

**One Year Bible Blog – Weekly Notes - www.OneYearBibleBlog.com
December 26 - December 31, 2010, [Copyright © 2004-2010 One Year Bible Blog](http://www.OneYearBibleBlog.com)
Weekly Notes will cover our readings from Sundays through Saturdays**

Notes & Group Questions from December 26 - 31 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

ZECHARIAH 9:1 - MALACHI 4:6

12/26 - I love it! In today's readings Zechariah prophesies 500 years in advance about Jesus entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey to a hail of Hosanna's (days before his death - popularly known as Palm Sunday) in verse 9: *"Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt."* **Q: This reminds me of a saying of one of my classmates in a Bible study class: "You can't understand the New Testament if you don't understand the Old Testament!" Q: How have the prophecies in the Old Testament this year strengthened your faith in the New Testament? How have they strengthened your faith in Jesus?**

12/27 - We continue to read some incredible prophecies from Zechariah today about Jesus, the Messiah, coming in 500 years! In chapter 10 verse 4 today Zechariah calls Jesus the "cornerstone": *"From Judah will come the cornerstone, the tent peg, the bow for battle, and all the rulers."* Why do you think Zechariah called Jesus the cornerstone? You'll recall that we read earlier in the year this passage in Matthew chapter 21 verse 42: *"Then Jesus asked them, 'Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'"* **Q: Have you heard Jesus referred to as the cornerstone in our world today? Is Jesus the cornerstone of your church? Is Jesus the cornerstone of your life?**

12/27 - In Zechariah chapter 11 verses 12 & 13 we have a foreshadowing of Judas betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver - and Judas' money being used to buy the potters field: *"And I said to them, 'If you like, give me my wages, whatever I am worth; but only if you want to.'" So they counted out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—this magnificent sum at which they valued me! So I took the thirty coins and threw them to the potter in the Temple of the Lord."* (hopefully you caught Zechariah's sarcasm in "this magnificent sum"...) A couple things to note here - 30 pieces of silver was the price of a slave among the Israelites in ancient times. Paying this price to Zechariah was an insult. However, paying this price for the life of Jesus was an unfathomable insult. Our Lord's life was sold for 30 pieces of silver... During this Christmas season this is really sad to think about - it's sad to think about this at any time, but somehow just celebrating our Lord's birth 2 days ago, and then now thinking about how his precious life was sold for 30 silver pieces is just incredibly sad for me today. Zechariah was rejected. Jesus was rejected. **Q: Think it's possible that if you and I really live our lives for God - really live our faith - that we too may be rejected some day? That perhaps someday our lives could be sold for just 30 pieces of silver?** (There are modern day martyrs whose lives were taken for much less than this amount...)

12/28 - Today in Zechariah chapter 12 we begin the second oracle in the book of Zechariah! It is interesting to note that the Hebrew term for "oracle" or "the word of the Lord" is only used 3 times in the Old Testament - here in 12:1, in Zechariah 9:1 and in Malachi 1:1. This indicates that Zechariah chapters 9 through 14 were likely written at about the same time as the book of Malachi - the last book of the Old Testament - which we'll be reading in a couple of days! :) This 2nd oracle in Zechariah consists of the final siege of Jerusalem and Jesus' return as Messiah to defeat Israel's enemies and establish his kingdom. Chapter 12 verse 10 is a powerful Messianic verse in today's readings: *"Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and on all the people of Jerusalem. They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for him as for a firstborn son who has died."* The first sentence indicates a pouring out of the Holy Spirit. In the second sentence it appears that Jesus is speaking in the first person - here in the Old Testament! The use of the word pierced here is similar to Psalm 22:16 - *"they have pierced my hands and my feet"* and John 19:34-37 - *"Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken,' and, as another scripture says, 'They will look on the one they have pierced.'"* Chapter 13 verse 7 is another powerful verse about Jesus: *"'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, the man who is my partner, says the LORD Almighty. Strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn against the lambs."* This last sentence is quoted by Jesus just before his arrest in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. It is applied to the scattering of the apostles, but can also be considered for the dispersion of the Jews in A.D. 70 after the

destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. **Q: And yet, even after the sheep were scattered, do you realize that Jesus is seeking after his lost sheep? Have you been found by Jesus? How are you helping other lost sheep find Jesus in your life?**

