

Notes & Group Questions for February 13-19 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

EXODUS 35:10 - LEVITICUS 9:6

2/15 - Today is the final day of readings from Exodus. Personally, a couple of learnings for me this year from Exodus that I will share are these - 1. Moses' leadership really stood out to me this year as I read through Exodus. And it was interesting to me that his leadership grew over time. Early on in Exodus Moses was saying to God to "please don't choose me to free the Israelites from Egypt - pick someone else" and then by the end of the book Moses has gained enough faith to fast for 40 days on Mt. Sinai and enough confidence to ask God to "show me your glory." I think we can see in Moses how God can transform a person's life completely - and how God can transform our lives completely - if that person enters into a responsive, faithful, loving and obedient relationship with God. Point #2 of my learnings this year - my interest and knowledge in some of the intricacies of the tabernacle has grown, which has been wonderful. **Q: I hope that your reading this past month about the Israelites Exodus from Egypt and their emergence as a nation under Moses' leadership has been a good learning experience for you? More than anything - I hope that reading about God's interactions with His covenant people in Egypt, the plagues, the Red Sea, the manna from heaven, the Ten Commandments, and the plans for the Tabernacle has expanded your understanding of who God is and God's story? What has been an interesting learning for you in Exodus this year that you can share with the group?**

2/16 - Learning to Love Leviticus! - This upcoming month of readings is what I call *mission-critical*. We're beginning our journey through the book of Leviticus! As this is my 6th time leading a crew of people through the One Year Bible, I know that Leviticus is the book where we lose many people who started out so strong over the past 6 weeks. I want to let you know this in advance, so that if you feel like maybe not reading your Bible for even just one day this upcoming month, don't do it! You may find Leviticus "boring" on occasion, but there truly is a lot of depth to it. And if you stop reading the One Year Bible during Leviticus, you'll miss out on so much more of the Bible coming up later this year - including Saul, David, Solomon, the prophets - and the list goes on. If you read nothing else in this posting today, please take ten minutes or so to review the amazing reflection at the link below on the book of Leviticus by Bob Deffinbaugh over at Bible.org. The article at this link below titled "**Learning to Love Leviticus**" will bless you immensely before we embark on our study of Leviticus this week: http://bible.org/page.php?page_id=258 An excerpt from Bob at this link above - "Up to this point in time the Book of Leviticus has been the "liver and onions" book of the Bible to me. That is, I know that it must be good for me, but I just don't seem to have a taste for the stuff. To others, the Book of Leviticus is something like camping - they tried it once and that was enough to last them a lifetime. Having briefly looked at the Book of Leviticus, let us get down to the issue of "taste" which must be settled before we will ever benefit from this portion of God's word. The first thing we must seek to do is to identify the reasons why we tend to dislike and thus to avoid this book." [Again, please please read "Learning to Love Leviticus" at this link](#) before you read anything else in this blog posting today. **Q: Have you read the book of Leviticus before? What has motivated you to read the book all the way through? What have you learned from the book of Leviticus in the past?**

2/16 – Leviticus begins!

Author: Moses

Date: 1420 or 1220 B.C.

Content: The book of Leviticus was designed to be a handbook for the priests or Levites, hence the name Leviticus. It sets down the regulations that were to govern the life of Israel in general and specifically to give regulations concerning sacrifice and worship. All of the major sacrifices are described, as well as the way they were to be offered. All of the major festivals and holidays are discussed. There are also special sections devoted to the priesthood and regulations concerning ceremonial matters.

Theme: The central theme of this book is that God has provided a way for atonement to be made by the offering of sacrificial blood. This whole system found its fulfillment in the shedding of Christ's blood as the one great sacrifice for the sins of the world. Leviticus also shows that worship is to be orderly and is to follow a regular pattern. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" page 2*) More commentary on Leviticus is at this link - http://bible.org/page.php?page_id=882

2/17 - Today in Leviticus we read about the Sin Offering and the Guilt Offering. Combine this with our readings from

yesterday and we've covered the 5 major Old Testament sacrifices - which I'll recap below from the NIV Study Bible. I'd recommend taking a good mental note of these 5 Sacrifices, as we'll keep reading about them this year in various capacities in the OT:

