

Notes & Group Questions from November 14-20 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

EZEKIEL 29:1 - 41:26

11/14 - Ezekiel chapters 29 & 30 are fascinating in that we are seeing God lay out the plans for Egypt's transformation from being one of the most powerful nations in the world to one of the least powerful - but God does provide some redemption for Egypt after 40 years of hardship. However, God says that Egypt will never again reach the heights of power in the world that it had under the Pharaohs. Verse 14 in chapter 29 captures this: *"I will restore the prosperity of Egypt and bring its people back to the land of Pathros in southern Egypt from which they came. But Egypt will remain an unimportant, minor kingdom."* Very interesting to reflect on this. Verse 7 in chapter 29 stands out as to why God is unhappy with Egypt (in part - idols are another reason...) - *"Israel leaned on you, but like a cracked staff, you splintered and stabbed her in the armpit. When she put her weight on you, you gave way, and her back was thrown out of joint."* God was not happy that Israel created an alliance with Egypt as we read earlier in Ezekiel - but at the same time, God was not happy with Egypt for bailing on the alliance when Babylon attacked Jerusalem. **Q: Think God likes for us to keep our promises in our life? Do you keep your promises in your life? Are you careful to never make empty promises?** The end of chapter 29 is fascinating in that God decides to allow Babylon to take plunder from Egypt in light of its war against Tyre (see yesterday's readings below). We continue to see that God is using King Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of Babylon for His purposes - for a time. We are reminded though at the end of this chapter in verse 21 - *"And the day will come when I will cause the ancient glory of Israel to revive."* God's still got the redemption of Israel in mind...

11/15 - I think Ezekiel chapter 31 starts out with a trick question from God to Egypt in verse 2: *"Son of man, give this message to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all his people: 'To whom would you compare your greatness?'"* The proper answer to this question is probably somewhere along the humble lines of, "no one - I am not great at all. I wouldn't dare compare myself to others. Everything I am and have comes from you God." Think Pharaoh would answer the question in this humble way? :) Better yet - maybe we should ask ourselves this question today as well. And think about how we would answer it. **Q: What if someone stops you on the street tomorrow and asks you this question. What would be your reply?** Here it is. **I ask this of you now: "To whom would you compare your greatness?"**

11/15 - Ezekiel chapters 31 & 32 are great studies on pride... pride of a nation, and pride of individuals. And the dangers of pride - where pride will ultimately lead someone. In chapter 32 verse 19 God asks the rhetorical question (not a trick question this time) - *"O Egypt, are you lovelier than the other nations? No! So go down to the pit and lie there among the outcasts."* **Q: Today in our lives, do we ever struggle with pride? Do we compare ourselves to others? Do we consider ourselves lovelier than others?** My hunch is that we too often do...

11/16 - In Ezekiel chapter 33 today we see Ezekiel appointed as the Watchman of Israel - once again. You'll recall this happened previously in chapter 3 of Ezekiel as well. The difference is that now we're in the post-destruction of Jerusalem & the Temple, so we'll quickly start to see more of a message of hope & redemption, in addition to continued calls for repentance. I think in verse 11 we start to see this shift in the Lord's wanting to restore Jerusalem & Israel again: *"As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die?"* The call for repentance... **Q: Are there areas in your life where God may be calling you to "Turn!"? Will you Turn?**

11/16 - Verse 32 stands out to me today when God talks about how the exiles view Ezekiel's messages: *"You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don't do it!"* This makes me think even of ourselves - maybe even in our churches... **Q: Do we sometimes go to church looking for a good "performance" from the church or musicians or pastors? And maybe miss the gospel message? Do we applaud the performance? Even hear what is said? But don't do anything about it...?**

11/16 - Ezekiel chapter 34 reminds me a lot of the famous and beautiful Psalm 23 - "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want..." However, before we get to God being the Good Shepherd - and hear about the Good Shepherd to come - there is some rebuking of the "shepherds" of Israel at that time, that may also have a message for us. In verses 3 & 4 we

read: "You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured." **Q: Could this verse speak into our lives in some way? Is it possible that we eat fine food and wear fine clothes at the expense of others in need? Are we consistently strengthening the weak? Healing the sick? Binding up the injured? 1.2 billion people in the world live on less than \$1 a day. Are you doing something to care for these brothers and sisters on a consistent basis? What are you doing?**