12/29 - Today we finish the book of the prophet Zechariah! Only one more book in the Bible to go with Malachi, which we'll read over the two remaining days of this year. In Zechariah chapter 14 today we read about the Lord's reign on earth - this reading fits in very nicely with the Revelation readings we have been going through recently. Verses 6 through 8 gave my imagination a great workout today: *"On that day the sources of light will no longer shine, yet there will be continuous day! Only the LORD knows how this could happen! There will be no normal day and night, for at evening time it will still be light. On that day life-giving waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean, flowing continuously both in summer and in winter."* How does this sound to you? Not bad, eh. The light and the life-giving waters sound wonderful to me! **Q: When it comes to the continuous Light mentioned in these verses, where do you suppose the continuous Light will be coming from? Or - rather than from where - perhaps I should ask from Whom do you suppose the continuous Light will be coming from... Are you looking forward to this Light? Are you looking forward to eternity with the Light?**

12/29 - Verse 16 is interesting: *"In the end, the enemies of Jerusalem who survive the plague will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters."* Tyndale's One Year Bible Companion has a great Question of "Why will there still be an Old Testament Feast during the Messiah's Kingdom?" And an answer that basically says the Feast of the Tabernacles (also called Shelters or Booths or simply Sukkot) will still be appropriate because it is a festival of thanksgiving, celebrating those who love God with all their soul. The other feasts of the Old Testament won't be celebrated as they were all fulfilled - The Passover in Jesus' death - Day of Atonement in Jesus' Salvation - Feast of Firstfruits in Jesus' resurrection - and Pentecost with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

12/30 - Today we start the very last book of the Old Testament by the likely last prophet of the Old Testament era, Malachi! Some say Joel was the last prophet, but most commentaries suggest Malachi. There is some great stuff in this short book... particularly when we get to tomorrow's readings. The name Malachi means "my messenger." Malachi was written in approximately 430 B.C. and he was likely a contemporary of Nehemiah. Malachi was written to the returned exiles in Jerusalem well after the temple had been rebuilt under governor Zerubbabel in 516 B.C. By 430 B.C. there was a spiritual malaise in the land. It is speculated that this is in part because Jerusalem was then just a small province in the large Persian empire. But, the big reason is probably because the glorious future of God sending his Messiah, Jesus - as pronounced by Isaiah, Haggai and Zechariah and other prophets - had not yet come to fruition.

12/30 - Chapter 1 verse 2 stood out to me in today's readings: *"I have loved you deeply," says the LORD.*" I guess this really resonated with me since we are now reading the last book of the Old Testament. As I look back on our readings earlier this year - all of the books of the Old Testament that we have read and all of the interaction between God and his covenant people, I have to absolutely nod my head in agreement with these words from God in verse 2. God loved deeply in the Old Testament. And God loved deeply the New Testament. And God loves us deeply today. **Q: Do you believe that God loves you deeply? And do you believe that he always will? Do you in turn love God deeply? Today will you reach out and jump in to the deep end of the pool of God's love?**

12/30 - Verse 7 also stood out to me: *"You have despised my name by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar."* The chapter goes on to describe how blind, crippled, and diseased animals were sacrificed to God - which were unacceptable holy sacrifices to God per his laws in Leviticus 1:3 and Deuteronomy 15:21. We are no longer under the law of these sacrifices, as Jesus was the final sacrifice once and for all on the cross. **Q: However - I wondered to myself as I read this verse, do we still offer "defiled sacrifices" to God in some ways today in our lives? Do we give God maybe the left-overs of our life? Our left-over time, finances, energy, prayers, love, etc.? Should we instead be giving God our best sacrifices - our firstfruits, our early morning energy, our constant prayers, our deepest love? Indeed, as Oswald Chambers puts it, are we giving God our very [Utmost for His Highest](#)? Are you giving God the very best of who you are? Every day? Or is God typically just getting your leftovers?**

12/30 - Did anyone else catch a couple of Delirious? (Christian worship band) lyrics from their song "Lead Me" in Malachi's readings today? :) How about chapter 7 verse 17: *"You have wearied the LORD with your words."* What a sad statement to think about - we can weary God with our words... do you suppose this is still possible today? Have we wearied God with our words? And then another Delirious lyric in verse 13: *"You cover the LORD's altar with tears."* What

does it mean to flood God's altar with our tears? When would this be good? When would this be not so good...? As Delirious continues to sing in "Lead Me": "Great God, our promises we've broken. Oh Lord, forgive me..." Beautiful tune.