1. **Burnt Offering** - Voluntary act of worship; atonement for unintentional sin in general; expression of devotion, commitment and surrender to God. Bull, ram or male bird is offered - wholly consumed no defect.
2. **Grain Offering** - Voluntary act of worship; recognition of God's goodness and provisions; devotion to God. Grain, fine flower, olive oil, incense, baked bread, salt offered - accompanied burnt and fellowship offering.
3. **Fellowship Offering** - Voluntary act of worship; thanksgiving and fellowship as it included a communal meal. Any animal without defect from herd or flock offered.
4. **Sin Offering** - Mandatory atonement for specific unintentional sin; confession of sin; forgiveness of sin; cleansing from defilement. Young bull for high priest & congregation offered. Male goat for leader. Female goat or lamb for common person. Dove or pigeon for the poor. Tenth of an ephah of fine flower for the very poor.
5. **Guilt Offering** - Mandatory atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution; cleansing from defilement; make restitution; pay 20% fine. Ram or lamb offered.

(above 5 points from the NIV Study Bible p. 151)

2/17 - Chapter 4 verse 21 foreshadows Jesus' death on the cross outside the gates of Jerusalem at Golgotha: *"The priest must then take what is left of the bull outside the camp and burn it there, just as is done with the sin offering for the high priest."* Here's how Hebrews chapter 13 verses 11 through 14 looks back at this verse in Leviticus: *"The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come."* **Q: What stands out to you about reading about offerings in our Old Testament readings? Do you see how Jesus was an offering for our sins and is also our high priest?**

2/18 - Today in Leviticus we read about further instructions for offerings. Chapter 6 verse 13 I found interesting: *"Remember, the fire must be kept burning on the altar at all times. It must never go out."* Commentaries state that the fire was never to go out because the fire was started by God. Humans were not to bring man-made fire to the altar, or they would die, as we will see Leviticus chapter 10 when we read about Nadab and Abihu. The only real "eternal flame" that I can think of in today, that was started by God, is the Holy Spirit. And this eternal flame of the Holy Spirit is made available to you and I through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. **Q: How do you experience the Holy Spirit in your life today? Do you experience the Holy Spirit often, or just sometimes? Do you want to experience more of the Holy Spirit in your life? I don't know if you've ever done much study on the Holy Spirit? If not, please do spend a good chunk of time at these 3 links above. Also, I remember a good friend of mine was reading a book a few years ago called "Holy Spirit" - I believe... He said it was an incredible book. I haven't read it. Has anyone else read it? Know the author's name? Or - do you have any other Holy Spirit books or other resources recommendations?**

2/18 - Leviticus chapter 7 verse 27 stands out: *"Anyone who eats blood must be cut off from the community."* This was commanded for 3 reasons - 1. to separate the Israelites from the pagans who drank blood - the pagans drank blood in the hopes of gaining the attributes of the animals from the blood they drank (speed, strength, etc.). 2. the sin of the people was symbolically transferred to the animal before the offering, and the blood represents the life of that animal. 3. for sanitary reasons - blood can carry some nasty diseases.

2/19 - I found Leviticus chapter 7 verse 36 to be powerful as we read about a portion of the offerings going to the priests: *"The LORD commanded that the Israelites were to give these portions to the priests as their regular share from the time of the priests' anointing. This regulation applies throughout the generations to come."* I think this is something for us to consider today - most of us realize that a portion of our tithes and offerings to our churches goes to support our pastors, priests, ministers, clergy. And I believe this is rightly so. These clergy are doing holy work in our churches today. And I know from first hand experience from my past that church ministry work is not easy work. Yes, oftentimes it is joyful work and the most amazing & fulfilling work you can imagine. But, other times it can be really tough work as you can find yourselves on the front lines of spiritual warfare and working with people at very low points in their lives. So - I guess I say all of this to encourage you to not begrudge your clergy in your church for getting paid for their work. Aaron and his sons were "paid" here in Leviticus - and I think it is still proper for clergy to be paid today. (and trust me - most clergy that I know do not get paid an exorbitant amount by a long shot... :) I guess, while I am on this subject, I am also a bit familiar with the house church model today - and I do believe there are some leaders in this movement that are probably not getting "paid" financially. And I think this is great if you can sustain the model. But, personally, I wouldn't fault house

church leaders for receiving compensation either. It is holy work that our clergy do. I think fair compensation for this work is fair. **Q: What are your thoughts on your clergy receiving compensation? What are your thoughts on others in other types of ministry receiving compensation? Where do we draw the line of when ministry should be done with compensation or without compensation?**

