

**Notes & Group Questions for February 27 - March 5 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)**

**LEVITICUS 20:22 - NUMBERS 5:31**

2/27 - Today in Leviticus chapter 20 verses 23 & 24 we read - *"Do not live by the customs of the people whom I will expel before you. It is because they do these terrible things that I detest them so much. But I have promised that you will inherit their land, a land flowing with milk and honey. I, the LORD, am your God, who has set you apart from all other people."* These verses are another reminder that God's laws to the Israelites were given to set them apart from the pagans surrounding them and in Canaan. God's laws were given to differentiate what is right and wrong, in comparison to the pagan immoral customs. I wonder about this in our modern world today. **Q: As followers of Jesus, do you think we should be "set apart" from what the modern world tells us to do & how to live? Should we or should we not be living by the customs of our modern world? How are you living your life today? If someone examined your life, how would they see that you are set apart from the customs of our modern world? How do you set yourself apart from the world for God? Are there particular movies or TV or radio programs that you will not watch or listen to? Should we set boundaries for ourselves on what we will and will not watch? Personally, I will admit that I don't watch rated R movie these days. I just know what those movies will typically be trying to "sell" me - and I ain't buying. I do think that we should think about the Holy Spirit indwelling in us and how we might want to set ourselves apart on occasion of what we won't participate in, that the rest of the world wouldn't blink at participating in. What are some examples of how you try to set yourself apart from the world for God?**

2/28 - Today in Leviticus chapter 23 we read about the Appointed Festivals! The NIV Study Bible has a great chart summarizing the Old Testament Feasts and Other Sacred Days, which is significantly paraphrased below with just Name & Purpose:

1. **Sabbath** - Rest for people and animals
2. **Sabbath Year** - Rest for land.
3. **Year of Jubilee** - Help for poor; stabilize society.
4. **Passover** - Remember Israel's deliverance from Egypt.
5. **Unleavened Bread** - Remember how the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt in haste.
6. **Firstfruits** - Recognize the Lord's bounty in the land.
7. **Weeks (Pentecost or Harvest)** - Show joy and thankfulness for the Lord's blessing of harvest.
8. **Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah-New Year's Day)** - Present Israel before the Lord for his favor.
9. **Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)** - Atone for the sins of priests and people and purify the Holy Place.
10. **Tabernacles (Booths or Ingathering)** - Memorialize the journey from Egypt to Canaan; give thanks for the productivity of Canaan.
11. **Sacred Assembly** - Commemorate the closing of the cycle of feasts.
12. **Purim** - Remind the Israelites of their national deliverance in the time of Esther.
13. **Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication or Festival of Lights)** - Commemorated the purification of the temple and altar in the Maccabean period.
14. New moons were also often special feast days.

*(Above is from Zondervan's "NIV Study Bible" pp. 176-177)*

**Q: Which of these festivals above do you "celebrate" in any way? Which of these festivals do you wish you did celebrate? Which of these festivals above do you see foreshadowing Jesus' life, death and/or resurrection?**

3/1 - We begin month 3 of our One Year Bible readings today! Whoo-hoo! Congratulations! Today in Leviticus chapter 24 we read the well known law of retaliation from verses 19 & 20: *"Anyone who injures another person must be dealt with according to the injury inflicted-- fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Whatever anyone does to hurt another person must be paid back in kind."* I've read commentaries that say that this law of retaliation was actually compassionate for its time - in that it limited what one person could do to another person in a very lawless age. If you lost an eye, you could take an eye - but you could not kill in return, for example. So, I see the logic behind saying that the law of retaliation limited punishments.... but, I also think we would do well to remember Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount where he quotes from Leviticus 24 verse 20 in Matthew chapter 5 verse 38 & 39: *"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the*

other also." Jesus teaches that there is a higher law of love that is better than the law of retaliation. **Q: Do you ever struggle with the desire to retaliate against someone? How have you ever been able to resist this struggle and turn instead to Jesus' law of love?**

**3/2** - Today in Leviticus chapter 25 we finish up reading about the Year of Jubilee. I don't know what it is about the Year of Jubilee, but for some reason I really like the concept of it! I actually read a commentary that said there is no evidence that the Year of Jubilee was actually ever carried out, which made me a bit sad. However, that same commentary suggested that the Year of Jubilee was ultimately fulfilled through the life of Jesus, as Jesus himself quotes this very Year-of-Jubilee-ic :) sounding verse from Isaiah in Luke chapter 4 verses 18-21: *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* Then Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* **Q: Whaddya think? Think the concept of the Year of Jubilee was indeed fulfilled in the life of Jesus?** I do. And we don't need to count down 50 years from now until the next Year of Jubilee. The Year of Jubilee is available to each of one of us today! **Q: How do you think the Year of Jubilee was fulfilled in Jesus? How are you living your life today in light of Jesus fulfilling the Year of Jubilee?**