12/31 - Today we finish the book of the prophet Malachi, and it is an awesome 2 chapters we read today! The first half of Malachi chapter 3 verse 1 is prophesying 400 years in advance of the coming of John the Baptist, who will prepare people's hearts for Jesus by preaching repentance of sins: "*Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.*" This is a great thing to reflect on as we close out one year and begin anew. **Q: Do we need a messenger from God to encourage us to repent from our sins? Will we listen to that messenger and make way for the coming of Jesus into our hearts and lives?** The second half of verse 1 then prophesies that Jesus is indeed coming to usher in the new covenant, or the new testament: "*The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming,*" says the LORD Almighty." The Good News for us today is that Jesus has come already for the forgiveness of sins and Jesus is coming again in glory!

12/31 - Verse 2 tells us this about Jesus: "*For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal or like a strong soap that whitens clothes.*" **Q: Will you allow Jesus to refine you through his holy fire? And make you pure through his holy soap?** (Okay, I realize this is a bit cheesy wording here - has anyone ever called Jesus holy soap before?? :)

12/31 - Verses 6 & 7 are so powerful for us to reflect upon: "*I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already completely destroyed. Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my laws and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you,*" says the LORD Almighty." As I reflect back upon our One Year Bible readings this year, it is so true that God does not change. He has shown so much compassion over and over again to the Israelites in the Old Testament. And he continues to show so much compassion to us today over and over again. **Q: In light of God's holy and unchanging love and compassion for us, will we return to Him? As you look back on our One Year Bible readings this year, do you agree with God's statement here that He does not change? Do you believe that all the way from the Old Testament's Genesis to the New Testament's Revelation God does not change?**

12/31 - Verse 10 is one of my favorites and one of the most challenging in the Bible: "*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,*" says the LORD Almighty, "*I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Let me prove it to you!*" This verse has and will continue to be interpreted so many ways. Check out the NIV translation of Malachi 3:10 (slightly different than the NLT version above) - "*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,*" says the LORD Almighty, "*and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.*" It is very rare in the Bible that God says "test me" and follows it up with an incredible promise of a blessing. **Q: This next year, will you test God with a tithe? This next year, will you trust God with your tithe?**

12/31 - Chapter 4 verse 2 makes me smile with the metaphor of us being compared to a calf frolicking in a field: "*But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture.*" **Q: Do you want to be set free? Truly free from your burdens and doing things that you do not want to do? Will you entrust your life to the Sun (Son?) of Righteousness, Jesus?** And then - are you looking forward to leaping with joy like a calf let out to pasture?? :) I love this metaphor... it will stick with me.

REVELATION 17:1 - 22:21

12/26 - Today in Revelation chapter 17 we read about the woman and the beast. **Q: How have our readings in Revelation about the beast affected your faith or outlook on end times? Do you believe these writings in Revelation are true?**

12/27 - In Revelation chapter 18 today we read about the fall of Babylon. This is one of those chapters in Revelation that can be interpreted in many ways by many different people - **with the overriding question and interpretation revolving around who is Babylon that John is referring to here?** Most commentaries that I have read suggest that John is referring to the Roman empire of the 1st century in this chapter. Much of Revelation is eschatological - end times prophecy - and some commentaries suggest that this chapter is too. But it seems that most commentaries look at this chapter as a prophecy toward the fall of the Roman empire - an empire that in John's time was a "cult of emperor worship". An empire that John wrote about here to warn the early Christian churches to be on guard against because it stood against God and His people. However - other commentaries do consider Babylon in this chapter to represent the

political and religious system of the world in general under the rule of the antichrist. And some others see this chapter to be about a literal Babylon in Mesopotamia that is rebuilt and restored in the end times. **Q: What is your take on Babylon? What does Babylon represent?** Since we're nearing the end of the book of Revelation, and in particular because of the questions this chapter 18 can bring up, this is probably a good time for me to re-post this information below about the book of Revelation - same info I posted up when we started Revelation chapter 1 on December 9th. There are basically 4 lines of thinking on how to interpret the book of Revelation, which I think are helpful to consider before diving into this book. I am editing these comments below from bible.org at this link: [Please check out this link](#) for more details on these 4 points below and the book of Revelation overall - these comments were edited on bible.org from M. C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*.

"(1) The **preterist** approach believes that "Revelation is simply a sketch of the conditions of the empire in the first century."

