says the LORD, "weeping and seeking the LORD their God. They will ask the way to Jerusalem and will start back home again. They will bind themselves to the LORD with an eternal covenant that will never again be broken." **Q: How often do we weep and seek the Lord? Should we ever literally weep and seek God? Can we learn something about the power of weeping from the people of Israel and Judah on how we can bind ourselves to God with an eternal covenant that will never be broken?**

10/27 - Jeremiah Chapter 51 dives into Babylon's destruction! Lately we've been basically just looking at Babylon the city & empire and Nebuchadnezzar from the historical perspective - though, certainly seeing where and how God has been interacting with Babylon. I think it might be a good point here to consider the spiritual connotations of Babylon. A great place to begin this conversation is in [Revelation Chapters 17 & 18](#) where Babylon is discussed. I won't go into trying to interpret these two chapters of Revelation today... :) We have yet to get to Revelation later this year in the One Year Bible! But, these two chapters may give you some more insight into the spiritual meaning of the term Babylon. If you do want to read more about Babylon in context of these two Revelation chapters, check out [this link](#) for an interesting commentary. The other thing to note in this chapter is that earlier in Jeremiah we read about the coming destruction of Jerusalem - but always with the note of ultimate redemption. In this chapter with Babylon, and other chapters discussing Babylon, there is no redemption for Babylon. This city will not be restored... It is interesting in the middle of Jeremiah 51 we have a few verses of a hymn of praise to God - verses 15 through 19. Again, in verse 18, idols are mentioned and can be assumed as one of the prime reasons of Babylon's destruction: "Idols are worthless; they are lies! The time is coming when they will all be destroyed." **Q: Do you believe that idols are worthless? Are they lies? What are some of our modern day idols that are worthless and lies? Are you rejecting worshiping any and all of our modern day idols and focusing your worship and time and love toward God and Jesus?** Please, leave those worthless idols behind... and don't pick them up ever again!

10/28 - We reach the end of the book of Jeremiah today! This has been a fascinating book for me to read this year! I definitely learned a lot more about prophets, the fall of Jerusalem and Babylon. I hope this has been a good learning experience for you as well? Jeremiah chapter 51 closes out Jeremiah's prophecies, ending with his prophecies against Babylon. Tomorrow we start the book of Lamentations! And actually, we're getting a good set up for Lamentations in Chapter 52 of Jeremiah today. I think as you read the end of chapter 51, you might think - okay, this should be the end of this book, correct, as verse 64 in chapter 51 tells us - "This is the end of Jeremiah's messages." But... chapter 52 is in here to remind readers of the fall of Jerusalem, and to segue way into the book of Lamentations. Chapter 52 is sad to read - particularly when you think back to all of the work of the Israelites in Solomon's day in creating the temple. Also I think back to the work of others earlier in the Old Testament who built up the walls of Jerusalem. All of this destroyed and burned. I read somewhere that it's speculated that the Ark of the Covenant was probably destroyed during this time period, in the fire at the Temple. It is so sad to think about this day in Jerusalem's history... At the very end of chapter 52

we see a few verses giving hope for Israel's line to continue. **Q: So, how has been reading the book of the prophet Jeremiah been for you this year? What have you learned from this book? How can you apply these learnings to your life today?** Whenever we reach the end of any book in the Bible, I like to take a few moments to sit back and think about what God taught me through each particular book. I hope you can find this time to do the same whenever you reach the end of reading or studying a book in the Bible.

10/29 - Today we begin the book of Lamentations! Lamentations is a short 5 chapter book. It's essentially a post-script to the book of Jeremiah, and was likely written by the prophet Jeremiah. It is a book that surveys and laments Jerusalem and the Temple after the destruction of both by the Babylonians in about 586 B.C.

~ **Lamentations** ~

Author: Jeremiah

Date: Sixth century B.C.

Content: The book of Lamentations is a funeral song, written for the fallen city of Jerusalem. It was composed by Jeremiah, who was an eye-witness of all he describes in such vivid detail. He shows the destruction in all its horror so that it could never again be asked, "Why did no one ever tell us the awful price we would have to pay for disobeying God?" There is very little of comfort, but Jeremiah's prayer in chapter 5 does look beyond the desolate ashes of the once glorious Jerusalem to God whose throne endures forever. Only there can Jeremiah find any solace.

Theme: Lamentations is a declaration of the wrath of God. It portrays the bitter truth that God had promised judgment upon sin, and Judah had been foolish enough to put God to the test. Bad as that was, the deeper tragedy was that it did not have to be. God's faithfulness is great, being renewed every morning, and his compassion never fails. Had Judah only obeyed, it all could have been avoided. The warning and the promise found in this book should be emblazoned in the skies for all to see. *(Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 13-14)*

10/29 - Lamentations chapter 1 verse 1 sets the tone & stage for this book - *"Jerusalem's streets, once bustling with people, are now silent. Like a widow broken with grief, she sits alone in her mourning. Once the queen of nations, she is now a slave."* Why is this so? Well, we just read the book of the prophet Jeremiah, so we know why... One thing to keep in mind when reading Lamentations - it provides a glimpse at the devastating affects of unchecked & unrepentant sin. **Q: Per this verse above, do you think our sin change our position in life from being a "queen" to a "slave"?**

10/29 - I think it is important to realize that God did provide so much grace and compassion toward Jerusalem and Judah in the book of Jeremiah before everything got to the devastating point that it is in the book of Lamentations. God sent the prophet Jeremiah to warn Judah over and over and over again.... However, there was no repentance of sin and things got worse and worse - until it got to the point that God had no choice but to discipline Judah through Babylon's taking Judah captive. We do need to know that unrepentant, unsorrowful, unchecked sin in our lives can lead to horrifically sorrowful things happening in our lives. And perhaps, by us hitting a rock bottom, like Jerusalem clearly is here in Lamentations, there will be an opportunity for discipline and ultimate redemption...

10/29 - Today in Lamentations 1:14 we read: *"My sins have been bound into a yoke; by his hands they were woven together. They have come upon my neck and the Lord has sapped my strength. He has handed me over to those I cannot withstand."* **Do you believe that sin can become a "yoke" around your neck? Can sin sap your strength? Can sin hand you over to those you cannot withstand? How can you be freed from this yoke of sin?** Perhaps these words from Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 will give us some ideas - *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* **Q: If there is a yoke of sin around your neck, will you allow Jesus to remove that yoke? Will you exchange the yoke of sin for the yoke of rest that Christ offers you today?**

10/29 - Perhaps Lamentations chapter 2, verses 18 & 19, give us a hint at what we should do if we realize we've hit a rock bottom place in our lives due to unchecked sin - *"Cry aloud before the Lord, O walls of Jerusalem! Let your tears flow like a river. Give yourselves no rest from weeping day or night. Rise during the night and cry out. Pour out your hearts like water to the Lord. Lift up your hands to him in prayer."* **Q: If you are at that place of rock bottom, or nearing it, will you cry to the Lord? Will you pour out your heart to the Lord letting him know that you need him - that you cannot do life without him? Will you pray?**

10/30 - Lamentations Chapter 3 today starts out quite sad and empty in verses 1-20. Of course, the reason for this sadness and emptiness in these opening verses is God's discipline toward the people of Jerusalem at this time. They had sinned greatly and thus this discipline had come upon them. I think the thing for us to remember in seasons like this in

our lives is that it is typically only a season. This too shall pass - if we repent & learn & grow and return to the Lord. Indeed, we see the transition in chapter 21: *"Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this..."* I love this! "I still dare to hope" - even in the midst of so much sadness & emptiness. **Q: In the midst of our tough seasons in life, can we still dare to hope? Why should we still dare to hope? Will you still dare to hope?**

10/30 - Verses 22 to 66 in today's readings are just phenomenal. I could write on and on about probably each of these verses. There is so much here for us. I'd encourage you to read these verses at least twice and meditate on them and how they might apply to your life today. I'll jump through a couple of verses here that stood out to me. Verse 23 - *"Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day."* **Q: Do you experience God's mercies afresh each day? Do you believe that you can?** Verse 25 - *"The LORD is wonderfully good to those who wait for him and seek him."* **If you are not experiencing God now, will you wait for him? Will you seek him?**

10/31 - Lamentations Chapters 4 and 5 are tough chapters to read. We know why everything that we read in these chapters has come to pass from our readings in the book of Jeremiah. I guess the thing personally that jumped out at me today when reading this chapter were these thoughts: **Q: Have I personally ever experienced anything like what we read about in this chapter?** The answer is no. The second thought or question that came to me, however, was this: **Are there people in our world today that are experiencing similar things that we read about in this chapter?** And I believe the answer is obviously yes. Not for the same "reasons" that Jerusalem was experiencing all of this of course - but the same experiences of starvation and lack of hope are indeed happening in our world today. Then.... **the question becomes - is this fair? Is this right? Should we try to do something for people in our world that are experiencing starvation, lack of hope, and worse? What will we do?** I know there are thousands of organizations that we could support to help those in need in our world. One that I have personal experience with is [World Vision](#). If you have an extra dollar a day, you can sponsor a child and radically change that child's life - forever. Or, even if you have an extra dollar a month, World Vision can do incredible things with that dollar. **Which international relief organization do you invest in?**

