

**One Year Bible Blog – Monthly Notes - www.OneYearBibleBlog.com
MARCH NOTES, [Copyright © 2004-2012 One Year Bible Blog](http://www.OneYearBibleBlog.com)**

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

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

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?**

3/6 - Today in Numbers chapter 6 we read about the Nazirite laws! The Nazirite vows could be taken for as little as 30 days or as long as a lifetime. It was voluntary - except parents could take the vow for their children, making them Nazirites for life. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist are all thought to have been Nazirites for life. More info on the Nazirites is [at this link](#).

3/6 - Today in Numbers chapter 6 verses 22-27 we will read the well known "Aaronic Blessing", which I've underlined in the verses – *"The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.""* **Q: How does this blessing speak to you today? Have you heard this blessing prayed aloud before? Can you imagine this ancient blessing that has been prayed innumerable times in history being prayed over you today? Take a few moments to really meditate upon the 3 sections of the blessing. Do you notice that each section begins with God's name? Do you believe that God can indeed bless you and keep you (favor & protect you)? That he can indeed make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you (be pleased & be merciful and compassionate to you)? And do you believe that God can indeed turn his face toward you and give you peace (give approval & peace to you)? It is also of note that this blessing "put God's name on the Israelites and they were blessed." Do you believe that God's name is upon you today? Do you want God's name to be upon you today?**

3/7 - Today in Numbers chapter 8 we read about the dedication of the Levites and in Numbers chapter 9 we read about the Second Passover. In chapter 9 we read about the fiery cloud over the tabernacle! Verses 22 & 23 stood out to me in today's readings: *"Whether the cloud stayed above the Tabernacle for two days, a month, or a year, the people of Israel stayed in camp and did not move on. But as soon as it lifted, they broke camp and moved on. So they camped or traveled at the LORD's command, and they did whatever the LORD told them through Moses."*

3/8 - Today we begin to read about the Israelites discontent with God's provision and care in Numbers chapter 11, and this discontent & disobedience we will read about through chapter 25. As we read through these chapters, I do think we would do well to not point fingers at the Israelites and say that we would have behaved differently back then. I'm not so sure that I would have. . . I think these chapters will very likely speak into our lives today and we might find that we are often not so different from the Israelites. In Numbers chapter 11 verse 1 today we read: *"Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused."* How does this verse speak to you today? I don't know about you, but for me this verse is convicting. Simply because I know that I often complain more to God than I actually thank God for the blessings he has poured out into my life. It really is incredible to stop and think about how good God is to us. In fact, one of our One Year Bible participants in the past had a blog called "God is Good All the Time." And this is so true. And yet, what is our percentage of thanksgiving to God versus our complaining to God? I'm afraid my percentage is way skewed toward complaining or worrying (worrying is really similar to complaining I think). I pray that as I go forward in my walk with God that I will do a lot more thanking and a lot less complaining & worrying. It is an amazing thing – this gift of life. Even in the midst of all of our daily challenges and storms, let us know that God is the anchor and harbor in our life. And he continues to pour out blessings upon blessings upon our life – oftentimes without us consciously being aware of the blessings. And oftentimes without us thanking God for the blessings. **Q: How about you? How is your thanksgiving of God's blessings in your life going these days? How do you give thanksgiving to God?**

3/9 - Today in Numbers chapter 11 we read about God's Spirit resting upon 70 leaders! I found verse 29 awesome when Moses responded to Joshua's protesting of Eldad and Medad prophesying in the camp - *"Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them all!"* This is great humility on Moses part! He was not threatened by others using gifts of the Spirit in public. "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets." These words of Moses remind me of a more modern day quote I read somewhere that went something like - "We are all called to be saints." I like that... **Q: Do you believe that you are called to be a saint? Do you want to be a saint?**

3/10 - Today in Numbers chapter 14 we read about Joshua and Caleb's bold faith. They were ready to move into the Promised Land! **Q: Again, similar to my thoughts in yesterday's post, I wonder if sometimes in our lives, when we are on the brink of something new & something big - that is of God - are we like Caleb & Joshua, or are we like the Israelites? Are we ready to move forward quickly and decisively on toward what God is giving us? Or, are we putting on the brakes and starting to complain? Do we sabotage ourselves? This is a tough question to ask ourselves I realize. But I think that if I honestly look at my life, I can more often be like the Israelites in this situation chapter - putting on the breaks and really becoming the cause of my own problem... I pray that I can have faith like Caleb and Joshua. I pray that I will boldly move forward to what God is calling me toward. How about you?**