(2) The **historicist** view (or continuous-historicist view) "contends that Revelation is a symbolic presentation of the entire course of the history of the church from the close of the first century to the end of time."

(3) The **futurist** approach usually argues that "all of the visions from Revelation 4:1 to the end of the book are yet to be fulfilled in the period immediately preceding and following the second advent of Christ."

(4) In the **idealist** approach, "the Revelation represents the eternal conflict of good and evil which persists in every age, although here it may have particular application to the period of the church."

12/28 - Revelation chapter 19 verses 7 through 9 discuss the wedding feast of the Lamb (Jesus) in powerful language: *"Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. She is permitted to wear the finest white linen."* (Fine linen represents the good deeds done by the people of God.) And the angel said, *"Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb."* And he added, *"These are true words that come from God."* The wedding feast of the Lamb is the end of human history - the judgment of the wicked and the wedding of the Lamb and his bride, the church. **Q: Are you looking forward to the wedding feast of the lamb? Do you want to be there? Do you believe the words - blessed are those who are invited to the feast? Have you accepted the Invitation?**

12/28 - Revelation chapter 19 utilizes the Hebrew for Hallelujah! four times in the first six verses - but it is interesting to note that Hallelujah is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. Though, certainly we are reading Hallelujah frequently now in the Psalms! (such as today's Psalm 147). The Hallelujah's in this chapter, along with verse 16 in today's readings - *"On his robe and thigh was written this title: King of kings and Lord of lords."* - reminded me of Handel's Messiah. **Q: How has Handel's Messiah been part of your life? Does it affect your faith in any way?** The rider on the white horse in chapter 19 is not the rider of the white horse from earlier in the book of Revelation, chapter 6 verse 2. The rider in this chapter is Jesus, returning as Warrior-Messiah-King. It's interesting to note that many of the Jewish faith in the 1st century were looking for their Messiah to come as Warrior-Messiah-King, and thus they rejected Jesus as Messiah, who came then as the Suffering Servant. However, it is powerful for us to keep in mind that Jesus is indeed coming again - and when he returns it won't be in his previous role as the Suffering Servant. That debt has been paid. Jesus will return as Warrior-Messiah-King!

12/29 - In Revelation chapter 20 today we read about the Millennial Reign of Christ! There are 3 basic beliefs in the 1,000 years described in this chapter: 1. *Amillennialism* (means we're in a figurative 1,000 years now) describes the present reign of Jesus in heaven, along with deceased believers and currently living believers - all of which will be followed by Jesus' second coming, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and Jesus' reign over the new earth eternally. 2. *Premillennialism* (means Jesus will come before a literal 1,000 years) also believes in the present reign of Jesus in heaven that is moving toward a time when Jesus returns again, the first resurrection occurs, and there will be a reign of Jesus on the current earth as we know it for 1,000 years. Then will come the final general resurrection, the final judgment, and then the eternal kingdom on the new earth. 3. *Postmillennialism* (means Jesus will come after a literal 1,000 years) believes that the entire world as we currently know it will be converted to Christianity and this will bring a millennium of peace - then to be followed by Jesus' second coming, the general resurrection, final judgment, and the eternal kingdom. Hopefully this makes some sort of sense on these three views? :) I read a commentary that said the key to remember with all 3 of these views is that they are simply timing differences. In all 3 views, Jesus returns again. Jesus reigns. Forever.

12/29 - Verses 11-12 get into Judgment, which is obviously quite a topic to attempt to cover in a daily blog... :) *"And I saw a great white throne, and I saw the one who was sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including*

the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done." So... I am going to defer to someone much smarter than me on this one, and HIGHLY encourage you to read Lehman Strauss's article entitled ["The Future Judgment of the Believer" at bible.org at this link](#). **I encourage you to check this link out if you'd like a glimpse toward what happens after we pass on from this life** - including a very interesting look at 5 crowns that can be given / received! Actually, if you are really interested in learning more about what happens after we die, Mr. Strauss at bible.org has a great 10 part series called "Death and Afterward" [at this link](#). **Q: Are you looking forward to your future judgment? On what - or should I say Whom - will you rest your case?**

12/30 - Revelation chapter 21 is definitely one of my favorite chapters in the Bible! It is what our very hearts long for! Today we read a wonderful glimpse of the New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God. Certainly verses 3 and 4 are powerful for us to reflect upon: *"I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever."* **Q: Are you looking forward to that day when God will be among his people? When he will remove all sorrows and pains?**