NEW TESTAMENT

10/1 - Philippians chapter 3 verse 3 is a great teaching from Paul - *"For we who worship God in the Spirit are the only ones who are truly circumcised. We put no confidence in human effort. Instead, we boast about what Christ Jesus has done for us."* **Q: How do you worship God? Do you worship in the Spirit? Do you put no confidence in your own human efforts? Do you today boast to others about what Jesus Christ has done for you?**

10/2 - Great teachings from Paul today in Philippians chapter 3! Verses 7 through 9 are so very true - *"I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him."* **Q: How do these words of Paul's speak to you? Have you ever valued & loved "things" in your life more than your relationship with Jesus? Can you now look back and realize that those things - love of power, money, prestige, or material goods, etc. - are worthless because of what Jesus Christ has done for you on the cross? Can you now see that love of those things is garbage - garbage that can prevent you from growing closer to Jesus if you do not throw it out? Is there any garbage in your life today that you should be throwing out...?**

10/2 - Today we also read Paul's amazing teachings in verses 12 through 14 - *"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven."* **Q: How about you? Are you all that you should be? Are you focusing all of your energies on reaching the end of the race and receiving the prize for which God is calling you? Are you forgetting the past? Are you looking forward to what lies ahead? Are you looking forward to heaven? In this race called life, is your focus on heaven as your prize?**

10/3 - Wow... so many great teachings from Paul here today as we close out his letter to the church in Philippi! Paul's letter to the church in Colosse begins in our readings tomorrow! I love Philippians chapter 4 verse 4 today - *"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again--rejoice!"* **Q: How does this verse speak to you? Are you full of joy in the Lord right now? Are you always full of joy in the Lord? Why or why not? Do you think Paul's teaching here is correct - should we always be full of joy in the Lord? Let us rejoice!**

10/3 - Verses 6 & 7 are so very powerful for each of us to truly learn and put into practice in our lives today! *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."* **Q: Do you worry? Why does Paul tell us not to worry about anything? What did Jesus say to us about worrying in the Sermon on the Mount? What does Paul tell us to do instead of worrying?** Pray. This is a powerful powerful thought! Think about this the next time you catch yourself worrying. You know that when you worry you are wasting energy and time. So, why not follow Paul's simple instructions here - when you catch yourself worrying, start praying. Really. Don't give one more minute or one more ounce of your energy to worrying. When you find yourself worrying, get down on your knees and pray! Tell God what you need - AND thank him for all he has done. Sure, it may be tough to thank God at your moment of worrying, but you should do so, in addition to telling him what you need. We should always thank God. And then... here's the beauty.... you will experience God's peace! His peace will guard your heart and mind as you live in Jesus! Let us each stop worrying and start praying! Actually... while I'm already down this path, think about this. **Do you think that you spend more time each day worrying or praying? Really, think about this. How many minutes a day would you say that you worry? And how many minutes a day would you say you pray?** My hunch is that worrying takes up far more minutes for most of us... Look at how we are wasting precious time on worrying! We don't have that kind of time... Let us pray!

10/3 - And finally Philippians chapter 4 verses 8 and 9 are so beautiful: *"And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you."* **Q: What type of things do you think about typically? Do you typically think about what is true and honorable and right? Do you often think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable? Do you think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise? Or are you filling your mind with other thoughts? Thoughts that, like worry, are a complete waste of your precious time here on this earth? Will you instead put into practice Paul's teachings - and the teachings you have received this year from the One Year Bible - and allow the peace of God to be with you?**

10/4 - Today we begin Paul's letter to the church in Colosse!

~ **Colossians** ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Rome

Date: A.D. 60 or 61

Content: Paul wrote this letter while a prisoner in Rome to a city he had never visited. He had come to know of these believers while living in Ephesus on his second missionary journey, and now he was concerned because he had heard of some strange pagan theories that were creeping into the church. The views that were troubling the Colossians were a mixture of astrology, magic, and Judaism, which downgraded Christ to being just some sort of angel. Paul wrote to correct this error by showing that Christ is none other than God and possesses the fullness of the eternal God. Instructions follow concerning Christian living.

Theme: In this important letter of Paul's we are presented with a carefully worked-out defense of Christ's deity and glory. He is all in all and the believer has everything he needs in Christ. Paul warns that believers out not to be led astray by the foolishness and the false wisdom of men. Instructions for Christian living stress the power of God for men and the joy that believers may have by making use of all the resources that are theirs in Christ. *(Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 27-28)*

10/4 - Colossians chapter 1 verses 15 through 17 are some of the most powerful statements in all of the Bible about Who Jesus truly is! *"Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation. Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see--kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through him and for him. He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together."* **Q: Do you believe these words of Paul's are true? Do you believe that Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God? Did Jesus exist before God made the Earth? Do you believe that Jesus holds all of creation together? Does Jesus hold you together?**

10/5 - I love Paul's teaching about the Christian life in Colossians chapter 1 verse 27 today! *"For this is the secret: Christ lives in you, and this is your assurance that you will share in his glory."* **Q: Were you aware of this secret? Does Christ live in you? Have you accepted Jesus into your life and your heart as your Lord and Savior so that he has your**

permission - your submission - for Him to live within you? Do you want Jesus to live in you? Do you have assurance that you will share in Jesus' glory for eternity?

10/5 - Paul's teachings in Colossians chapter 2 verses 6 & 7 definitely stood out to me today: *"And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to him. Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all he has done."* I absolutely love the thought of letting our roots grow down into Jesus and draw up nourishment from Jesus! Meditate on this thought for a while... I honestly haven't really ever thought about "having roots in Jesus." I mean, I certainly know Jesus is my Lord and Savior. I know Jesus lives within me. And I know the whole Chapter of John 15 about the vine & the branches has gotten me in the past to think about truly being attached to Jesus. But something about these verses from Paul about letting our roots grow down into Jesus really is profound for me today... **Q: How deep are your roots in Jesus today? Is there room for growth in your roots?** Let us grow! And let us overflow with thankfulness!

10/6 - Colossians chapter 2 verse 8 is a teaching from Paul that reminds me so much of our modern world today... *"Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world, and not from Christ."* **Q: Have you ever heard anyone in our world today offer you empty philosophy or high-sounding nonsense?** I know I have... And perhaps I've even preached it on occasion in my past too. Scary stuff. There is stuff out there today that does indeed come from human thinking - not divine thinking - and from the evil powers of this world - not from Christ. I think we need to prayerfully be so vigilant to protect ourselves from these empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense. I almost hesitate to write this... but I am feeling like I should. I think we need to even watch out for empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense in some churches today too. I really don't mean to be divisive to the body of Christ, the church, by saying this. But I say this for our own good - for brothers and sisters in Christ. One thing that I have seen in churches on occasion that has alarmed me is what I'll call "the cult of personality" around a pastor. Meaning, I think it can reach a point in a church where there is an unhealthy fixation on a pastor or minister. Don't get me wrong. We'll all probably have a favorite pastor or minister or priest. But let us be cautious if ever our devotion to a pastor surpasses (or gets anywhere near) our devotion to Jesus. It's then when the "cult of personality" can lead to empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense invading our hearts and minds. Maybe there is someone out there that needs to hear this... Just pray about it to Jesus if ever you feel that you are paying more attention to a pastor / priest / anybody than you are paying to Jesus. And ask Jesus what he would have you do. Perhaps it would be to move on to another church... A church where Jesus is clearly preached, worshiped, and followed. Trust me, there are multitudes of churches out there where Jesus and his work on the cross for your sins is preached. Make sure Christ and Him crucified is preached clearly at your church!

10/6 - I absolutely love the imagery Paul uses in verse 11 today: *"When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure--the cutting away of your sinful nature."* The cutting away of your sinful nature! Isn't that profound to think about? It almost makes me feel 100 pounds lighter spiritually just thinking about it... Our old sinful nature was an old beast of a thing that bogged us down. Makes us slow. Makes us groggy. Keeps us foggy. But - Jesus can take the scissors of spiritual circumcision and cut away that old sinful nature! **Q: Doesn't this make you feel 100 pounds lighter to think about this? Doesn't this thought of cutting away the sinful nature make you want to never want to put on that old musty moldy deadly suit of sin ever again? Let us be free instead! Has Jesus circumcised you spiritually? Has Jesus cut away your sinful nature once and for all?** This all makes me think about butterfly coming out of its cocoon about to take flight... Let us fly!