**3/2** - Leviticus chapter 26 is a great look at the blessings of obedience and punishments for disobedience. As I read through the punishments for disobedience my mind instantly went to where, later in the Bible, Israel would indeed walk down the path of disobedience - and ultimately be punished with the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile into Babylon. For those going through the One Year Bible for more than the first time, I am sure you probably recognized this as well. What is interesting to keep in mind that these words of God were written by Moses nearly 1,000 years before the Babylonian exile. This reminded me again of how powerful God's Word truly is - and how true it really is. And it reminded me that even in our modern times, the Bible is still truth, and the teachings of Jesus are still relevant now 2,000 years later... Truth is truth. We may be inconsistent, but God is not. **Q: How are you walking in the path of obedience in your relationship with God? How are you walking in Truth? How in your life have you seen that obedience brings blessings and disobedience brings punishment?**

**3/2** - Verses 44 & 45 in this chapter stood out to me as a reminder that even though God punishes disobedience, he leaves room for repentance and he allows for a remnant to carry on the covenant: *"But despite all this, I will not utterly reject or despise them while they are in exile in the land of their enemies. I will not cancel my covenant with them by wiping them out. I, the LORD, am their God. I will remember my ancient covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of Egypt while all the nations watched. I, the LORD, am their God."* And verses 12 & 13 in this chapter are awesome: *"I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be my people. I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt so you would no longer be slaves. I have lifted the yoke of slavery from your neck so you can walk free with your heads held high."* **Q: How do you believe that God walks among us today? How is God your God? And how are you His? How has the yoke of slavery from sin been lifted from your neck? How are you walking free today with your head held high?**

**3/3** - Today we wrap up Leviticus and transition into Numbers! Congratulations on staying the course through the book of Leviticus! Have you [Learned to Love Leviticus](#) this past month?? :) Commentary on Leviticus chapter 27 by Bob Deffinbaugh titled "**The Value of a Vow**" is at bible.org [at this link](#). Numbers is an amazing book! I encourage you to reflect on words "Obedience" and "Disobedience" as we read through the book of Numbers. We'll read much about both of these words in this book. And - I think as we read about both Moses' and the Israelites Obedience and Disobedience, we will see many parallels in our own lives today. We have an opportunity with the book of Numbers to reflect upon where we have been both Obedient and Disobedient to God in our lives. We also have the opportunity to reflect upon the fruits and blessings of Obedience and the consequences of Disobedience - in Moses', the Israelites, and our lives today. I hope you are ready to experience the book of Numbers! **Q: How was reading the book of Leviticus for you this year? What did you learn? What did you learn about God? About Jesus?**

### **3/3 - ~The Book of Numbers~**

Author: Moses

Date: 1420 or 1220 B.C.

Content: This book deals with the journey of Israel from Mt. Sinai to the edge of Canaan and the Israelites' preparation to enter the Promised Land. Because of sin and unbelief, however, they were not allowed by God to claim their inheritance but were condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years. After the forty years they slowly made their way back to

Canaan – this time ready to obey God’s commands. After winning some important battles to the east of the Jordan River, the Israelites prepared for the entrance into the land itself.

Theme: The book shows the continual faithfulness of God and the unbelievable sin of man. Israel rejected God but God remained true to his word, in leading the people through the wilderness and providing for their needs. In the New Testament the Christian life is likened to a wandering in the wilderness with the promise of a heavenly Canaan before us. (Above commentary is from “The One Year Bible Companion” pp. 2-3) Excellent commentary on the Book of Numbers is [at this link](#).