12/30 - And verses 23-25 are so beautiful to meditate upon: *"And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. The nations of the earth will walk in its light, and the rulers of the world will come and bring their glory to it. Its gates never close at the end of day because there is no night."* **Q: Are you looking forward to this everlasting light? The light that can come only from God and Jesus, the Lamb?**

12/31 - Today we finish the book of Revelation with a glorious chapter describing the New Jerusalem in heaven, and with a clear reminder that Jesus is coming again! Chapter 22 verses 1 & 2 are so beautiful: *"And the angel showed me a pure river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, coursing down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations."* This river combines the elements of the river in the Garden of Eden - see [Genesis 2:8-14](#) - and the river flowing from the temple in Ezekiel's vision - see [Ezekiel 47:1-12](#). I love this idea of this "river of life". There are so many beautiful allusions to God and grace being like water or a river in the Bible - particularly in the Psalms. A river that heals us. I love this. There is a great song by Steven Curtis Chapman about diving into the river. I think it's called "Dive" on his Speechless CD. This song of his reminds me so much of these verses. One of his lyrics goes something like: "The River's deep, the river's wide, the river's water is ALIVE! So sink or swim, I'm diving in!" **Q: Do you want to dive into this holy river of God? Do you want to be healed and purified by it's waters? Will you dive in?**

12/31 - Verse 8 is powerful for us to reflect upon, where we see an angel speaking to John after he fell to worship the angel: *"No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this scroll. Worship God!"* **Q: My thought here is that do we sometimes worship other people in our life? And does this worship of other people ultimately take away from our worship of God?** Meaning, I think it might sometimes be tempting for us to "worship" our pastors or ministers or spiritual mentors. **But, should we do this?** I think we would do well to remember that these people in our life are simply servants of God, like this angel. They are not God. We are called to give our hearts and minds and souls and worship to God and God only.

12/30 - Verse 20 (almost) closes out the book of Revelation with these words: *"Come, Lord Jesus!"* **Q: Are these three words a prayer of your heart? Should they be?** It's only recently that I started praying these words from my heart, and it is an amazing thing to truly pray and truly desire. Come Lord Jesus!

PSALM 145:1 - 150:6

12/26 - I love the imagery today in Psalm 145 verse 9! *"The LORD is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation."* **Q: Do you believe that God is good to everyone? Do you feel God's compassion being showered upon you right this very moment?**

12/27 - I love Psalm 146 verse 9 today: *"The LORD protects the foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows."* **Q: If God protects foreigners, orphans and widows, should we protect these folks in our communities as well? How in your life today are you caring for orphans and widows and foreigners?**

12/28 - Psalm 147 was thought to have been written for Levitical singers on the happy occasion of the dedication of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem - see [Nehemiah 12:27-43](#). Psalm 147 was divided into two Psalms - verses 1 through 11 and 12 through 20 - in the Septuagint, the pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament. However, the Hebrew text has the Psalm as one whole Psalm. Verses 10 and 11 are an incredible middle point of this Psalm that stood out to me today: *"The strength of a horse does not impress him; how puny in his sight is the strength of a man. Rather, the LORD's delight is in those who honor him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love."* These verses remind me that God really is not impressed with our shows of "strength" or "independence." God is much more impressed when we are dependent on Him. **Q: How are you honoring the Lord with your life today? Do you put his hope in his unfailing love? Or do you rely on your own strength?**

12/29 - Psalm 148 is a call for all creation to praise God! I love it. As I was reading this Psalm I was reminded of a song that we sometimes sing in church that goes something like - "Let everything that. Let everything that. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!" I love how the Psalms can stir up worship songs in our minds! We read this in verse 5 - *"Let every created thing give praise to the LORD, for he issued his command, and they came into being."* **Q: Do you agree with this verse? That you came into being because the Lord commanded it? Do you give thanks to God frequently? And joyfully? Even in the midst of some challenging times in your life, can you still give praise to your Creator?**

12/30 - Psalm 149 is a beautiful song of praise today! Verse 3 I love: *"Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp."* **Do you praise God's name with dancing and music?** Yes, I confess, I am a huge fan of the praise and worship thing going on in churches and with CCM artists and their concerts these days. I know this is not the only way to praise or worship God by any means. **Q: Are you praising God's name each day with the very "dance" of your life?**

12/30 - Psalm 150 is a wonderful end to the Psalter filled with a call to Praise God with all that we are! Give it up for God and God only!