10/7 - Colossians 3 verse 4 is so powerful and is really something each of us should reflect upon: *"And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory."* Here is the thing that really stops me in my tracks when reading this verse: "Christ, who is your life." Those are 5 incredibly powerful words when put together! And I'm afraid that sometimes we don't really live our lives as if Jesus is indeed our life. He is! Or he should be... Here's the thing. I've had a lot of conversations over the years with fellow Christians about who Jesus is to them. And I've thought a lot about who Jesus is to me. And I think many of us can easily get to the point of saying, "well, yes, Jesus is my Savior." We can acknowledge that He died on the cross for our sins. He saved us. We're into salvation! But, I think sometimes it can get a bit fuzzier for us when we think about Jesus being our Lord - in addition to Jesus being our Savior. Meaning, if Jesus is our Lord, then we really need to take incredibly seriously and to heart Jesus' words and teachings in the Bible! And really allow Jesus to lead our lives. Transform our lives. Lord our lives. Well, I think this Colossians verse takes things even a step further. Maybe we're at the point where yes, Jesus is our Lord and Savior. But now, Paul here teaches us that Jesus is our very life! That's big... That's saying our life = Jesus. Jesus = our life. If you really stop to

think about this and allow this into your heart you'll know how huge this is. Jesus is our life.... wow! That's very good news! Our job isn't our life. Our money isn't our life. Our health isn't our life. Even our family isn't our life - those these can all be good gifts. But none of these things are our life. Jesus is our life! **Q: Today, can you honestly say Jesus is your life? If not, will you begin to really think about this and pray about this? Is Jesus your life?**

10/7 - Verses 12 through 14 of Colossians chapter 3 are awesome! *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."* **Q: How are you doing on each of these virtues in your life today - Compassion? Kindness? Humility? Gentleness? Patience? Forgiveness? Love? Do you think you can do each of these well using just your own will power? Or, do regularly pray to Jesus to give you these virtues within your heart and to bring them to fruition in your life? Can you allow love to lead within you? Will you allow Jesus to lead you?**

10/8 - Today we wrap up our reading of the book of Colossians! Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians begins tomorrow! Colossians 4:6 today is fantastic: *"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."* Let your conversation be always full of grace. **Q: How often is this true for us? Are there times when our conversation is un-graceful? Judgmental perhaps? Angry? Curt? But Grace... that's something to strive for in all of our conversations! If we are grace-full in our conversations, where does that Grace come from?**

10/9 - Today we begin Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica!

~ **First Thessalonians** ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Corinth

Date: A.D. 50 or 51

Content: On Paul's second missionary journey he visited Thessalonica but was forced to flee because of the intense persecutions that arose there (see [Acts 17:1-9](#)). After making his way to Athens and finally to Corinth, Paul heard from Timothy, whom he had sent to inquire about the Thessalonians, that they were standing fast in spite of their suffering. Paul wrote this letter to comfort and encourage the young believers in the Lord. He also wrote to confirm their faith in the basic doctrines of the church concerning God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, Christian living, but especially concerning Jesus' second coming. Apparently because some believers had died, the remaining Christians were concerned lest the believing dead miss out on the resurrection. Paul writes to assure them that the dead in Christ rise first.

Theme: Paul comforts the persecuted believers with the assurance that God is with us and has assured us of ultimate victory. The final victory will occur at Jesus' return, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven and gather us to himself, ever to be with him. In the light of this we should bear up under persecution, living lives that are godly and above reproach. (Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers *"The One Year Bible Companion"* p. 28)

10/9 - Today in First Thessalonians 1:5 we read: *"For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know that the way we lived among you was further proof of the truth of our message."* This is a great reminder that while we are out and about in the world being salt and light, we're not just out there on our own. The Holy Spirit is doing work concurrently in other people's hearts. And indeed, the Holy Spirit is doing the true work of salvation, not us. I do like that Paul wrote that "the way we lived" was further proof of the truth. Christians are called to be in the world, but not of it. And I do think people pay attention to how we live. **Q: How are we living our lives today? Are we living a life of love? Are we compassionate? Are we caring? Are we serving the poor? Or - are we bought into consumerism? Are we selfish? Are we serving ourselves? Does the way we spend our money and time look different from how the culture says we should be spending our money and time? Are we giving to our church? Are we worshiping God at a church once a week? Are we praying frequently? How are you living your life today? If someone took a look at your life would it be abundantly clear that you are following Jesus?**

10/10 - The First Thessalonians readings today are nice! I found chapter 2 verse 18 to be an interesting verse: *"We wanted very much to come, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us."* I think this is an important reminder that Satan can indeed prevent good work from taking place in our lives. Through prayer, reading the Word, and obedience we can avoid some attacks. But, they will still come while we are in this world. I would just encourage you to keep in mind that Satan is real. Don't dwell on this, but realize it is true. And that by growing your relationship with Jesus

& God, I do believe great protection can come over you - but keep in mind that even a person as close to the Lord as Paul was prevented by Satan from doing some things Paul wanted to do. **Q: How is your prayer life today? Do you pray to God to protect you and keep you from Satan and all his tricks and lies and temptations?** Let us be prayer warriors for not only ourselves, but also for others in our lives! **Do you consider yourself to be a prayer warrior? Would you like to be a prayer warrior? What is stopping you from being a prayer warrior?** All it takes is prayer...

10/11 - The First Thessalonians verses today are great teachings on living to please God and the hope of the resurrection. A verse from 1 Thessalonians 5:2 that I actual use fairly frequently is: *"the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night."* I confess that I don't get too into predicting "end times" scenarios. Pre-trib, post-trib, etc. I know many good friends who are into all of this. I guess I just come back to this verse about the day of the Lord coming unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. I think this also applies to each of our own lives. We don't know how many years we have - hopefully many. But, you just don't know. And I don't really dwell or worry about it. The end of our lives will likely come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. And if we know Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we do not need to fear the day of the Lord! **Q: Do you think about the day of the Lord often?**

10/11 - In First Thessalonians 4:3-5 today we read this teaching of Paul's: *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust."* **Q: Are these verses contrary in any way to what you might see in our culture today? Are these verses contrary to any way that you might live your life? Do you see the value in this teaching of Paul's? Is the lust / sexual immorality that our culture sells full of life or emptiness? Is this teaching of Paul's full of life or emptiness? Are you controlling your own body in a way that is holy and honorable? What does Paul mean when he says it is God's will that you should be sanctified? Do you want God to sanctify you? Will you participate in the sanctification process with God? Will you avoid sexual immorality?**

10/12 - Today we wrap up Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians! His second letter begins tomorrow! There is a lot of good letter-closing advice in these today's readings. To make sure this advice gets heard throughout the church in Thessalonica Paul commands in chapter 5 verse 27: *"I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters."* **Q: Think this letter got read to everyone? :**

10/12 - Verses 12 & 13 stood out to me in today's readings: *"Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and warn you against all that is wrong. Think highly of them and give them your wholehearted love because of their work."* This verse ties in perfectly to Clergy Appreciation Month! Did you know that October is Clergy Appreciation Month? I don't know who started this trend, but I like it! **Q: Hopefully this month you can take 15 minutes to write a letter or send a card of encouragement to your pastor or clergy? How do you encourage your clergy?** I encourage you to encourage your pastor this month! :) And please try to remember to do this in October of each year. More details about how you can participate in clergy appreciation month are on this website link: <http://parsonage.org/cam/index.cfm>

10/12 - More verses from today's readings that stood out -

Verse 16 - *"Always be joyful."* How's joy doing in your life these days?

Verse 17- *"Keep on praying."* And prayer?

Verse 11 - *"So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing."* I like this. It reminds me that we have the opportunity to encourage people that we come in contact with each day. Spread some love. **Q: How are you doing on being encouraging to others each day?**

10/13 - Today we begin Paul's second letter to the church in Thessalonica!

~ **Second Thessalonians** ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Corinth

Date: A.D. 51

Content: Either Paul's first letter or a forged letter purporting to be from him had disturbed the Thessalonians concerning the second coming of Jesus. Perhaps adding to the confusion was the continued persecution that they were enduring. Paul writes to assure the believers that Jesus will certainly return to comfort the believers and to punish those who are troubling them. He also tells them that the great Day of Judgment (the Day of the Lord) will not take them by surprise but will be preceded by a series of events. In the light of Jesus' sure return, Christians are to live above reproach.

Theme: Throughout this short letter the promise of God's victory over evil is stressed. Believers may suffer now, but God

has planned comfort and reward for them. For those who refuse to obey God, however, there will be distress and judgment. Paul also stresses the need for living in such a way that God is honored. Some people at Thessalonica may have stopped working because they believed Christ would return soon. This does not honor God and Paul says concerning it, "He who does not work shall not eat." (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 28-29*)

10/13 - Paul's encouragement during times of persecution is powerful in chapter 1 verse 5 today: *"But God will use this persecution to show his justice. For he will make you worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering."* If there is persecution in your life today, I hope this verse is encouraging to you. It reminds me of the old adage - "it builds character." I know this is tough to realize in the midst of persecution - that God is working in the midst of it to show his justice and to make you worthy of his Kingdom. Your suffering is for His Kingdom. You are not suffering alone. **Q: Have your sufferings ever had blessings in disguises?**

10/14 - Second Thessalonians chapter 2 is a good look at the 2nd coming of Jesus. Verse 7 is interesting - *"For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way."* Seems that this is alluding to sin and the temptation to sin that pursues people in our world today. The lawlessness is at work - secretly - and will remain secret until it comes out in the open in the form of the anti-christ? Again, I'm not big into end times stuff. But, clearly, there will come the day of Jesus' return. And the Bible is preparing believers for what to expect and to know that God is bigger than whatever evil comes in those days. God is bigger!