3/3 - Today in Numbers chapter 1 verse 1 we read: “*The LORD spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt.*” You’ll definitely notice as we read through the book of Numbers that God speaks to Moses, and through Moses to Israel. This fact is stated over 150 times and in more than 20 different ways in the book of Numbers – all the way from this first verse above until the very last verse of Numbers in chapter 36 verse 13 – “*These are the commands and regulations the LORD gave through Moses to the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.*” The Israelites were dependent on Moses at that time to hear from God. **Q: How do you hear from God in your life today? Do you believe that you are hearing from God as you read the Bible? Do you believe that you can hear from God during times of prayer? Do you believe that today you can hear from God through your faith in Jesus and in your participation in the body of Christ, the church? Are you hearing from God today? Do you want to hear from God today?**

3/4 - Today in Numbers chapter 2 we read about the organization of Israel's camp! For some reason I really like these types of chapters - chapters where we get what may seem at first glance to be "just a bunch of details" and maybe we even ask occasionally, "what's the point?" For me, the details are the point! I don't know about you, but I'll confess this here and now on the blog - I'm a bit of a packrat. :) Seriously. And not only that - but I have seasons of crazy disorganization in my house and in my life. And I of course remember the old adage, "cleanliness is next to godliness...." :) And yes, I guess I can at times feel guilty about my disorganization. But, for some odd reason just this past few weeks I've been on an organization kick. The homestead has been getting a serious cleaning. I'm getting rid of stuff that I really really don't need to keep. And then I read chapters like this in Numbers, and I realize that God is a God of order. He likes things organized. And I think we as followers of God do well when we get things organized in our lives too - our housekeeping, our finances, how we spend our time, etc. Now, don't hear me say that you should be obsessive compulsive about order... :) But... I am seeing amazing benefits in my life of being organized. **Q: Are there any other closet packrats out there that will fess up?? :) Or any former packrats / disorganized folks that can give us some advice in the Comments below on how you got orderly? Do you think that God is a God of order? Should we be a people of order?**

3/5 - Today in Numbers chapter 4 we read about the duties of the Kohathites, Gershonites and the Merarites! Reading this chapter reminded me of the church where I used to work - where we had to set up and tear down the sanctuary each Sunday, because we were holding services in a rented community center building. And truly, most Sundays my days felt like verse 31 and the Merarites: “*Their duties at the Tabernacle will consist of carrying loads.*” But, even though this task of carrying loads back then and today may seem "menial" at first glance, the task was of utmost importance for the community's worship! So, I hope this chapter can be an encouragement to you if at times you feel like you are simply "carrying loads" at your church - keep in mind it is a holy task that the Merarites faithfully conducted before you in the time of Moses! **Q: Have you ever had volunteer duties at your church that were less than glamorous duties? :) Do you think that maybe these duties were actually very glamorous to God, even if they weren't glamorous to the world? Do you make it a habit of volunteering at your church regularly? What are some volunteer things you do for your church to help "carry the load" of your church's ministry?**

#### **MARK 9:1 - 12:37**

2/27 - Today in Mark chapter 9 we read about the Transfiguration! I heard a wonderful sermon recently about the Transfiguration. The sermon basically was stating that the Transfiguration of Jesus into a dazzling white & God's voice showed to James, John, and Peter that Jesus was truly divine and the son of God. And, the sermon suggested this Transfiguration took place relatively closely to Jesus' arrest and death - as such, the Transfiguration was meant to give these 3 apostles the hope that even during the dark days that were soon to come during the arrest, trial and death of Jesus, that they truly were following the Messiah and that he would rise from the dead - although they didn't quite understand the rise from the dead part at this time. I think it is important for us to remember that we have the knowledge of the full story of Jesus, including his resurrection - hindsight is 20/20 - but the apostles did not know exactly what was going to happen at this particular time. The Transfiguration was an incredible sign of God's control in all that was

happening and would happen to his beloved son Jesus. **Q: What does the Transfiguration mean to you? What would you have thought if you were James, John or Peter seeing the Transfiguration? As Christians, how can we bring the message of the Transfiguration to our dying world today?**

2/28 - Mark chapter 9 verses 33-35 always stand out to me and I personally always need to be reminded of Jesus' teaching here in the last sentence: *"Jesus asked them, "What were you discussing out on the road?" But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. He sat down and called the twelve disciples over to him. Then he said, "Anyone who wants to be the first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."* **Q: How are you doing on this last sentence? When in your life are you taking last place? When are you the servant of everyone else? Do you think this last sentence applies to Jesus' life? Do you think we should model how Jesus lived his life in this regard?**