11/17 - Ezekiel chapter 36 is an awesome chapter looking at the restoration of Israel, post-exile. I like that there are prophecies to the mountain and hills and valleys in this chapter! Great verses. Verses 8 & 9 stood out to me - "*But the mountains of Israel will produce heavy crops of fruit to prepare for my people's return--and they will be coming home again soon! See, I am concerned for you, and I will come to help you. Your ground will be tilled and your crops planted.*" I like that God is concerned for the mountains and he wants them to be fruitful. If He is concerned for the mountains, think how much more He is concerned for each of our lives... **Q: Think He wants our lives to be fruitful as well? How so?** Verse 22 shows God's grace - "*I am bringing you back again but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name.*" The first sentence shows grace in that God is bringing them back, even though they are undeserving. The second sentence you might not initially see the grace in it - but, God is protecting his holy name so that ultimately all people's in all nations will come to faith in him - and not idols, which deliver nothing and lead to the grave. If God did not bring the Israelites back and protect his name, the rest of the world would see no reason to turn from their idols. Verses 26 & 27 sound very New Testament / new covenant - "*And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command.*" **Q: Do you have a new heart? With new and right desires? Do you have a new Spirit in you?**

11/18 - Ezekiel chapter 37 starts with a fascinating vision! This vision of the valley of dry bones is an allusion to the exiled Israelites. As God brings life and breath into the bones, he will do the same for the exiles, and bring them back to their home land. In a sense, bring them back to life! Verse 14 sums up the purpose of this vision nicely - "*I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD.*" Again, we hear the words, as we have so often in Ezekiel - "*then you will know that I am the Lord.*" **Q: Today in our lives, do we know that the Lord is the Lord? How so?** Verses 15-23 are great - discussing the reunification of the two kingdoms of Israel since the time of Solomon. Israel will become one kingdom again. And verses 24 through 28 point toward the coming Messiah, Jesus. Verse 26 stands out - "*And I will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant.*" **Have you entered into this covenant of peace with God? The everlasting covenant? Have you opened the door to Jesus in your heart? Do you hear him knocking? Maybe late at night, do you hear Jesus knocking? Offering you an everlasting covenant of peace? Will you open the door of your heart?**

11/19 - Ezekiel chapter 39 continues the destruction of Gog! See yesterday's posting below for more details on who and what Gog may be. Verse 25 stands out to me in today's readings: "*So now the Sovereign LORD says: I will end the captivity of my people; I will have mercy on Israel, for I am jealous for my holy reputation!*" We see that the exile is coming near to an end. Ezekiel and Jeremiah have been two pretty heavy books with prophecies against Israel. This chapter continues to show the redemption and return of the exiles from Babylon to Israel is soon coming. It is interesting that God is jealous for his holy reputation in the verse above... **Q: are we ourselves also jealous for God's holy reputation? Should we be?**

11/19 - Ezekiel chapter 40 is very interesting! It begins the vision and description of what many call "Ezekiel's Temple." Essentially, this temple has not been built. Some say that this temple will be built in the future - during Christ's millennial reign. Some say it's a heavenly temple. Some say it was the vision for the temple that should have been built during Ezra's days in 517 B.C., but was not. It is fascinating to look at various theories on the various temples.

11/20 - Ezekiel chapters 40 and 41 in today's readings include verses where we read a lot about measurements and cubits and such! I have to admit that I sometimes zone out a bit when reading these types of details in the Old Testament. However - something that popped into my mind once when reading through these types of verses that has benefited me greatly in my appreciation of measurements and such is this - God is a God of precision. God is a God of detail. God is an organized God. Which I think is great news! I mean, look at our own human bodies and all our internal organs. We are wonderfully made by a God who is a God of precision and detail. So, remembering this when I read these types of measurements verses helps. It helps me keep my focus and interest on what I'm reading. I hope this helps you in some way as you read through detailed chapters like these in the Bible. **Q: If God showed this much**

organization and care for Ezekiel's Temple, do you suppose he continues to show his organization and care for our local churches today?

11/20 - Ezekiel chapter 41 verse 3 stands out today: *"Then he went into the inner room at the end of the Holy Place."* This is interesting in that the angelic being leading Ezekiel through this vision and the temple enters the Most Holy Place - Ezekiel does not. Even though it's a vision. And even though God's presence is not in the Most Holy Place at this time (we'll see the Presence coming next chapter). Yet Ezekiel does not enter. Why? Because the law was that only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place. This shows great obedience on Ezekiel's part! Even in a vision, he's obedient.