10/15 - Second Thessalonians chapter 3 is a nice closing chapter to this 2nd letter of Paul's! The first few verses remind us of the need to pray. Pray for those doing the Lord's work! **How are you doing in praying for your pastors, your church, other ministries you support?** Paul then goes into an exhortation for proper living. These verses remind me of the importance of work in our lives. We are not called to be blissful aestheticians - but called to work. Paul worked hard during his time of ministry. He was at times a "tentmaker" - making a living during the day and preaching and conducting ministry in the evenings and weekends. **Q: How are you doing with work these days? Are you giving your all, your 100% for the hours you are at work? No matter where you are working - are you working as if you were working for God?**

10/16 - This week we begin Paul's first and second letters to Timothy! These are very powerful letters to read because Paul wrote them toward the end of his life. Paul's second letter to Timothy was likely the last letter he ever wrote. Some call this letter Paul's "last will and testament." Please pay close attention to Paul's teachings in these letters this next week. We cannot hear the teachings in these letters often enough!

~ **First Timothy** ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Uncertain

Date: A.D. 64

Content: This letter was written by Paul near the end of his life and he addressed it to his associate Timothy, whom he had left in Ephesus to correct some problems in the church. By this time problems had arisen concerning doctrine, church practice, church government, and various aspects of Christian living. Paul wrote to instruct Timothy concerning these matters so that the church would function properly. He also wrote to encourage Timothy so that he would not become weary in his Christian life, but would live wholly to the glory of God. There are some specific regulations given for the ordination of church officers as well.

Theme: The importance of right belief and right behavior form the theme of this book. Paul stresses that we must know the truth and defend it against the false doctrines that arise. We must also be very careful to live lives that are consistent with the truth so that Satan will not get an advantage over the people of God. The importance of dedicated and pure-hearted men to lead the church is also stressed. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 29*)

10/16 - First and Second Timothy and Titus are considered to be "The Pastoral Letters" because they provide instruction about the care of churches. We have some powerful teachings from Paul today in First Timothy chapter 1. One very interesting thing to note is that Paul uses the clause "This is a trustworthy saying" in verse 15. What's interesting about this is that this clause is found nowhere else in the New Testament except for its use 5 times in the Pastoral Letters to identify an important teaching. So, here is the important teaching in verse 15: *"This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners""* **Q: What do you think about this teaching?** So

simple a teaching at first glance, and yet of course so profound in it's meaning! I like how Paul starts off this letter to Timothy with a lot of humility.

10/17 - 1 Timothy 2 starts of with yet another reminder to pray for others... I love and need this type of reminder in verses 1 and 2... often! *"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks. Pray this way for kings and all others who are in authority, so that we can live in peace and quietness, in godliness and dignity."* This is powerful. Pray for all people. Make requests for them. Plead God's mercy upon them. Give thanks. Pray for those leading our government. I think these verses are very appropriate during a time of local and national elections coming up. Pray for all of the candidates. Make requests for them. Plead God's mercy upon them. Give thanks. Pray. The other thing these opening two verses remind me of is to "Pray the News." I think often times we read about all of the bad news in the world and maybe feel a bit helpless or hopeless in the midst of it all. However, I strongly believe that God has blessed us with the ability to "Pray the News." Pray for earthquake victims, the people starving and dying in other parts of the world, the person who was in a car crash in your town, etc. etc. Pray for them. Make requests for them. Plead God's mercy upon them. Give thanks. **Q: Will you join me in "Praying the News" each day? Will you join me in praying for our politicians?**

10/17 - I realize that Paul's instructions for women in today's readings can be controversial. This is one of those days that if you have the Tyndale Publishers One Year Bible Companion to please read the 3 questions & answers for today. All 3 relate to these instructions of Paul's. Basically, the instructions for women in today's readings can either be interpreted as being: 1. historically conditioned - instructions just for the women of the church in Ephesus at that time and place or 2. universal and timeless instructions. Honestly, different Christian denominations interpret these verses different ways - but probably along one of the two lines above for the most part. The One Year Bible Companion does a great job of going down these 2 paths, with some detail placed on why the instructions could be being historically conditioned because of the Ephesian church having a unique case of prevalent false teachings. Overall, know that Paul did not forbid women from ever teaching or being active in church life. Priscilla taught Apollos, a great preacher from Acts. Phoebe worked in the church (see Romans 16:1). Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Eudia and Syntyche were all women who were the Lord's workers in the New Testament as well (see Romans 16:6, 12 and Philippians 4:2). If you want to dive into further study on 1 Timothy 2:15 today: *"But women will be saved through childbearing..."* please check out an in depth look at this verse on bible.org at this link. **Q: What is your reaction to Paul's instructions for women from today's readings?**

10/18 - Paul's teachings in 1 Timothy 3 gives some great rules and regulations for leaders in a church. It all makes a lot of sense. I would encourage anyone who has interest in leading in your church - or if you are currently leading in your church - to prayerfully read through these. **How are you doing on these? Are there some areas in your life discussed here that need redeeming?** One of my favorite verses in all of these is verse 5 - *"For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?"* **How very true is that? How are you doing in managing your own household?**

10/18 - Verse 16 today beautifully demonstrates Jesus' divinity and his humanity!

"Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith:

Christ appeared in the flesh

and was shown to be righteous by the Spirit.

He was seen by angels

and was announced to the nations.

He was believed on in the world

and was taken up into heaven."

Q: Do you believe in everything written above? When is the last time you meditated upon the fact that Jesus ascended into heaven? I heard a Pastor recently say that he thinks the Ascension is one of the most overlooked facts of Jesus' life in the church today. Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the Father's right hand! This is very good news for us indeed!

10/19 - Today in 1 Timothy 4:7-8 we will read: *"Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."* **Q: How are you doing on training yourself to be godly? Do you believe this is something you can be trained in? Are you practicing spiritual disciplines on a regular basis?** Spiritual disciplines might include: prayer, journaling, quiet time, fasting, retreats, Sabbaths, reading the Bible :), to name a few.

10/20 - First Timothy 5:8 is a powerful teaching from Paul today: *"But those who won't care for their own relatives, especially those living in the same household, have denied what we believe. Such people are worse than unbelievers."* This is such a great reminder to care for our parents as they get older! I have seen some family members and friends do this for their parents - and uncles and other relatives - and it is such a blessing to see in action. This reminds me of the commandment of "Honor your father & mother." What a blessed way to honor your father and mother by caring for them when they are older!

10/20 - First Timothy 5:24 is so important: *"Remember, the sins of some people are obvious, leading them to certain judgment. But there are others whose sins will not be revealed until later."* There is so much I could say about this verse. First and foremost, I think each of us needs to consider this verse in our own lives. **Q: Are there sins in our life that no one else knows about? Do you think that God knows about these secret sins? Do you think those secret sins will indeed eventually be revealed?** I recently heard Dennis Prager (radio talk show host) talking about secrets. And basically he made the point that none of us should have secrets in our life because if we do those secrets will not "keep" - they'll spoil us inside and, worst case, someday they could explode in horrendous ways. Prager made the comment that someone in our life needs to know absolutely everything in our life. (not that everyone in our life needs to know everything - but at least one person does) He ranked this in order of who he thought should know everything about us: 1. your spouse 2. a good trusted friend. 3. a clergy or professional counselor. It was interesting that Prager did make the point that he didn't think that your child(ren) need to know absolutely everything - but someone does... Obviously, we all know that God knows everything about us. But, I think there is so much truth in that one of the key ways to rid ourselves of a secret sin is to bring it out of the dark and into the Light by sharing that secret with someone else. And if it's a continuing sin, ask that person for help and accountability. Let us not wait until we meet the Lord face to face for us to rid ourselves of the rotten burden of secrets! Let us shine a Light on the secrets now for healing & peace!

10/21 - Today we wrap up First Timothy! Second Timothy begins tomorrow! First Timothy chapter 6 today is full of great wisdom. Verse 7: *"Yet true religion with contentment is great wealth."* Are you seeking true religion? What is true religion? I think Paul gives some great hints to us in verses 11-14: *"Run from all these evil things, and follow what is right and good. Pursue a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight for what we believe. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses. And I command you before God, who gives life to all, and before Christ Jesus, who gave a good testimony before Pontius Pilate, that you obey his commands with all purity."* **Q: Are you holding tightly to the eternal life that God has given you?** Hold tight!

10/21 - Verse 10 is powerful today - *"For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows."* It is important to note that the "love of money" is the root of all kinds of evil. Not money in and of itself - that's not the root of evil. But the *love of money*... this is a great distinction and a great truth. **Do you love money? If so, should you be worried about this? If we love money, might we wander from the faith and pierce ourselves with many sorrows?**

10/22 - Today we begin Paul's second letter to Timothy, which was likely the last letter Paul ever wrote. Some call this letter Paul's "last will and testament!"

~ **Second Timothy** ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Probably Rome

Date: A.D. 66 or 67

Content: This letter was probably the last letter that Paul ever wrote, and he addressed it to his former associate Timothy. It is a personal letter that expresses Paul's deepest feelings and the assurance that though his earthly life might end, God had eternal life waiting for him in heaven. Paul also reflects upon the faithfulness of God (who led him through his entire life) and upon the coming desperate days when men would depart from the truth, refusing to acknowledge God as Lord. He exhorts Timothy to stand firm in the face of the coming persecutions.