3/11 - Today in Numbers chapter 15 we read about unintentional and intentional sins. Verse 30 stood out to me - *"But those who brazenly violate the LORD's will, whether native Israelites or foreigners, blaspheme the LORD."* I have thought about this in my life in the past... and thought about that old phrase, "ignorance is bliss." While this phrase may seem true at first glance - ignorance is bliss - it's obviously not "True" at all. It is so much better to know godly Truth, than to be ignorant. However... once we know godly Truth, what if we then consciously go against that Truth? What if we "brazenly violate God's will"? I'll admit - I have done this certainly. I have consciously sinned. And it eats me up inside when I do. Not because I expect myself to be perfect - but because I am simply sinning against God, whom I love so much. And I know better. I guess this verse today reminded me that once we know Truth - and as we continue to grow in our knowledge of Truth and the Bible - we really should be much more intentional in how we live. We know what godly living looks like. We should not go back to our old ways of thinking or our old habits. We know better. And we most certainly should not think that "ignorance is bliss." It isn't. **Q: Have you ever thought ignorance is bliss? Do you think it is? Why or why not?**

3/11- "Trial By Fire" - ever hear this term? I think this term may have gotten its genesis here in Numbers chapter 16. Korah's rebellion caused Moses to explain how this true trial by fire would go down in verses 4 through 7 - *"Tomorrow morning the LORD will show us who belongs to him and who is holy. The LORD will allow those who are chosen to enter his holy presence. You, Korah, and all your followers must do this: Take incense burners, and burn incense in them tomorrow before the LORD. Then we will see whom the LORD chooses as his holy one."* A trial by fire indeed occurs subsequently in this chapter. Verses 12 & 13 stood out as completely strange, as these 2 men had somehow now thought that instead of being a prison, Egypt was now in their minds a paradise?.... *"Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they replied, "We refuse to come! Isn't it enough that you brought us out of Egypt, a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us here in this wilderness, and that you now treat us like your subjects?"* I wonder if we do this in our lives? Think that things that used to be so bad for us are now somehow good? I know I've done this. I've left situations or relationships or bad habits - knowing they were simply bad for me - and then later down the road I've sometimes thought to myself, "ahh... I miss xyz or doing xyz... I should go back to that." And I do. And I regret it all over once again. There is a somewhat obscure R.E.M. song that goes "Don't go back to Rockville - and waste another year." I think of this song on occasion when I am tempted to go back to something I know I shouldn't go back to - I sing to myself, "don't go back to Rockville." Perhaps Dathan and Abiram should have been singing to themselves - "don't go back to Egypt - and waste another year..." **Q: What about you? Is there an Egypt / Rockville or two in your life that you've left behind? Are you ever tempted to go back? Do you sometimes even think you might have been wrong about how bad things were back then.... that it might have really been a land flowing with milk and honey even! Well, I know we'll all have our moments of going backwards.... but I pray we see the True land of milk and honey in front of us that is only available through a relationship with Jesus and the Father - and that we won't go back to our "Egypt"...**

3/12 - Today in Numbers chapter 17 verse 8 we read how God stopped the questioning of the Israelite community about Aaron and his houses' unique priestly authority - *"When Moses went into the Tabernacle of the Covenant the next day, he found that Aaron's staff, representing the tribe of Levi, had sprouted, blossomed, and produced almonds!"* The 2nd sentence in Numbers chapter 18 verse 20 stood out to me today: *"And the LORD said to Aaron, "You priests will receive no inheritance of land or share of property among the people of Israel. I am your inheritance and your share."* What a beautiful thing to hear from God! I am your inheritance and your share. **Q: In your life today, is God your inheritance and your share? Do you want God to be your inheritance and share? Does anything else at all compare to this glorious inheritance?**