Q: Are there areas of our life where God is calling us to be obedient? Even if we think our obedience in a specific circumstance or situation won't matter (e.g. a vision or a dream or even a small circumstance in real life) - will we still be obedient?

HEBREWS 11:32 - JAMES 4:17

11/14 - Hebrews chapter 11 verses today finish out this chapter on "faith" strongly! Please take a minute to re-read this entire chapter 11 if you can. It is an amazing chapter of our spiritual ancestor's faith. **Q: How does reading about our spiritual ancestor's faith speak into your life today? Are their areas of your life where you can better live with faith? Can you turn over your fears and anxieties to God, in faith? Knowing, in faith, God will ultimately provide and thus there is nothing to fear or worry about today?**

11/14 - Hebrews 11 verse 38 stands out to me today: *"They were too good for this world."* I think it is helpful to remember that this current world is not our ultimate eternal home. It is temporary. We're called to be saints and love others in this world. But, we should not become too attached to it or what it offers. God has a better home for us in mind at the end of our race - our journey through this life. This verse says that our spiritual ancestors were too good for this world - and hence, many of them suffered. But they suffered knowing it was temporary. Impermanent. I don't think that this verse should make us conceited or arrogant in any way - being "too good" for this world - but hopefully it helps us realize that this life is not necessarily going to be easy in this world if we are truly living in faith.... In fact, sometimes I wonder that if our life is really easy if we are really living our faith? I just hope we never get complacent and chill out and relax because "we are so saved".... There is a dying world out there that needs us! **Q: How are you truly living your life in faith these days?**

11/14 - Hebrews chapter 12 verse 1 is phenomenal to think about - *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress."* I think sometimes we think that we are doing this Christian walk / faith thing alone. We think we are in this alone - just us & God. I think this verse helps remind us that there is a huge crowd of witnesses that are in this with us. I like to think of this cloud of witnesses cheering us on in our walk! They are rooting for us! **Q: So - in light of knowing we have these saints rooting for us, doesn't it make sense that we should strip away sin that hinders our walk? Is there sin your life that is hindering your walk? Will you allow Jesus to strip it away so that the cloud of witnesses can continue to cheer you on toward the finish line? How do we run this race toward the finish line well? I think verse 2 tells us how - "We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish." Are your eyes on Jesus? Constantly? Does your faith depend solely on Jesus? Is your faith as fresh today as when you first came to faith in Jesus? Verse 3 is a powerful reflection of Jesus' passion.... "Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don't become weary and give up." Think about what Jesus endured at the hands of the Roman guards. Think about Jesus' resolve. He was running the race toward the finish line. Can reflecting on Jesus' passion help us resist becoming weary and giving up? How often do you reflect on Jesus' passion? Verses 5 & 6 quote Proverbs 3:11-12 and the following verses then go into explaining this wisdom of this Proverb - "My child, don't ignore it when the Lord disciplines you, and don't be discouraged when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes those he accepts as his children." Do you believe this proverb to be true? Is the Lord perhaps disciplining you in some way today? Are you accepting or ignoring the discipline? Do you believe that the Lord disciplines those he loves? And that this "divine discipline" is ultimately good for you and everyone you come in contact with in your life?**

11/15 - Hebrews chapter 12 verse 14 starts out strong with: *"Try to live in peace with everyone, and seek to live a clean and holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord."* I love this! If we seek to live in peace with everyone and live a clean and holy life people around us will see the Lord. This is very powerful to think about... You've probably heard this said before: "You may be the only Bible anyone ever reads". Or "you may be the only Jesus anyone ever meets." (not you being Jesus of course, but Christ within you shining through you!) **Q: Are you living in peace with everyone?**

Are you seeking to live a clean and holy life? Are others seeing the Lord in you? Are others reading the Bible through you?