Theme: The sovereign control of God over all things is the basic theme of this book. Although distress has come and will continue to increase, God is in control and those who trust him will have nothing to fear. Paul also adds his own testimony of faith, describing how he fought for the truth and will be rewarded by God in the end. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 29-30*)

10/22 - Second Timothy chapter 1 verse 6 is a very important teaching of Paul's that each of us should consider in our own lives: *"This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you."* Do

you notice that Paul says "fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you"? What does this say to you? This says to me that when God gives us spiritual gifts, they don't typically come in full bloom all at once! The gifts are given, and then we are to partner with the Spirit of God in fanning the embers of the spiritual gifts into full flames! This is really powerful to think about. I think sometimes we think that once we're saved, that's it. We're done. We've got all we need and there's nothing more to do except wait for heaven. Well... I think once we're saved the spiritual adventure really begins! God's gives us spiritual gifts. He gives us Kingdom work to do on this side of heaven! **Q: Do you believe that you have spiritual gifts? Do you know what they are? If not, do you suppose that perhaps your spiritual gifts are currently embers and now is the time for you to "fan into flames the spiritual gifts God gave you"?** Let us fan the flames folks!

10/23 - 2 Timothy 2, verse 9 has a great verse for us One Year Bible readers! :) *"But the word of God cannot be chained."* Amen! Well, I suppose in theory one individual Bible could be chained (as you sadly see below), but not all Bibles. God's living and active Word overall cannot be chained! 2 Tim 2 is a great chapter today... just jam packed with wisdom. Verse 4 stands out: *"And as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army."* **Q: How often do we become tied up in affairs of this life.... ? Every day? Every hour? More often than that... ? If we are constantly "distracted" by the affairs of this life, do we lose sight of Jesus? Do we distract ourselves so much so that we can't serve Jesus well?**

10/23 - Verse 21 is a great closing verse today: *"If you keep yourself pure, you will be a utensil God can use for his purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work."* **Q: Will you keep yourself pure? Have you ever realized that you are indeed a utensil for God's use? :**

10/24 - Second Timothy chapter 2 verse 22 is so very true: *"Run from anything that stimulates youthful lust. "* Notice that first word - Run. Flee. Go the other way. U-turn. Don't hang around. Run. **Q: Do you run from things that stimulate lust in your life? Do you really Run? How fast?**

10/24 - Verse 22 continues on with some encouraging words - *"Follow anything that makes you want to do right. Pursue faith and love and peace, and enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts."* I like that - pursue faith. Pursue love. Pursue peace. And - "enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts." **Q: I do pray you have some relationships like this in your life?** They can provide you such great rest and rejuvenation. A small group in your church may be a great way to find these types of relationships if you don't have them currently. Community can be messy & tough & scary at times - but it's so worth it! Please pursue community with other believers. And please do continue to have relationships with others who may not be believers in your life too. Be cautious in that sometimes those old relationships can bring us down or pull us back to old habits if we are not careful. That is why we most definitely need to have a community of those who call on the Lord in our lives as well. In community, let us pursue faith! Pursue love! Pursue peace! With pure hearts!

10/24 - 2 Timothy 3:1-5 are 5 powerful verses that deserve to be meditated upon by each of us: *"You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control; they will be cruel and have no interest in what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that."* **Q: How do these teachings of Paul resonate with you? Do you see parallels in today's modern world with these teachings? Are there some people in your life today that you should literally stay away from?**

10/24 - Okay, and then verses 16 and 17 just make One Year Bible bloggers like myself smile.... :) *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do."* **Q: Do you believe these verses to be true? Do you believe that Scripture is inspired by God? And useful to teach us what is true? And make us realize what is wrong in our lives? Is God's Word fully equipping you for every good thing God wants you to do?**

10/25 - We wrap up Paul's second letter to Timothy today! Titus begins tomorrow! Second Timothy chapter 4 verses 3 & 4 give a good warning for each of us today: *"For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They*

will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear. They will reject the truth and follow strange myths." **Do we do this? Do we "look for" or "shop around for" teachers that we really like? Teachers that may only tell us what we want to hear? That may not challenge us with Truth? That may offer strange myths?**

10/26 - Today we begin Paul's letter to Titus!

~ Titus ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Uncertain

Date: A.D. 64 or 65

Content: Paul addressed this letter to an earlier associate of his whom he had left on the island of Crete to help strengthen the churches there. Titus' task was to ordain elders and to instruct the believers in the basic doctrines of the faith. It was necessary for Paul to go into some detail regarding the qualifications for the office of elder, and to give instructions for others in the church as well. During the course of these instructions, Paul touches upon the problems that face the servant of God and how these problems may be met.

Theme: The need for proper Christian living in the midst of the evil of the world is stressed by Paul in this letter. Around us we see the hostility and corruption of the world, but we must show by our lives what the grace of God can do. Such a life will have an impact, whereas mere words will do little or nothing. *(Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 30)*

10/26 - The first two verses of this letter start so wonderfully! *"This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I have been sent to bring faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives. This truth gives them the confidence of eternal life, which God promised them before the world began--and he cannot lie."* **Q: Do you believe everything in these two verses? Does the Truth give us the confidence of eternal life? Is this a promise of God's that you've accepted? Do you believe Paul's teaching here that God cannot lie? Do you know that Jesus cannot lie?**

10/26 - The next few verses are great instructions for whom should be elders in churches. A portion of verse 8 really stands out to me: *"He must enjoy having guests in his home."* What a great verse! This really shows the importance of hospitality. **Q: Do you enjoy having guests in your home? When people invite you to be guests in their home, do you understand how incredible of an invitation this truly is? Do you allow them to share their hospitality with you?**

10/27 - Titus chapter 2 today is full of great wisdom from Paul! Please let these verses sink in. Verse 14 stands out: *"He (Jesus) gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right."* **Q: Do you believe that Jesus gave his life to free you from every kind of sin? To cleanse you? And to make you his very own? Are you totally committed to doing what is right? Has Jesus' life, death and resurrection freed you from sin?**

10/27 - In Titus 2:11 we read: *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all people."* **Q: Do you believe this? What does God's grace mean to you? How have you experienced God's grace in your life? Has God's grace brought salvation to your life?**

10/28 - Today we also finish up Paul's letter to Titus! The very short letter to Philemon begins tomorrow. The first couple verses of Titus chapter 3 are interesting to me - *"Remind your people to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not speak evil of anyone, and they must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone."* Paul is reminding the church at that time to submit to governmental authority - to be obedient. And to do what is good. This reminds me of Jesus saying in the Gospels - *"give to Caesar what is Caesar's. And to God what is God."* So, there does certainly seem to be a call to be good citizens of the communities we live in - as we strive to be good citizens of the kingdom of God simultaneously. **Q: Do you think these two can happen simultaneously? Or are there points where there may be a conflict between our obedience to God and obedience to the world's civil laws & governments?**

10/29 - Today we begin Paul's letter to Philemon!

~ Philemon ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Rome

Date: A.D. 60 or 61

Content: A slave named Onesimus, who was owned by a Christian in Colosse named Philemon, had run away, ultimately making his way to Rome. Here he heard the gospel from Paul and became a believer. This letter was written by Paul to encourage Philemon to take Onesimus back, this time as more than a servant, indeed, as a Christian brother. There is a play on words in verse 11 where Paul says that now Onesimus (the word means "useful") will in fact be Onesimus – useful both to Philemon and the ministry.

Theme: This short book is quite important in many ways. Two things stand out. First, we see the way in which the gospel worked. No one is beyond the reach of God. If anyone will trust in Jesus, he will become a new person. Second, the ancient barriers of class hatred are being broken down by the gospel – Philemon and Onesimus are now Christian brothers. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 30-31*)

10/29 - Verse 4 stands out to me in Philemon today - *"I always thank God when I pray for you, Philemon..."* **Q: How often do we tell our family or friends that we thank God for them? How often do we tell them that we pray for them? How often do we actually do both of these things?**

10/30 - Today we begin the book of Hebrews! What a wonderful book. I read somewhere that this book is a "letter of encouragement." I do pray this book will encourage you. There is so much in this one! The author of the book of Hebrews is unknown. For many centuries, it was thought to be Paul. However, around the time of the Reformation it was thought that this letter was not from Paul, because the writing style is so different from his other letters - and because in all of his other letters, he identifies himself as the writer of the letter. Some now think that either Barnabas or Apollos were two of the potential writers of this letter. It was likely written before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, because the temple is referred to as if it still exists in this letter. What I love about Hebrews is the multitudes of references back to Old Testament scriptures. As you read through Hebrews, I would encourage you to take note of how many OT scriptures this book is referring back to.

~ Hebrews ~

Author: Uncertain

Place: Uncertain

Date: A.D. 60-69

Content: This important letter was written to Jewish Christians who were perhaps thinking of returning to their old ways in Judaism. It was designed to show that now because Christ has come, there remains nothing in Judaism for the believer. The time of fulfillment has arrived and it would be futile to return to the old life which was inherently inferior to the new life found in the Gospel. This is justified by showing that in every way Christ is better – he is superior to angels, to Moses, and to the Old Testament priest. He mediates a better covenant and offers a better sacrifice. The life of faith that the Christian lives is also better than the old life, proof of this coming from the lives of Old Testament saints who showed the way by their lives of faith.