**3/1-** Today in Mark chapter 10 we read about the Rich Man. I have heard plenty of sermons on this passage of scripture and read a bunch of commentaries. The message is probably not that every Christian needs to sell all they have, give to the poor, and you'll have treasure in heaven. However... this could be the message for some of us. Basically, the message is probably more along the lines of what in your life are you holding on so tight to, that you need to let go of? What are you worshipping? What are you letting stand in the way of your relationship with Jesus? And what must you let go of? What's your "camel" that's holding you back? It might be money or material possessions. It could be an addiction. It could be status. It could be anger. It could be lust. I don't know what it is for you - that's between you and Jesus. **Q: What is your take on the Rich Man / Rich Young Ruler? Why do you think Jesus said he should sell all he had and give to the poor? Are there areas in your life where Jesus has asked you to give up something? Maybe something material or maybe something more like an addiction or obsession, etc.? Have you obeyed Jesus in this regard? Was it a blessing to obey Jesus?**

**3/2 -** In Mark chapter 10 verse 33 today we read Jesus' third and last prediction of his death to the disciples in Mark's Gospel. You'll note the two previous predictions are at Mark 8:31 & 9:31. Crucifixion is not explicitly stated by Jesus in this verse, but it is implied in that he states he will be handed over to the Romans. The Romans in this era killed non-Romans via crucifixion. Verse 45 I think is such an important verse in the Bible for us to really meditate upon and understand, as this verse summarizes Jesus' ministry and purpose so succinctly and powerfully: *"For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many."* Jesus was not your typical "King - who lords it over the people beneath him". He did not come to be served. But to serve. And he gave his life as a ransom for our sins. Via crucifixion. For some reason in this Lenten / pre-Easter season I am thinking more and more about Jesus' Passion and what he did for each of us on the cross. It's really really humbling to think about. But so good I think for each of us to reflect upon the ransom that was paid for us by Jesus. The Suffering Servant. The King. The Savior of the World. **Q: How do you reflect upon what Jesus did for you on the Cross? Are there spiritual disciplines or books that help you in this regard? What does it mean to you that Jesus ransomed you?**

**3/2 -** In today's readings we read about Jesus healing Bartimaeus, who was blind. You'll notice that Bartimaeus seems to have a very "expectant" faith! He expects that Jesus will heal him. But, it's not expectation alone that demonstrates his faith in Jesus - Bartimaeus verbalizes that Jesus is the Messiah, when he calls him "Son of David!" in verse 48. It was known that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David, and Bartimaeus clearly believed. **Q: Is there anything today we can learn from Bartimaeus and his expectant faith? Would you describe your own faith as "expectant?"**

**3/3 -** Today in Mark chapter 11 we read about Jesus' Triumphal entry in Jerusalem! This entry is an important transition point in Jesus' ministry, in large part because it is the last week of Jesus' life, which inaugurates Passion Week. But also because Jesus' ministry will now be focused in the confines of Jerusalem, the Holy City. Jesus' triumphal entry is a deliberate Messianic action and the clue to its understanding is found in Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9: *"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."* Hosanna in the highest! (Hosanna is a Hebrew expression meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise). **Q: When in your life to you praise Jesus like this crowd did? How do you shout "Hosannas" to Jesus in your life?**

**3/4 -** In Mark chapter 12 we read Jesus' profound Parable of the Tenants, which exposes the planned attempt on Jesus' life. At the end of the parable Jesus quotes from Psalm 118 verses 22 & 23 when he says in Mark chapter 12 verse 10: *"Haven't you read this scripture: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"* I have heard some awesome sermons on this verse – about how our Christian lives

should be based upon and aligned with the true foundational Cornerstone – and that cornerstone being Jesus Christ. **Q: How do you believe that Jesus is the cornerstone of Christianity? How is Jesus the cornerstone of your life? How do you align your life with Jesus' teachings?**

3/5 - I have heard Jesus' teaching about the 2 greatest commandments in Mark chapter 12 verses 29-31 summarized as simply Love God & Love People: *"Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these.""* Here is a very interesting note about Jesus' quote above from Deuteronomy 6:4 that starts "'Hear, O Israel!' - This verse begins what is known as the Shema - which was named after the first word in this verse and means "Hear." [The Shema became the Jewish confession of faith](#), which was recited by pious Jews every morning and evening and it is still recited in synagogue services today. More very interesting information about The Shema from a Jewish website is [at this link](#). **Q: How are you loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? How are you loving your neighbor as yourself? How often do you meditate on these 2 great commandments?**