MATTHEW 27:32 - MARK 4:25

2/13 - Today in Matthew chapter 27 verse 54 we read, just after Jesus' death on the cross: *"The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"* Reflect on these words of the Roman officers and soldiers for a moment. **Q: Do you believe these words of the soldiers are true? If these words are true, what does this mean for our lives today? Are we really living our lives in such a way that reflects that these words are true? Or, is it possible, that sometimes we just say these words of the Roman soldiers, and then just go about our lives as business as usual? If Jesus truly is the Son of God, how then should we be living our lives this very day?**

2/14 - Matthew 28 is one of the most important chapters of the Bible we will read this year! Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. The resurrection is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and of Jesus' own statements. The Christian faith stands or falls on the bodily resurrection of Jesus. We can read more about this important point from Paul in [1 Corinthians 15](#). Tyndale Publishers outlines these 5 points in their commentary today that the resurrection guarantees:

1. Jesus was truly the Son of God. ([Romans 1:4](#))
2. God the Father accepted what Jesus did at Calvary on the basis of the resurrection. ([Romans 4:25](#))
3. Jesus as our Risen Lord pleads for his people before the Father. ([Romans 8:34](#))
4. Believers have the hope of eternal life. ([1 Peter 1:3-5](#))
5. Believers will also rise and have resurrected bodies like that of Jesus. ([1 Corinthians 15:49](#), [Philippians 3:21](#), [1 John 3:2](#))

Q: What does Jesus' resurrection mean to you personally? How does Jesus' resurrection affect how you live your life today?

2/14 - The Great Commission at the end of Matthew chapter 28 in verses 18-20 is so important for us as followers of Jesus on Earth today: *"Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.""* I like that we see the Trinity in this commission - the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen! The NIV Study Bible commentary today says that Jesus' Great Commission has three steps: 1. Go 2. Baptize them. 3. Teach them to obey everything Jesus has commanded. I know the Great Commission encourages many to go on mission trips, which is wonderful and makes sense. However, I believe that often times the mission field many of us are called to "go" into is in our own backyards. Our own towns. Our own cities. Maybe even our own homes. Let us go where the Lord calls us to go - near or afar. Will you go? **Q: How are you participating in Jesus' Great Commission today in your life? Are you in some way helping make disciples? Are you in some way helping to baptize? Are you teaching people to obey Jesus' commands?**

2/14 - We finish up the Gospel of Matthew today. I think the main thing that really stood out to me in the Gospel of Matthew readings this year was how powerfully truthful and insightful Jesus' teachings are in the parables. Some of the parables really took on new life & meaning for me this year as I read through Matthew. It is such an amazing thing - every time I read the Bible - or re-read portions of the Bible I should say - I gain some new insight that I never saw before. I hope that has been the case for you as you read through Matthew this year? **Q: What are some new things God has taught you about Jesus as you read through Matthew this year?**

2/15 - We begin the book of Mark!

Author: Mark

Place: Rome

Date: A.D. 60-65

Content: John Mark was a companion of the apostle Paul. He finally settled in Rome where he wrote down the remembrances of the apostle Peter. Thus Mark's Gospel reflects the words of an eyewitness of the events he describes. Mark's purpose was to put together an expanded Gospel message. Hence it centers upon the acts of Jesus rather than his words and devotes a disproportionately large amount of material to the last week of Jesus' life. Mark's Gospel begins

with Jesus' public ministry and preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Several explicit predictions of his coming death are made (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34, 45) and then Jesus goes to the cross to die for the sins of the world.

Theme: Mark depicts Jesus as the Servant of God who came to do God's will. The miracles, healings, victory over demons, and personal power show the world that Jesus was no ordinary servant, but was truly the Son of God (Mark 15:39). Jesus' resurrection authenticated all that he did, and now we await his return in glory from heaven. Mark also wrote to encourage the Roman Christians in a time of persecution. (Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pages 21-22) Excellent commentary on the Gospel of Mark is [at this link](#).