Theme: The overall superiority of Christ and the Christian life is the central theme of this book. Other religious systems have value, no doubt, but they cannot compare with the work that God has done in Christ. Not even Judaism, which has the Old Testament, can compare, great as it was. Christ is the very essence of God, who did God's work on earth by dying for our sins. What God requires of us now is trust in him. If we have faith then we have entered into the promises of God – fullness of life now and eternal life to come. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 31*)

10/30 - In Hebrews chapter 1, the first 3 verses set the stage incredibly well for this book - *"Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. But now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he made the universe and everything in it. The Son reflects God's own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of his command. After he died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven."* Wow... great stuff. We have indeed been reading recently about God speaking through Jeremiah in our One Year Bible readings. And here we are reminded that God is now speaking to us through Jesus. **Q: How do these 3 verses above speak to your heart? Has Jesus cleansed you from the stain of sin?**

10/31 - Hebrews chapter 2 starts strong with the first verse: *"So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it."* This is powerful. We must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we'll drift away from it. My thoughts here are that listening carefully in this sense also means listening often to the truth. Or reading often

of the truth. Reading the Bible often. Say, every day? :) I think our human nature is such that we'll oftentimes hear something and it goes in one ear and out the other. We need repetition. We need a routine. We need the truth. Please don't drift away from it! **Q: What's your routine to stay close to God and not drift away?**

10/31 - Verse 12 is beautiful: *"I will declare the wonder of your name to my brothers and sisters."* Here Jesus calls those who believe in Him his "brothers and sisters." What a great thing! To be brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ! And in the gospels Jesus also calls those who believe in Him his "friends." This is incredible to consider. **Q: Who better is there to be your brother and your friend than Jesus?**

10/31 - And verse 18 is a great reminder that *"Since he himself has gone through suffering and temptation, he is able to help us when we are being tempted."* We all will go through temptations in this life. Don't feel bad if you are "tempted." Jesus himself was tempted by the devil in the gospels. The problem comes when we give into temptation and commit the sin. However, when in the midst of temptation, this verse reminds us to turn our minds to Jesus when we are being tempted - and he will help us! He has been there - he has been tempted. Another great tool to combat temptation is bringing Scripture to mind. In fact - this is exactly what Jesus did with the devil in the desert. Each temptation the devil threw at Jesus, Jesus combated with Scripture. What a holy sword Scripture is in the midst of temptation! To help us in the midst of temptation, memorizing Scripture regularly is a very wise practice. **Q: Do you memorize Scripture? Do you think it would help you in the midst of temptation?**

PSALMS

10/1 - 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: In what ways is God the strength of your heart?**

10/3 - 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! :) **Q: How are you doing in judging or not judging others these days?**

10/4 - 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...

10/5 - 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.

10/6 - 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: Are you discipling or teaching someone about God's truth, deeds, and love? How are you helping the next generation learn about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?**

10/7 - 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?**

10/8 - 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."* Can you imagine a worse insult? Well, yeah, I suppose there are worse. But coming from a Psalmist, this is no good. **Q: 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)**

10/9 - 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?**

10/10 - 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: If you need to, will you turn yourself again toward God? When is the last time you conscientiously chose to turn back toward God?**

10/11 - 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 the messages that are in those songs 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. So why hang on to them at all? Hope you don't mind this long tangent. **Q: Does anyone else have any music / God experiences that you would be up for sharing with us all?**

10/12 - 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. **Q: But, wow, it makes me wonder if I am truly allowing Jesus to rescue the poor and helpless through me? How about you?**

10/13 - **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...

10/14 - Today in Psalm 84:5 we read: *"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage."* **Q: Where does your strength come from? God? Or your own will-power? Why might it be a good idea to rely on God for your strength rather than yourself? Have you set your heart on a pilgrimage? Is the pilgrimage toward God? Do you think this will be a life-long pilgrimage?** Later in this Psalm, verse 10, we read: *"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere."* This is a song many of us have probably sung before at church. **What does this verse mean to you? What does one day in God's courts look like for you? Why would one day in God's courts be better than one thousand days elsewhere? Do you look forward to spending an eternity in God's courts? Is your heart on a pilgrimage to God's courts?**

10/15 - Psalm 85 is awesome today! So many great verses... I love verse 8 - *"I listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying, for he speaks peace to his people, his faithful ones. But let them not return to their foolish ways."* I like that thought - God speaks peace to his people. **Q: Are we listening carefully to what God is saying? Are we receiving his peace into our hearts? And so importantly - are we not returning to our foolish ways?** Verse 6 reminds me of the Jeremy Camp tune "Revive Me", which is an amazing tune - *"Won't you revive us again, so your people can rejoice in you?"* **Do you need God to revive you? Will you pray for revival?**

10/16 - 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."*

10/17 - Psalm 87 is a celebration of Jerusalem as the City of God, as we read in verse 3 - *"O city of God, what glorious things are said of you!"* As we continue to read through the One Year Bible this year it is amazing to reflect upon how much focus there is on Jerusalem as the city of God. Truly, so many of the Psalms glorify Jerusalem, often as a foreshadowing of the Heavenly City of God. Indeed, as this verse suggests, many glorious things are said of Jerusalem in the Bible! **Q: Have you visited Jerusalem? Is it glorious?**

10/18 - 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...

10/19 - 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?**

10/20 - 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... be it a house church or regular church or some church...) Will you choose to walk in the light of God's presence each week?**

10/21 - 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!

10/22 - Today in Psalm 91:11-12 we read the words quoted by Satan to Jesus during the temptation in the desert: *"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."* **Q: As you read this Psalm, do these words apply to Jesus only? Or to those who trust in the Lord as well? Do you believe that the Lord is guarding you in all your ways? Do you believe this is possible?** (I hope your answer is yes!) Do you recall Jesus' response to Satan in Matthew 4:7: *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* **What do Jesus' words to Satan tell you about these words in the Psalm? Can we believe these words of the Psalmist, and also not put God to the test at the same time? As an example, is driving over the speed limit putting God to the test? Is deciding to skip church one week (or for many weeks) because we have some chores to catch up on / or fun stuff to do / or because we're just tired, putting God to the test in some ways?**

10/23 - Today in Psalm 92 verse 4 we read a joyful verse! *"For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands."* **Q: When was the last time you reflected upon God's deeds? When was the last time you reflected upon God's work of his hands? Do you think this might be a good daily habit? Do God's deeds make you glad? Do you sing for joy regularly for the work of God's hands?**

10/24 - Psalm 94 verse 14 is fantastic today - *"The LORD will not reject his people; he will not abandon his own special possession."* I love this thought - that God will not reject us. He will not abandon us. We are his own special possession. **Q: Do you believe that you are God's own special possession?**

10/26 - Psalm 97 verses 10 & 11 are so spiritually powerful & true: *"You who love the LORD, hate evil! He protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. Light shines on the godly, and joy on those who*

do right." I do believe that God protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. Honestly, I believe that God does this in our lives much more often than we even consciously realize. I am sure there are a few moments in our life when we fully realize we were being protected by God. But, I also have a strong belief that God protects us from unforeseen things that never entered our consciousness. Do bad things still happen to godly people? Yes, of course they do. Why? I can't answer this - I've heard C.S. Lewis' book "[The Problem of Pain](#)" gets at this a bit. I need to read it. We are in a fallen world. There is evil and an enemy in this world. Bad things do happen. But, overall, I believe these verses above are so true. I do believe that light shines on the godly and joy on those who do right. **Q: Do you believe these verses above to be true? Have you experienced the truth of these verses in your life?**

10/27 - Psalm 99 is a great psalm of praise! This Psalm mentions the word Lord 7 times. I like verse 6 a lot: "*Moses and Aaron were among his priests; Samuel also called on his name. They cried to the LORD for help, and he answered them.*" These were obviously some godly men in the Bible. **Q: Do you believe if you cry out to the Lord for help, He will answer you too?**

10/28 - Today we read Psalm 100! I will copy this short Psalm below. Does this Psalm speak to you? Do you feel joy while reading this song? I have read much of "[The Life You've Always Wanted](#)" by [John Ortberg](#) (a great book!) and he has a great chapter on JOY being a spiritual discipline. It is amazing to realize that Joy is a gift from God we should be experiencing every day. I pray you are experiencing joy as a spiritual discipline! Think this Psalmist in Psalm 100 was?
Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving thanks.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving

and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Q: When is the last time you shouted for joy to God? Do you regularly worship God with gladness? Do you come before our Heavenly Father with joyful songs? Do you know that you are God's? Is this fact alone worth being joyful about each and every day?

10/29 - 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. **How often do we have integrity outside of our home - but then not display integrity within our own home? Think this is healthy? Should we strive for leading a life of integrity within our own home?**

10/30 - Psalm 102 is a great reminder to us on the importance to pray. To bring our troubles to the Lord. Psalm 102 can also definitely be a comfort for us during a time of sorrow. I love the reminder about God in verse 27 (which Hebrews also reminded us of today in the verses above...) - "*But you are always the same; your years never end.*" God does not change. He is perfectly consistent. We are oftentimes inconsistent. But, our inconsistencies do not change God's consistency. He is always the same - yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever. God is the one sure thing in life that you can count on - forever. **Q: Do you believe this? Have you experienced this?**

10/31 - 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? 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?** (think now... God loves you so much he's given you beautiful life-giving oxygen to fill your lungs as you read this... praise God for the very air we breath!)