11/15 - Verse 28 stands out to me today: *"Since we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe."* This is an interesting phrasing - worship God with holy fear and awe. It reminds me a lot of a lyric in Chris Tomlin's single, "Indescribable." He sings - "humbly we fall to our knees and say, 'you are amazing God!'" That one word "humbly" jumped out at me in this song. **Q: It seems to me that there should be some reverence, holy fear, awe, and humility as we worship God? And maybe not just take worship and our relationship for God lightly? But be thankful for the opportunity to worship God?** Just some questions... Because then verse 29 tells us *"For our God is a consuming fire."*

11/16 - We wrap up the book of Hebrews today, and start James tomorrow! Hebrews chapter 13 verse 2 has always stood out to me - *"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!"* Powerful eh? When we show hospitality to strangers, we may be entertaining angels! Something to definitely keep in mind... Verse 7 I think is a great reminder for each of us to rejoice in and show some appreciation for those that helped bring us to faith and to study the Bible - *"Remember your leaders who first taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and trust the Lord as they do."* **Q: Is there someone right now that this verse makes you think of? Can you send them a card or a quick email of encouragement to thank them for the impact they have had on your spiritual life?** Verse 8 is infamous and powerful and please memorize this one: *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."* **This is an easy verse to memorize, yes?** Say it with me. Hebrews 13:8 - "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Yep, I think you got it. :)

11/17 - Today we begin the book of James!

~ James ~

Author: James

Place: Uncertain

Date: A.D. 45-49

Content: The book of James was written to Jewish Christians in order to provide them with some practical instructions in the Christian life. It contains many short proverbial sayings and reflects in a remarkable way the teachings of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount. The problems addressed show the kind of difficulties that were troubling the church. We read of pride, discrimination, greed, lust, hypocrisy, worldliness, and backbiting. James writes to correct these evils by showing that faith without works is dead; that is, mere profession of faith is not enough. True faith will issue forth in a good life as surely as a good tree bears good fruit and not thistles.

Theme: James stresses the need for Christian living both to show the reality of one's inner faith and to show the world that the Gospel does in fact change lives. If a person says he is a Christian but is no different than when he was an unbeliever, what benefit has there been either for him or for the needy world? But in fact the Gospel does change lives and if we will commit ourselves to Jesus, we will find that from our living faith will flow living deeds of love and kindness. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 31-32*)

11/17 - Today in James chapter 1 verses 2 – 4 we read: *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."* **Q: Are you facing a trial of some kind in your life today? Do you see the wisdom in considering this trial pure joy? Do you think it is possible that this trial will develop perseverance in your life? Maturity? Completeness? Will you persevere in this trial? Will you persevere with pure joy?**

11/17 - I like verse 17 today - *"Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above, who created all heaven's lights. Unlike them, he never changes or casts shifting shadows."* Think about this for a bit - God is a God of no shadows. Pure light. Unchanging. No shadows. I like that thought of no shadows a lot... Of course, this means we can't hide out in God's shadows either! :) Praise God for his unchanging, un-shadowed & pure Light! And verse 18 is an awesome closing to the James readings today - *"In his goodness he chose to make us his own children by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his choice possession."* Congratulations to you for diving into God's true Word today - the Bible! Please continue to accept the gift of God's true word by reading the Bible each day.... this will bless and change your life immensely. **Q: Do you realize that you are God's choice possession? Do you realize that you are a child of God? How does this affect how you live?**

11/18 - James' verses today again are all so powerful... I am enjoying this book immensely. Chapter 1 Verse 27 is a great reminder to care for the poor amongst us - *"Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us."* **Q: Are you caring for those in their time of trouble? Are you refusing to let the world corrupt us? Do you care for orphans and widows?**

11/18 - James chapter 2 verse 17 is a famous one - *"So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is no faith at all--it is dead and useless."* Or, paraphrased, faith without works is dead. It's important of course to remember that works alone do not save us - only faith does through the grace of God. But, works naturally come through that saving faith. They are a natural by-product and demonstrate that we have a true and living faith. **Q: How does this verse stand out to you? What does it mean to your faith life?**

11/19 - James chapter 2 today continues in the strong words about good deeds accompanying a living faith. James' arguments are summed up in verse 26: *"Just as the body is dead without a spirit, so also faith is dead without good deeds."* Another very interesting verse in this chapter that always jumps out at me is verse 19 - *"Do you still think it's enough just to believe that there is one God? Well, even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror!"* I had someone once tell me that they believed in God - but that they realized that so do the demons. The difference of course is that the demons are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit, as are those who have faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. **Q: Still, a bit of a scary verse to think about, no?** Not necessarily for our own lives, perhaps, but maybe for others we know. Let us pray that we and others we know not only know God, but know Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit!