2/15 - You'll notice in Mark chapter 1 today that there is no nativity narrative - Mark and John's Gospels do not have the nativity narrative. Verse 1 starts off powerfully with: *"Here begins the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God."* (Good News = Gospel. Gospel comes from the Old English word godspel, which means "good story" or "good tidings" or "good news" and accurately translates the original Greek word: evangelion.) And what is the Good News? It is that God has provided salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is very Good News indeed! I know I mentioned this when we read through the Baptism narrative in Matthew, but I think this is so powerful, that I want to mention it again. All three persons of the Trinity are involved in Jesus' Baptism - 1. the Father speaks 2. the Son is Baptized 3. the Holy Spirit descends on the Son. Verses 10 & 11: *"And when Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens split open and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with you.""* Per Tyndale's commentary today, Jesus was baptized 1. to begin his mission to bring the message of salvation to all people; 2. to show support for John's ministry; 3. to identify with our humanness and sin; 4. to give us an example to follow. **Q: When were you baptized? What does your baptism mean to you? When do you reflect back on your baptism?**

2/16 - Today in Mark's readings I noticed that Jesus healed, taught, healed and healed. 3 healings and 1 teaching in today's readings. I don't know about you, but sometimes I personally seem to overlook Jesus' healing ministry. I pay a lot of attention to what he did on the cross for us. I pay a lot of attention to his resurrection. I pay a lot of attention to his teachings. But his healings? Not so much. And if I really stop to think about it, I know that I personally need some healing from Jesus in my life. I have wounds. I have issues. I have "patterns" as the singer David Wilcox would say. :) I need Jesus' healing touch in my life. **Q: How about you? Do you need Jesus' healing touch in your life?** If so, can you reflect on chapter 1 verses 40 & 41 in Mark's readings today: *"A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. "If you want to, you can make me well again," he said. Moved with pity, Jesus touched him. "I want to," he said. "Be healed!"* **Q: What has been your "leprosy" in the past or today? Do you want to be made well again? Do you believe that Jesus wants to heal you? Has Jesus healed you in the past?**

2/18 - In Mark chapter 3 verses 7 & 8 show how Jesus' ministry was quickly being noticed from all over Israel: *"Jesus and his disciples went out to the lake, followed by a huge crowd from all over Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, from east of the Jordan River, and even from as far away as Tyre and Sidon. The news about his miracles had spread far and wide, and vast numbers of people came to see him for themselves."* And now today think about how far and wide Jesus' ministry has gone. Worldwide. **Q: Why do you suppose Jesus' ministry gained such notice during his lifetime? Why do you suppose that Jesus' ministry continues to gain such notice today? How is there is true power in Jesus' ministry? How does Jesus changes lives? Heals people - teaches people - loves people - forgives people.... How is Jesus the Savior of the World?**

2/19 - Mark chapter 3 verses 33-35 make an impact on me each time I read it: *"Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Then he looked at those around him and said, "These are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."* This last sentence is a powerful proclamation from Jesus. If we are obedient to God's will in our life we are brothers and sisters and mothers of Jesus. Pretty amazing to think about! Jesus is not only our savior - but our brother. And later he calls us friends. Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary puts it this way - "It is a great comfort to all true Christians, that they are dearer to Christ than mother, brother, or sister as such, merely as relations in the flesh would have been, even had they been holy. Blessed be God, this great and gracious privilege is ours even now; for though Christ's bodily presence cannot be enjoyed by us, his spiritual presence is not denied us." **Q: How is Jesus your relative? How are other believers your relatives? Do you believe people in your church are your family?**

2/19 - Mark chapter 4's parable of the Farmer scattering seed is a parable that I am sure can convict each of us in various ways. Verses 16 through 18 I am afraid can sometimes represent all too well the "soil" of our hearts... *"The rocky soil represents those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But like young plants in such soil, their roots don't go very*

deep. At first they get along fine, but they wilt as soon as they have problems or are persecuted because they believe the word. The thorny ground represents those who hear and accept the Good News, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for nice things, so no crop is produced." The crowding out of the Good News by the cares of this life and the desire for nice things is where I am afraid we miss the mark too often. And when we succumb to these cares & desires, indeed, no crop is produced. However - I do pray that there are moments in life where we can see the amazing power & truth in verse 20: "*But the good soil represents those who hear and accept God's message and produce a huge harvest--thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted.*" I just pray for more consistency in our lives to live in verse 20 than in the previous verses... **Q: How is the soil of your heart? Which verses in this parable are you living in these days? Are you receiving God's Word into your heart? Will you allowing God's Word in your heart to produce a huge harvest?**