#### **PSALM 43:1 - 48:14**

2/27 - I think Psalm 43 verse 5 starts off with a couple of questions that then answer themselves by the end of the verse - *"Why am I discouraged? Why so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again--my Savior and my God!"* I would agree with what this verse is getting at. If I find myself to be discouraged or sad, it comes as no great surprise to me that I have been putting my hope in things other than God. I have been perhaps even praising false idols. And the sure fire way to be freed from the discouragement or sadness? To put my hope once again in God and God only. And to praise him again! I think this Psalm verse is a great reminder to make sure we are not placing our hope in anything other than God. For anything other than God will only leave us empty in the end. **Q: Have you ever found yourself discouraged or sad and then found yourself somehow praising God? Has praising God ever dramatically changed your mood?**

2/28 - Psalm 44 verse 3 is a wise statement about where the Israelites and our true strength and victory in life comes from! *"They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strength that gave them victory. It was by your mighty power that they succeeded; it was because you favored them and smiled on them."* **Q: As you look back on your life and at the good things that have happened to you, do you think that these things occurred because of your own power or work alone? Or, do you think it is possible that God's hand was blessing your life through all of those good things - even if maybe you did not notice God was there at the time? Can you share some instances in your life that when you look back on them you realize that God was absolutely there and blessing what was taking place?**

3/1 - Every time I read Psalm 44 verse 23 it reminds me of one of the amazing aspects of the Psalms - that the Psalms are people like us speaking to God - and in all sorts of emotional ways: *"Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Get up! Do not reject us forever."* This type of verse reminds me that it's okay for us to not always talk to God in our "church voice." It's okay to get a little bit passionate in our prayers to God. I think God would prefer us to be real with him - where we are right now or at any given moment - rather than try to put on any special facades for God. If ever you feel like you are at a loss for words for what you might want to say to God - how you might be needing to pray to God - surf through the Psalms... you'll very likely find voice for what you are trying to say. **Q: How has reading the Psalms this year spoken to you? Have any of the Psalms spoken words or emotions that you are feeling yourself?**

3/2 - Psalm 45 is very likely a song of praise to King David on his wedding day. Interestingly, after the Babylonian exile, this Psalm was applied to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the promised Son of David. I can see how some verses in this Psalm could apply to both the current king of the day and the true king yet to come. Verse 7 is a good example: *"You love what is right and hate what is wrong. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else."* **Q: In your life today, how do you love what is right and hate what is wrong? Is it appropriate to hate what is wrong?**

3/3 - Today we read Psalm 46, which is an incredible Psalm! This Psalm represents a song of hope celebrating the certain triumph of God's kingdom – even in the midst of times of severe trouble. This Psalm served as the inspiration for Martin Luther's famous Hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Just after 9/11 I saw emails and posts on the internet floating around with the entirety of this Psalm. I would encourage you to keep this Psalm in your "back-pocket" as a Psalm to meditate upon whenever you personally might be going through times of severe trouble – or whenever our world might be

going through times of severe trouble. Near the end of Psalm 46 in verse 10 we read a tiny little verse that I think is the key to this Psalm – *“Be still, and know that I am God.”* If you are going through a time of trouble in your life right now, will you take some time to meditate upon Psalm 46 and in particular verse 10? **Q: What does it mean to you to “Be still, and know that I am God?” Do you believe that being still during times of trouble can draw you closer to God? How do you bring stillness to your life?**

**3/4** - Psalm 47 is an awesome Psalm! I can almost hear and feel music and a drum beat as I read this Psalm today! This Psalm was used in later Jewish synagogue liturgies for Rosh Hashanah, the New Year Festival. This Psalm has also been used by the Christian church in the Celebration of Jesus' ascension, in particular with emphases on verse 5 - *“God has ascended with a mighty shout. The LORD has ascended with trumpets blaring.”* Do you hear and feel the music as you read this Psalm? Verse 1 sets the stage so very well for verse 2 in the image below - *“Come, everyone, and clap your hands for joy! Shout to God with joyful praise!”* **Q: How does music enhance your worship with God?**