11/19 - James 3 verses 9 and 10 are powerful reminders on the danger of what can come out of our mouths: *"Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it breaks out into curses against those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!"* How true is this... Reminds me of the old saying of being "two-faced". Or maybe having a forked-tongue? The key here to how we can control the tongue I believe is answered in verse 13 - *"If you are wise and understand God's ways, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise!"* If we can focus on wisdom and what's going on inside our hearts and minds, we won't have to worry about what comes out of the mouth! **Q: How do you control your tongue?**

11/20 - James chapter 4 continues to just level me... This book is phenomenal. I need to read this book more than just once a year when I come around to it in the One Year Bible. The verse today that just made me set the Bible down for a minute and reflect was verse 4: *"You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with this world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy this world, you can't be a friend of God."* That is some heavy duty language... it pierced me in reading it today. **Q: Am I a friend of the world? Am I trying to be a friend of the world? Per this verse, where does this pursuit of the world put me with my relationship with God? Am I an "adulterer", in the sense of my relationship with God and the world?** (now, please keep in mind, I'm a huge fan and believer of grace... but sometimes we need to let verses like this really sink in. We need to reflect. And respond if need be... and let Jesus save us and heal us if need be...)

11/20 - And verse 8 is so true as well: *"Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you."* Another one to put into memory - and practice each day. **Q: Have you drawn close to God this very day? And has God drawn close to you?** Verse 14 I think is so helpful for us to remember - and to give Thanks for each day we have: *"How do you know what will happen tomorrow? For your life is like the morning fog--it's here a little while, then it's gone."* Life is short. Every day is indeed a blessing and an opportunity to love and know God more. Please take advantage of each and every day God gives you. Diving into his Word each day through the One Year Bible is one amazing thing you can do every day. As is prayer of course!

PSALM 112:1 - 118:29

11/14 - Psalm 112 is a great look at a godly person's life. Today in verse 1 we read: *"Blessed is the person who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands."* **Q: Is fear of the Lord healthy? Why or why not? Is fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? Are you blessed if you fear the Lord? Do you find great delight in God's commands? What are God's commands?** And verse 9 is a great reminder - *"They give generously to those in need."* **Are you doing something in your life to serve the poorest of the poor?** There are 1.2 billion people living in our world today on less than \$1 per day. **Is there something you can do to give generously to those in need?**

11/15 - Psalm 113 & 114 today are very interesting and important Psalms! These are 2 of 6 Psalms, 113 to 118, that form the "Egyptian Hallel." These Psalms were used in Jewish liturgy at the great religious festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication, Weeks, New Moon. At Passover Psalm 113 & 114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115 - 118 were sung after the meal. **Q: As you read these two Psalms today, do you sense joy in the Lord's work? Justice? Glory? Power? Does reading these two Psalms make you want to celebrate and give thanks for the Lord and all he has done throughout history and in your life?**

11/16 - Today in Psalm 115 verse 1 we will read – *"Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory."* (Chris Tomlin fans out there will recognize this as one of his many awesome worship tunes. . .) I don't know how this verse strikes you, but it strikes me hard. Which is good. I think sometimes I do things for my own glory. And this verse, and really the entire Bible, is clear that the glory is God's and not ours. Yeah, sure, we will live our lives full of "glorious" moments when we are loving God and loving people. But, we should not be living our lives to build up our own fame or our own glory. As Rick Warren states so well in the 1st sentence of the 1st chapter of his book "Purpose Driven Life"- "It is not about you." And this is true. It is about God. And this is good news! Really. I have tried to live my life in the past where it was all about me. And this was a miserable way to live life. I pray that you see the incredible wisdom in this verse - *"Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory."* **Q: How are you living your life? Are you living your life to advance the fame and glory of God? Are you doing this by loving God and loving other people with all that you are? Or, are you by chance living your life to advance the fame and glory of yourself? And if so. . . how's this going for you?**

11/17 - Psalm 116 verses 1 & 2 are amazing- *"I love the LORD because he hears and answers my prayers. Because he bends down and listens, I will pray as long as I have breath!"* **Q: How is your prayer life these days? Do you believe God bends down and listens to your prayers? And answers them? Will you pray as long as you have breath?**

11/18 - Psalm 117 is the shortest of all the Psalms - and the shortest chapter in the entire Bible. This Psalm is said to basically be one long Alleluia. :) Actually verse 1 has a very important message - *"Praise the LORD, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth."* This demonstrates that God was very interested in the salvation of the Gentiles and all the nations in the Old Testament. And not just in the New Testament as we get to the book of Acts. This was part of the plan all along...