PSALM 34:1 - 37:29

2/13 - Psalm 34 verse 9 in the NIV reads: "*Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.*" **Q: What does fearing God mean to you? Do you think that fearing God is a good or bad thing? Why? Do you think it is possible to both love God and fear God at the same time? What do you think of when you hear the word "saints"? Do you believe that you are a saint? Do you want to be a saint? Are you acting like a saint? Do you believe that those who fear God lack nothing? Why would this be?**

2/14 - I love Psalm 34 verses 17 & 18 today: "*The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit.*" I am sure all of us have moments of needing help. Moments of trouble. Moments of being brokenhearted. Moments of being crushed in spirit. **Q: The big question is what do you do in those moments? Or, who do you turn to? Do you call to God in those moments? How do you know that he will help you? How do you know that he will rescue you? How do you know that he is close to you? How do you know that He is near?**

2/15 - Per the NIV Study Bible, Psalm 35 today is an appeal to the heavenly King, as divine Warrior and Judge, to come to the defense of his servant David who is being maliciously slandered by those toward whom he had shown only the most tender friendship. I like verse 10 a lot: "*I will praise him from the bottom of my heart: "LORD, who can compare with you? Who else rescues the weak and helpless from the strong? Who else protects the poor and needy from those who want to rob them?"*" **Q: Have you recently praised God from the bottom of your heart? Do you think that anyone/ anything compares with God? Do you believe that God has rescued you and protected you? Perhaps many times when you have not even realized it?** I think about this on occasion. It is my hunch that God literally rescues us and protects us dozens if not hundreds if not thousands of times each and every day. And I think we typically miss it.... If we knew it, I am sure we would be praising Him from the bottom of our heart very frequently!

2/16 - Psalm 35 verses 22 & 23 are two very impassioned verses that I think we should take note of: "*O LORD, you know all about this. Do not stay silent. Don't abandon me now, O Lord. Wake up! Rise to my defense! Take up my case, my God and my Lord.*" I think what these verses do is remind me that we don't have to always speak to God in "hushed" tones or in our "church voices". We can interact with God at any moment as we really are. I don't think we should try to hide our emotions from God. We should come before God at any time - as we are - and let Him take us from there... and heal us from there... **Q: When is the last time you literally cried out to God? Do you think it is healthy to cry out to God?**

2/17 - I love Psalm 36 today! There are some powerful verses in this Psalm... Starting off with verse 1 being a scary & true verse... "*Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them.*" Wow. I'll admit - I've been there. I know what it is like to have sin whispering deep within my heart. Thank God for the gift of Jesus - the savior of my world... Thank God for the gift of the fear of God. And thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit who directs us along the narrow path - the path of life and light. I pray that verse 1 does not ring too true for you today - but if it does, please pray to Jesus to instead fill your heart with Jesus' Spirit, which is the only power that can truly dispel the whisper of sin within. **Q: Have you ever felt sin whispering to you? Do you think that sin can indeed whisper to our hearts? Can it whisper from within our hearts? Do we need more than just fear of God to restrain us from sin? How has Jesus freed you from the whisper of sin within your heart?**

2/18 - Today we read Psalm 37, which is most definitely a Wisdom Psalm! It's like we are reading Proverbs! I love verse 5: "*Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.*" **Q: Do you commit everything you do to God? EVERYTHING? Your waking life? Your sleeping life? Your job? Your relationships? Your family? Your**

finances? Your time? If so, do you trust that God will help you in everything you do in your life? Do you believe what verse 4 teaches? *"Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires."* I love that thought - take delight in God. Do you take delight in God each and every day? Do you believe that he will give you your heart's desires?