**3/5** - Psalm 48 is a celebratory Psalm of Mount Zion in Jerusalem, as verse 8 reads: *“We had heard of the city's glory, but now we have seen it ourselves- the city of the LORD Almighty. It is the city of our God; he will make it safe forever.”* I like verse 10 a lot in this Psalm: *“As your name deserves, O God, you will be praised to the ends of the earth.”* I have had the good fortune to travel many places on this planet, and I will admit that it always encourages me to no end when I see God being praised and worshiped in other cultures. I always try to visit churches wherever I travel on Sundays, and I love seeing how different cultures worship God. One of the most memorable experiences was in the Dominican Republic in a very impoverished community. I honestly don't know that I have ever seen a congregation worship God so wholeheartedly than I did that day in the DR. It was beautiful. The other thing I am reminded of when traveling is that when we are in relationship with Jesus, God is always with us no matter where we go. When we're 35,000 feet above the ground in an airplane, God is with us. When we're in the middle of nowhere that has no church - God is with us. So, no matter where we go, if God is with us, we have the opportunity to praise God's name to the ends of the earth! **Q: How do you praise God when you are away from church or your faith community? How have you ever praised God in foreign countries? What are some ways Christians in other countries praise God differently than we do in the U.S.?**

#### **PROVERBS 10:18 - 10:26**

**2/27** - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 18 tells us - *“To hide hatred is to be a liar; to slander is to be a fool.”* Powerful teaching for us to consider. Let us pray that we will not be foolish... **Q: Have you ever slandered someone and realized it was a foolish thing to do?**

**2/28** - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 19 today teaches us: *“Don't talk too much, for it fosters sin. Be sensible and turn off the flow!”* This is a wonderful reminder that we should listen at least twice as much as we talk! That's why we have 2 ears and one mouth... :) **Q: Have you ever had to remind yourself to listen more than you speak? How have you been able to successfully do this?**

**3/2** - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 22 is short but powerful! *“The blessing of the LORD makes a person rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.”* I love that thought - we should have no sorrow with the blessings God gives! God does not add the sorrow. We might... but, with God's blessings should come joy and thanksgiving and praise! **Q: What are 3 things in your life today that God has blessed you with? How are you joyful in these blessings, and how do you thank and praise God for them?**

**3/3** - Today in Proverbs chapter 10 verse 23 we read: *“Doing wrong is fun for a fool, while wise conduct is a pleasure to the wise.”* This is one of those convicting Proverbs for me, as I have found myself on both sides of this coin. In my past, I've had fun in doing wrong. And in recent years I have found wise conduct to be a pleasure. As I've walked along the Way of following Jesus, I do know that I'm spending more time than ever enjoying wise conduct – thanks to the grace of God. However, this Proverb still makes me really examine how I am living my life today. Have I really stopped finding pleasure in doing wrong? Are there still some subtle ways perhaps that I am having fun doing wrong? Am I still acting foolishly at times? **Q: How about you? How does this Proverb speak to you? Have you found yourself on both sides of this coin? What does wise conduct look like to you in your life today? How do you seek to live a life of wise conduct?**

**3/4** - Proverbs 10 verse 25 is a verse for each of us to meditate upon a bit - *“Disaster strikes like a cyclone, whirling the wicked away, but the godly have a lasting foundation.”* **Q: How do you have a lasting foundation in the midst of a**

## disaster?

**3/5** - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 26 teaches us: *"Lazy people are a pain to their employer. They are like smoke in the eyes or vinegar that sets the teeth on edge."* I think this gives each of us a chance to reflect upon how diligently we work for our employers. I think about this a lot. I know there are friends of mine that surf the net at work or send personal emails or play video games. I suppose some of this is okay, if you really are counting it as "break time" and not letting it eat into the actual hours you are supposed to be working. I would simply say that I think this is a very slippery slope for each of us - wasting time at work on personal stuff or games on the computers. I pray that each of us are so diligent to not start down this slope at work... and if we are on this slope already, to get off of it immediately! Actually, while I'm going on this tangent, I'll keep going... :) A friend of mine once gave me some very wise advice. He was in a job that he really didn't like. He knew he wouldn't be there long, and he was looking for other jobs - outside of work time. But, when he was at this job he was still giving it 100% - he was working hard. I asked him why he was working so hard if he knew he was leaving soon. He simply said to me, "Mike, if you pick up bad habits in one job, let me guarantee you that you are going to carry forward those bad habits to your next job. Don't kid yourself and think that you can turn those bad habits off overnight. You can't. I don't want to carry forward any bad habits when I land my dream job." Wow... what amazing wisdom from my friend here! **Q: I also kind of wonder that if we have bad habits at work, if they will also carry over into our personal lives? I think we'd all do well to meditate on this Proverb and ask ourselves are we really working an honest day's work each and every day for our employer? How do you make sure you are not lazy for your employer or in your home?**

### 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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