11/19 - I came across a wonderful speculation on Psalm 118! Commentaries suggested that Jesus and the disciples sung this psalm/hymn at the end of the Last Supper. Matthew chapter 26 verse 30 tells us - *"When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."* This adds a bit of a new dimension to this Psalm! The reason for this speculation is because this is the final Psalm in the Egyptian Hallel of Psalms 113 through 118. These Psalms were used in Jewish liturgy at the great religious festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication, Weeks, New Moon. At Passover Psalm 113 & 114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115 - 118 were sung after the meal. Perhaps, even after the Last Supper by Jesus and the disciples? Verse 8 in this Psalm stands out to me big time: *"It is better to trust the LORD than to put confidence in people."* Kind of strong words I know... but what do you think? Might people, on occasion, let you down? Obviously, we know the answer to this one. People will let us down. Even our closest friends and family at some point will let us down. However - I don't think this means we give up on investing and loving friends and family! It just means we should not be surprised when someone let's us down. That's human nature. None of us is perfect this side of heaven - you will obviously let people down too. Realizing this, I think all of us should be prepared to forgive others and to ask for forgiveness of others. **Q: However, what do you think on this question: Will God ever let you down? Will Jesus ever let you down?** Please know He won't! In fact, I believe that He's holding you up right this very moment...

11/20 - Psalm 118 is the last half of the psalm possibly sung by Jesus and the disciples after the Last Supper - see yesterday's posting below for details. What an amazing Psalm... Verse 22 was quoted by Jesus in Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17 and he used this verse to refer to himself - *"The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone."* **Q: Do you believe this verse applies to Jesus? Is Jesus the cornerstone in your life?**

PROVERBS 27:17 - 28:5

11/14 - Today in Proverbs 27:17 we read: *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."* This is such a powerful proverb to memorize, meditate upon, and put into practice in our lives! **Q: Do you see the value in this proverb? Are you "iron" in someone else's life? Is someone "iron" in your life? Are you being sharpened? Why would you want to be sharpened? Is there some dullness spiritually in your life today? How will you seek to**

sharpen that dullness? Will you seek to sharpen that dullness through involvement in a local church? Do you think that a church community can sharpen you? Do you think involvement in a weekly small group can sharpen you?

11/15 - This week in Proverbs 27 verse 19 we read: *"As water reflects a face, so a person's heart reflects the person."* **Q: How is your heart these days? Take a minute and really reflect on this question. How is your heart? Your heart toward others? Toward your family? Toward God? Toward Jesus? Is your heart full of love? Overflowing with love? (if maybe not, please read [First Corinthians chapter 13](#) for a good refresher on love) What is your heart reflecting to others you come in contact with these days? Are you reflecting love to others? Are you reflecting Jesus?**

11/16 - Proverbs 27 verse 21 I think carries forward our theme from the opening of Psalm 115 again very succinctly - *"Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by being praised."* **Q: When you are praised, where should the glory go?**

11/17 - Proverbs 27:23-27 are pretty much just agricultural advice. :) Agriculture was obviously a huge part of the B.C. economy - and still is today. So, a few proverbs verses on agriculture certainly makes sense!

11/18 - Proverbs 28 verse 1 today teaches us: *"The wicked run away when no one is chasing them, but the godly are as bold as lions."* **Q: This can only cause us to ask ourselves - are we running with no one chasing us? Or are we bold like lions?**

11/19 - Proverbs 28 verse 2 today is a great reminder for us to pray for our leaders in power nationally, locally, and worldwide. *"When there is moral rot within a nation, its government topples easily. But with wise and knowledgeable leaders, there is stability."* **Q: How often do you pray for your leaders? Will you cover them with prayer today?**

11/20 - Proverbs 28 verse 4 today teaches us: *"To reject the law is to praise the wicked; to obey the law is to fight them."* This is a great reminder that obeying God "heaps coals upon the head" of those who are not obeying God. Let us obey the Lord! Let us obey the lion of Judah!

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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