PROVERBS 30:32 - 31:31

12/26 - Proverbs chapter 30 verse 32 teaches us today: *"If you have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil, cover your mouth in shame."* The thing that stood out to me in this Proverb today is that being proud equals being a fool. Plotting evil also equals being a fool - and I'm sure we'd all quickly agree on that. But, being proud also equals being a fool! This is so important for us to realize. I am afraid that all too often we can default to being prideful, thinking that's appropriate, when indeed it is pure foolishness. Being proud = been a fool. Why do you suppose this is? What is it about pride that is so bad? I think it is in large part this: when we are proud we are turning our focus away from God and toward ourselves. We are relying on ourselves instead of God. We are glorifying ourselves instead of God. And when we look at Satan and the Fall, we see that pride can even get to the point of trying to equate ourselves with God! This was Satan's great sin. Pride. And pride is a sin that we must be vigilant to guard against in our lives today, tomorrow and every day. Let us not be foolish by being proud! And when we find ourselves being prideful, let us cover our mouths in shame as this Proverb teaches and repent. **Q: Do you struggle with pride in your life? Do you agree with this Proverb that being proud = being a fool?**

12/27 - Today Proverbs chapter 30 verse 33 teaches us: *"As the beating of cream yields butter and striking the nose causes bleeding, so stirring up anger causes quarrels."* This is an appropriate Proverb for our Christmas season when we spend so much time with our families, no? :) I shouldn't joke about this I realize - but I think it's appropriate to address this issue. During the holiday season I am afraid that sometimes we bring up old battles or wounds when we spend time with our families - and we risk stirring up anger that causes quarrels. Don't get me wrong - I think it's ultimately better to bring things into the open with our families. That's how healing begins. But let us be careful that we don't just revert to some old "scripts" we have with our families that stirs up anger in ourselves or in them and then causes quarrels. Let us write some new redemptive and loving scripts instead! **Q: Do you ever stir up anger that causes quarrels in your family? Do some folks in your family stir up anger that causes quarrels? Will you pray that Jesus will introduce new redemptive and loving "scripts" in your family this holiday season? And will you make sure you no longer cause any stirring up of unnecessary anger?**

12/28 - Proverbs chapter 31 and the preceding chapter 30 are thought to be essentially an "appendix" to the overall book of Proverbs, as they are non-Israelite in origin. Chapter 29 was the final chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon. Proverbs chapter 31 verses 1 through 9 consist of 3 sayings that King Lemuel's mother taught him. The entirety of Proverbs chapter

31 demonstrates the significance and role of wise women in the ancient Near East, where the queen mother was often an influential figure. **Q: Who have been some wise women in your life?**

12/29 - Proverbs 31:8-9 today teaches us this powerful lesson: *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those who are perishing. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice."* **Q: Do you believe that God calling you to speak up in some way for the poor and helpless? Maybe it's somewhere in your city or neighborhood or home that this call is leading you to speak up... Will you speak up? Will we speak up?**

12/30 - Proverbs 31:10-24 is a great reflection upon a godly wife. I read a commentary that said such a wife is almost a personification of wisdom. I like that thought! And certainly it makes sense that a woman / wife would be a personification of wisdom rather than a man / husband... :) Just kidding! I'm a guy, so I can make this kind of joke right? **Q: In all seriousness, how about that thought for each of our lives - male or female - would it be a godly thing to move toward being a personification of wisdom?** Obviously I'd say that Jesus was the only human this side of heaven that will walk this earth as a pure personification of wisdom. But let us seek wisdom in how we live our lives each and every day. Let us seek God's Wisdom that is worth far more than rubies...

12/31 - Proverbs 31:25-31 are a continued great look at what a godly woman does. I really like verse 30 which seems so opposite of what our culture is often selling us today: *"Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised."* I think this holds so true for women and men - our beauty or good looks or outer appearances do not last. They are not eternal. What matters is what's inside - our relationship with and love of God and other people. So, I think this is a great reminder for us to focus on what's inside - which is what's eternal. And yes, our culture will continue to try to sell us on the latest fads to look better on the outside. **Q: Will you refuse to buy into that which will not last? Do you realize that holiness is beautiful?**

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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