10/31 - 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?**

PROVERBS

10/1 - I like Proverbs 24 verse 14 a lot to day - *“Wisdom is sweet to your soul. If you find it, you will have a bright future, and your hopes will not be cut short.”* I don't know about you, but I want wisdom. I want a bright future with God. I don't want my hopes to be cut short. I want to be with God forever. I believe the Bible is the place I will find the wisdom I so crave. I do not think there is really anything else that will provide the True wisdom that I so desperately crave here on this material earth other than the Bible... **Q: What about you? Do you crave wisdom? Do you believe that wisdom is sweet to your soul? What out there will give you more wisdom than the Bible? Do you look forward to finding wisdom in the Bible today, tomorrow, and every day into your golden years?**

10/2 - Proverbs 24 verses 15 & 16 I think is an interesting look at God's grace and judgment all at once - *“Do not lie in wait like an outlaw at the home of the godly. And don't raid the house where the godly live. They may trip seven times, but each time they will rise again. But one calamity is enough to lay the wicked low.”* This Proverb says that the godly may trip 7 times - but each time they will rise again. This is a great example I think of God's grace. He will pick us back up over and over and over again. However.... this Proverb tells us that one calamity is enough to lay the wicked low. Here I think we see God's judgment. God indeed will lay the wicked low. Now, don't get me wrong. I do think God offers his grace to all - in hopes of winning all into his Kingdom. But unfortunately in this fallen world, some will reject God's grace over and over and over again. And eventually comes judgment. Let us pray for God's continuing grace in our lives and in the lives of those around us. And let us also realize that God's judgment is just as real as God's grace. **Q: When is a time you have fallen, but gotten back up again?**

10/3 - Today in Proverbs chapter 24 verses 17 & 18 we read – *“Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him.”* This is a powerful Proverb and reminds me that Jesus took this Proverb one step further in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5. This Proverb says *“do not gloat when your enemy falls.”* This in and of itself may be a hard teaching in our lives. Well, let us also recall Jesus' teaching in Matthew chapter 5 verses 44 and 45 – *“I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.”* Jesus tells us to actually love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us! How's that for a hard teaching? But. . . a beautiful teaching. A True teaching. A teaching we must put into practice in our lives. So, yes, let us not gloat or rejoice when our enemy falls. But more than that, let us love and pray for our enemies. Why? Perhaps through love and prayer they will one day not be enemies, but could actually be brothers and sisters? **Q: How are you doing with these teachings in your life? Do you have any enemies in your life? Are you not gloating or rejoicing when they fall? Are you literally praying for and loving your enemies today? Would this be a holy thing to put into practice in your life this very day?**

10/4 - We read an interesting Proverb in chapter 24 verses 21 & 22 today - *“My child, fear the LORD and the king, and don't associate with rebels. For you will go down with them to sudden disaster. Who knows where the punishment from the LORD and the king will end?”* I find it interesting that this Proverb says fear both God and the king. This is interesting that "fear" of the king - essentially the government - is put on equal footing with fear of God. I think this is important for us to pay attention to. God cares about governments. God though is of course above all governments. (I think it is important here to note that this Proverb does not say "worship" God and the king - we most definitely should not be worshiping the government....) It's interesting that we are instructed here to fear the king and don't associate with rebels. Or else you'll go down with them to sudden disaster. Generally speaking, I can agree w/ this Proverb. But, this is also one of those Proverbs where I think to myself - "well, wait a second - what about this type of situation....." I am sure we

can all think of some situations where we *should* be associating with "rebels" of the government - and where that association is actually the moral high ground - the right thing to do. (if the government was a Nazi government for example) **Q: What are your thoughts on this Proverb? Should we always / sometimes / never fear both God and "the king"?**

10/5 - Interesting Proverbs today in chapter 24 verses 23 through 25 - *"Here are some further sayings of the wise: It is wrong to show favoritism when passing judgment. A judge who says to the wicked, "You are innocent," will be cursed by many people and denounced by the nations. But blessings are showered on those who convict the guilty."* As we know from our readings earlier this year, God cares a lot about judges - and that judges should judge justly. Honestly, I think being a judge would be a very tough job in a lot of ways. I imagine there may be a judge or two reading this. Hats off to you for your work. I have to believe that obviously most judges would agree with this Proverb. But... there's likely some judges that may not follow this Proverb. That is a sad thing to consider. Here's actually a thought that just popped into my mind here as I am typing this. **Q: How about if you and I pray for our local and national judges on occasion? Do you ever do this?** I confess that I don't. And I should. We all should. Let us pray that our judges will not show favoritism when passing judgment. Let us pray that they convict the guilty. Let us pray God would lead them in wisdom in their judgments that they must make. Let us pray our judges rightly uphold and interpret the laws they are hired to uphold and interpret. Let us pray for our judges!

10/6 - We read an interesting Proverb in chapter 24 verse 26 today - *"It is an honor to receive an honest reply."* This is an interesting Proverb to me because it almost seems to be inferring that it is rare to receive an honest reply! **Q: It wouldn't really be an honor to receive an honest reply if that was standard operating procedure, would it? This is actually a bit frightening to think about - that perhaps many / most replies we receive are not honest?** I think there is truth in this... I'll have to chew on it a bit more. I will say this - how about if you and I make it a practice to give honor to others in our lives by giving them an honest reply! Let us be truth-tellers!

10/7 - Proverbs 24 verse 27 is quite practical - *"Develop your business first before building your house."* This Proverb may simply mean - don't buy or build a house until you know where your source of income is coming from. Develop your business or job first. Makes sense... And this is incredibly practical advice in our modern world today of foreclosures and bankruptcy and debt. Perhaps we're building and buying houses (and many other things) before we have developed our business! **Q: How does this Proverb stand out to you? What does it mean to you?**

10/8 - Proverbs 24:28-29 teaches us: *"Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive. Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did.""* (NIV) This is a powerful reminder that revenge is a bad idea! As is lying - particularly against innocent neighbors! **Q: Any chance we ever plot revenge or lie against others without cause in our lives today? Think this is pleasing to God?** Let us instead live by the Holy Spirit and only be pure witnesses of Truth!

10/9 - Proverbs 24:30-34 is great Proverb today with the lesson coming in verses 33 and 34: *"A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber."* The interesting thing about this Proverb for me personally is that I honestly am not getting enough sleep these days - I could use a little extra sleep! :) And yet, of course, this Proverb is also so very true. I think we need to basically balance what this Proverb teaches versus what our modern world preaches / teaches. I think our modern world can encourage us to be a workaholic - work 50, 60, 70 hours a week! Sleep 4, 5, 6 hours a night! Go, go, go! And yet, I don't think that is what this Proverb is teaching... Certainly not in context with the rest of the Bible. I think being a workaholic is just as dangerous as being slothful. We need to find the happy middle - which I think only is ultimately achieved with God in our life. Without God we'll either think there's no point to life and be slothful or we'll think life is all about money, success, pride, etc. and be a workaholic. Let us live our lives with God where we know that work is important, but that work is most definitely not a god to be worshiped! **Q: Have you ever struggled with sleep issues in your life - too much or too little? How were they resolved? Or, how are you working to resolve them?**

10/10 - Proverbs chapter 25 verses 4 & 5 today are interesting: *"Remove the dross from silver, and the sterling will be ready for the silversmith. Remove the wicked from the king's court, and his reign will be made secure by justice."* I believe dross is some sort of impurity that is in silver when it is heated up. Actually, I just looked it up in the dictionary and dross means: "impurity: worthless or dangerous material that should be removed; "there were impurities in the water" or "[n. DRAHSS] Something that is useless or worthless is dross. This noun refers to the less-than-desirable parts of something. Near synonyms include: refuse, rubbish, and impurity. Another more specific use of the word dross describes the scum or

slag thrown off from metals in the process of melting them. It traces back to the Old English dros, which corresponds to the Middle Dutch droes and the Germanic dros. All of these are words for dregs (less than desirable parts)." So, this proverb is also saying the wicked in the king's court is an impurity that must be removed for a secure reign with justice.

This makes sense in a governmental sense. You don't want crooks on the cabinet. But, I think this also works well in our own personal lives. Sin is a dross - an impurity - in our life that must be removed so that we will be of use to the "silversmith" - Jesus. **Q: Do you have dross / sin in your life? Will you allow God to remove the dross - the impurity - from your life through the work of his expert Silversmith, Jesus?** Please let Jesus heal you of the dross in your life. Jesus is the only one who truly can!

10/11 - In proverbs 25:6-7 today we read - *"Don't demand an audience with the king or push for a place among the great. It is better to wait for an invitation than to be sent to the end of the line, publicly disgraced!"* This reminds me of Jesus' parable of not taking the best seats at the feast, or you may be asked to move down. But take the lowest seats and you may be asked to move on up. This is similar to Jesus' teaching: "those who are first, shall be last. And those who are last, shall be first." Are you comfortable being last? This Proverb today also talks about waiting for an invitation. How are you doing these days on waiting? Are you comfortable with waiting? Are you even comfortable on waiting for God? I'll share with you when I am in a season of "waiting" in my life, I have been incredibly encouraged by Isaiah 40:31 - *"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."* And I've also been encouraged greatly by the Lincoln Brewster song "Everlasting God" that has the awesome line - "Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord!" Amen! **Q: Do you feel your strength rising as you wait upon the Lord?**

10/12 - Proverbs chapter 25 verses 9 & 10 is a strong teaching - *"So discuss the matter with them privately. Don't tell anyone else, or others may accuse you of gossip. Then you will never regain your good reputation."* This Proverb stands out to me for when we see someone who perhaps sins. Maybe a brother or sister in Christ has a moral failing. **Q: And then the big question is this - will we discuss the matter directly with that person, to correct them. OR - will we discuss the matter with others and be a gossip?** Don't get me wrong - there may be a time and a place to discuss the matter with others, such as a pastor, to get advice on how to discuss the matter with the person who stumbled. But, we absolutely should not resort to simply being a gossip about someone else. That's seeing one sin of someone else's and then creating another sin of your own!