2/19 - Psalm 37 verse 16 is powerful today - *"It is better to be godly and have little than to be evil and possess much."* I don't know what I can add to this.... I think you probably get it. :) Do you live it? Verse 23 is so amazing... *"The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives."* I don't mean to infer that I am godly here... but, I will admit that there are times in my life where I really sense that God is directing my steps - and taking care of every detail. And basically, it feels like I am sort of just going with God's flow. Things are just happening beautifully. And I do sense the Spirit often during these times. My sadness in this area is that I don't realize that God is directing my steps all of the time. And that he is delighting in every detail of my life - most of the time... :) I pray you and I will come to a greater awareness of this in our lives each and every moment: *"The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives."* **Q: How is God directing your steps today? Are you allowing God to lead your steps? Are there any areas of your life where you are not allowing God to lead your steps today?**

PROVERBS 9:7 - 10:5

2/13 - Proverbs chapter 9 verses 7 & 8 are fascinating to me: *"Anyone who rebukes a mocker will get a smart retort. Anyone who rebukes the wicked will get hurt. So don't bother rebuking mockers; they will only hate you. But the wise, when rebuked, will love you all the more."* I do believe this Proverb is true. If anyone needs a definition of rebuke it is: "an act or expression of criticism and censure." (and for that matter censure means - "harsh criticism or disapproval") So, this Proverb teaches us that rebukes of a mocker or the wicked will bring a critical reply or even injury. But that rebukes of the wise can bring love! Powerful to consider! **Q: Do you ever rebuke anyone? Part of me thinks that sometimes we can become so scared of what anyone else will think that we say absolutely nothing - even when perhaps we should rebuke someone. When do you feel it is appropriate to rebuke someone? Is it based on a relationship? Is it based on if they ask your opinion on a matter? Will you ever rebuke someone even if not asked an opinion on the matter? Are you careful to not rebuke mockers or the wicked, but only to rebuke the wise? How do you discern who is wise and able to receive a rebuke? Conversely, have you ever been rebuked by someone else? Have you ultimately loved that person for the rebuke? Even if the rebuke stung at the time, were you ultimately appreciative of receiving the rebuke?**

2/14 - I love Proverbs 9:10 today: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Bob Deffinbaugh has a great look at this Proverbs verse - and many others - in an essay titled **"God and Man in Proverbs"** [at this link](#). A great quote from Bob at this link is: "Proverbs persists in confronting us with the urgency of coming to a decision regarding the fear of the Lord. There are only two ways, the way of wisdom and the way of folly. Those who follow their natural bent will continue on the road to destruction. Those who admit their sin and trust in God will receive life and peace and fellowship with God. Whether by decision or default, every man, woman, and child makes this choice. Do not delay to choose to follow the way of wisdom, the way of life." **Q: What does fear of the LORD mean to you in your life today? How do you fear the Lord? How are you gaining knowledge of the Holy One in your life today?**

2/15 - Today we read in Proverbs chapter 9 verse 12: *"If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit. If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer."* This is one of the simplest and yet wisest verses that has jumped out at me in a long time! **Q: Do you believe this Proverb to be true? How about if we go one step beyond this Proverb - If we become wise, will it also benefit others around us? Maybe based on how we will live our lives? And conversely, if we don't acquire wisdom would it be fair to say that others around us may suffer? Could it be that gaining wisdom is both a self-giving and self-less pursuit all at the same time?**

2/16 - Proverbs verse 18 is downright scary: *"But the men don't realize that her (Folly's) former guests are now in the grave."* This reminds me of Romans 6:23 - *"For the wages of sin is death."* Yes, sin sells... And sin calls... And sin pays... Death. Sin/Folly pays death. That is downright scary. That's why we read about the sacrifice system in the Old Testament - to atone for sin, which brings death without atonement. Thanks to the New Covenant, our sins have been paid for on the cross by Jesus. Let us not ever forget the gravity of sin. Let us not ever forget that sin sells nothing but death. But let us also not ever forget that Jesus paid our debts once and for all on the cross. So, next time you hear Folly calling out to you from her doorway, walk on by in the light of salvation that was given to you freely by Jesus. Jesus who saves us from death! **Q: Do you believe that the wages of sin is death? How have you seen sin lead to death?**

2/17 - We start Proverbs chapter 10 today, with the reminder that we're currently reading Proverbs of King Solomon, the son of David. Verse 2 is another great reminder for each of us... *"right living can save your life."* **Q: Do you believe this? Do you practice this?**

2/18 - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 4 teaches us: *"Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth."* This is certainly a good reminder to work hard! **Q: How has hard work been a benefit to you in your life?**

2/19 - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 5 - *"A wise youth works hard all summer; a youth who sleeps away the hour of opportunity brings shame"* - for some reason reminds me of Paul's writings in 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 2: *"Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* **Q: Is the hour of opportunity upon you now? Will you stay awake for it? Is now the favorable time? Is now the day of salvation? Are you awake?**

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:

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