10/13 - The 4 verses in Proverbs today are all spot on. How about the last one today in 25:14: *"A person who doesn't give a promised gift is like clouds and wind that don't bring rain."* Don't be that person! Make sure you give promised gifts. **Q: And how about giving unexpected gifts? Gifts for no particular reason? When is the last time you surprised someone with a gift out of the blue?**

10/14 - Proverbs 25 verse 15 is a beautiful meditation in the midst of our hussle-bussle world of today - *"Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can crush strong opposition."* Basically this Proverb tells us that we don't need to be in a hurry or be loud! **Q: Are you a patient person? Do you speak softly / humbly?**

10/15 - Today in Proverbs 25 verse 16 we read - *"If you find honey, eat just enough— too much of it, and you will vomit."* This is a great teaching about not eating junk food! :) Well, a little bit is okay on occasion - but not too much! Seriously, I do think we should be mindful of what we are eating. There are so many studies out there that show that so many of us are not eating well. We are eating way too much "honey." I simply pray that each of us realizes that our body is a temple that is indwelled by the Holy Spirit. We should not worship our bodies. But we should not neglect them either. Let us care for our bodies so that we may serve God and serve others for a long time in this life. God has so many great things for you to do in this life - please eat healthy and exercise regularly so that he can work through you fully and for a good length of time! I think the culture sells us junk food - just like it sells us sexual immorality or materialism. These things might seem appealing on the surface initially - but give them too much attention and they can literally kill you. Leave the junk food alone. Eat God's good food that is good for you! **Q: How are your eating habits these days? How is your exercise life? Is God calling you to improve in either your eating habits or your exercise habits? Why might it be a very good idea to improve your eating habits or exercise habits? Will you do so? Today?**

10/16 - Proverbs 25:17 is a great one! *"Don't visit your neighbors too often, or you will wear out your welcome."* This kind of reminds me of the old adage: "fish and friends go bad after 3 days..." :)

10/17 - Proverbs 25:18 today teaches us of the danger of spreading lies about others! This indeed can indeed be *"as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow."* **Q: How are you doing in your life today of not engaging in telling lies about others? Do you see how this can be as harmful as hitting someone with an ax?**

10/18 - Proverbs 25 verse 20 is intriguing to me today: *"Singing cheerful songs to a person whose heart is heavy is as bad as stealing someone's jacket in cold weather or rubbing salt in a wound."* I've always kind of thought you should try to "cheer someone up" when they are feeling down. **But... this Proverb seems to suggest otherwise? What do you think?** Actually, this does remind me that if someone is grieving the loss of a loved one, we should allow them to grieve. If they don't grieve now, they'll grieve later. It's better to go through the grieving process than to repress it. So, let us be judicious in when we sing cheerful songs to someone whose heart is heavy... They probably don't need to see these 3 folks below at their doorstep early on in the grieving process...

10/19 - Today's Proverbs chapter 25 verses 23 & 24 teach us: *"As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue causes anger! It's better to live alone in the corner of an attic than with a quarrelsome wife in a lovely home."* These verses are great teachings of - 1. don't gossip. 2. don't be contentious. Or if you are a gossip or if you are contentious, then you just might find your spouse hiding from you in the attic... :)

10/20 - Proverbs 25:6 today is strong: *"If the godly compromise with the wicked, it is like polluting a fountain or muddying a spring."* **Q: Is there an area in your life where you might be compromising? Will you return to the pure spring water of life? Where can you find the pure spring water of life? Will you stop polluting in your own life?**

10/21 - Today in Proverbs 25:28 we are taught: *"Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control."* **Q: Does this Proverb remind you of our recent readings in Jeremiah? Are there parallels to the captivity of the Israelites and this Proverb? How does this Proverb speak to you personally? Are your walls in need of some repair? Will you allow Jesus to repair them? Will you allow Jesus to restore self-control in those areas of your life that are lacking in self-control?**

10/22 - Proverbs 26 verse 2 is a great reminder to not curse anyone! We are not the judge. God is. We cannot truly curse anyone. Any curse we offer is an unfair curse. *"Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an unfair curse will not land on its intended victim."* **Q: Why do we ever behave like fluttering sparrows or a darting swallows by giving unfair curses? Do we realize that any curse we attempt to impose will not land on our intended victim, but could come right back on ourselves like a boomerang?**

10/23 - In Proverbs 26 today I think we have a catch-22! Someone correct me if I'm wrong here in verses 4 & 5 - *"When arguing with fools, don't answer their foolish arguments, or you will become as foolish as they are. When arguing with fools, be sure to answer their foolish arguments, or they will become wise in their own estimation."* **Q: So do we not answer their foolish arguments.... or do we? :)** I can see the wisdom in both verses in different circumstances...

10/24 - Proverbs 26 verse 7 is powerful for us to consider: *"In the mouth of a fool, a proverb becomes as limp as a paralyzed leg."* This makes me realize that sometimes the messenger can be as important as the message... **Q: If we are messengers in some sort of way for God - by how we live our lives, love others, serve others, etc. - how are we doing? Are we worthy messengers? Or are we diluting the message in some ways?** Ultimately God's Word and message will proceed forward with or without us. But it's obviously such a blessing for us to be part of God's message - participating in God's process of redeeming the world. Let us pray we are good messengers for God in our lives today!

10/25 - Today in Proverbs 26:12 we read: *"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."* This is an impactful verse for me. It reminds me of the need for true humility in our lives – and realizing where true wisdom comes from in our lives – God. **Q: Are we sometimes wise in our own eyes? If so, could this lead to trouble? Do you ever pray to God to keep you humble? Do you joyfully accept being humble in your life at all times? Will you pray to God to give you the strength to remain humble?**

10/26 - Proverbs 26:13 today is a powerful teaching: *"The lazy person is full of excuses, saying, 'I can't go outside because there might be a lion on the road! Yes, I'm sure there's a lion out there!'"* **Q: In addition to lazy, I wonder if we can sometimes use the word "worried" or "anxious" in place of lazy in this Proverb? Are we afraid of lions out there? Can we instead rely on the one true "Lion" who will be with us wherever we go?**

10/27 - Proverbs 26:17 makes me chuckle. I don't know what it is about this Chapter 26 of Proverbs, but the analogies are cracking me up lately. (I didn't post up the vomit analogy a day or two ago... you'll have to look that one up...) Today's verse tells us - "*Yanking a dog's ears is as foolish as interfering in someone else's argument.*" **Q: Why would you ever yank a dog's ears?? :) And thus, why would you interfere in someone else's argument?** This is of course a true and effective proverb analogy! Let that sleeping dog lie!

10/28 - Proverbs 26 verses 18 & 19 are so true... "*Just as damaging as a mad man shooting a lethal weapon is someone who lies to a friend and then says, "I was only joking."* Please don't lie to your friends ever as a joke... this is such a bad idea... In my past I did lose a friendship this way, which I deeply regret. Lying jokes aren't funny at all! **Q: Have you ever experienced the teaching of this Proverb?**

10/29 - Proverbs 26:20 is another excellent reminder to not gossip - and when you stop, the gossip stops. Interesting how that works... "*Fire goes out for lack of fuel, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops.*" **Q: Are you fueling any quarrels due to gossip these days? Will you stop being the fuel for that fire so that the fire can finally go out?**

10/30 - Proverbs 26:22 is another great reminder that rumors can invade our hearts - "*What dainty morsels rumors are-- but they sink deep into one's heart.*" We must always remember Proverbs 4:23 - "*guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*" Don't let rumors get in there!

10/31 - Proverbs Chapter 26, verse 23 is so true - "*Smooth words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a common clay pot.*" Be watchful for the smooth words or smooth talker. Again, think of the devil tempting Jesus in the desert in the gospels... **Q: do you think those were smooth words being said by the devil in those temptations? Another thing I'd like to caution each of us on - let us not be smooth talkers ourselves! Really. Think about your talk to others - are your words simple and sincere? Or are you smooth talking at times?** I on occasion catch myself "talking smooth" and I'm so disappointed when I hear myself talk like that! I don't think I'm hiding a wicked heart with those smooth words - but I'm sounding just fake as can be. I think maybe I default to smooth talking if I'm feeling tired or rushed or not confident for whatever reasons. I just pray that we would be sincere-talkers. Speak sincerely to each other from the heart. Through our relationship with Jesus, we should have nothing to hide from others. Let us leave our smooth talking ways completely behind! Let us talk simply and sincerely!

Group discussions:

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

Each group is encouraged to close in prayer.

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

- 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:

Visit www.OneYearBibleBlog.com this next week for daily commentary and questions for reflection.

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