3/13 - Today in Numbers chapter 20 verse 12 we read about God pronouncing that Moses & Aaron would not enter the Promised Land - *"But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!"* Why did this happen? Well, it's

best to stick with Scripture - God says that Moses & Aaron did not trust God enough. They did not trust God enough to demonstrate his holiness to the people of Israel. Thus they will not lead them into the Promised Land. Where was the lack of trust? Go back to verse 8 and you'll see God tell Moses to "command the rock" for water - command meaning verbally... then in verse 11 we see Moses strike the rock twice - not using the verbal command God instructed him on, but using an action. There also may have been a pride issue when Moses in verse 10 says "must we bring you water from this rock?" You'll notice the little word WE - We being Moses & Aaron? -this is probably not the way to best recognize God for God bringing water out of the rock... It looks like Moses is taking credit. **Q: How about us in our lives today? Are there times when we disobey God's direct commands to us? Are there times when we take credit for God's work? Even if we generally follow God's instructions - as Moses clearly does for the majority of his life - should we be on constant watch that we do not disobey God?**

3/14 - Today in Numbers chapter 22 we read about Balak sending for Balaam - hoping Balaam will curse the Israelites. Balak sends messengers the 1st time and Balaam gets a message from God to not go with these messengers, as God has blessed the Israelites. What is interesting to me are verses 15-17: *"Then Balak tried again. This time he sent a larger number of even more distinguished officials than those he had sent the first time. They went to Balaam and gave him this message: 'This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Please don't let anything stop you from coming. I will pay you well and do anything you ask of me. Just come and curse these people for me!'"* For some reason these verses really reminded me of temptation in our lives today. Like Balaam with the messengers on their first visit, we may realize something is not what God would want us to do - and we send the temptation away. But... then the temptation can come back! In a bigger way - with more distinguished officials than before... with more allure than before... the temptation that we resisted once so valiantly can come back. And then, the question becomes - with the opportunity to be "paid well" by the temptation, will we still resist the temptation? Can we resist the temptation a 2nd time? Through Jesus, our mediator before our Heavenly Father, yes, I know we can. If temptation has visited you once - or twice - or even many times - will you pray to God today in the name of Jesus that temptation will never overcome you? **Q: How do you resist temptation in your life? Are you still tempted today? What are some current temptations? How will you resist them?**

3/15 - Today in Numbers chapter 22 we read about Balaam's talking donkey! Yes, this is a very unique portion of scripture, and, yes, one we can learn from. In verses 27 & 28 we read: *"When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?'"* There is a lot going on in the verses leading up to this point, and in the verses thereafter - which you can study more [at this link](#). I think one thing for us to pay attention to here is how we are sometimes saved from a bad situation by what at first glance appears to be an "inconvenience." A donkey laying down and starting to talk is inconvenient to Balaam. But, this talking donkey saved Balaam from an angel with a sword in hand that Balaam could not see. Are there perhaps "inconveniences" in your life today that are maybe saving you from a bad situation? Or, do you recognize inconveniences in the past that saved you from a bad situation? I know I have. If my car breaks down or I get sick or I miss a flight - all inconveniences - I try to remind myself that it might just be possible that this inconvenience was meant to be. It may have saved me from something much worse happening. The inconvenience - the "talking donkey" - may have actually saved me from something I could not see. Keep your eyes open for inconvenient "talking donkeys" in your life :) - and praise God for them when they appear! **Q: Have you ever had any "talking donkey" experiences in your life? An experience that at first glance was a huge inconvenience to you, but in retrospect was an incredible blessing from God? Basically, have you ever had a blessing in disguise? Do you think God still can use "talking donkey" experiences in our lives today to get our attention?**

3/16 - Today in Numbers chapter 24 we read about Balaam's prophecies! Verse 17 is thought to be prophetic of Jesus: *"I see him, but not in the present time. I perceive him, but far in the distant future. A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel. It will crush the foreheads of Moab's people, cracking the skulls of the people of Sheth."* Tyndale's commentary today suggests that the star rising from Jacob may be the prophecy that convinced the wise men to travel to Israel in search of the newborn Jesus. And just when it looks like Balaam was turning out to be maybe not so bad in chapter 24... we get to chapter 25... In chapter 25 we read about Israel's sin in worshipping Baal and their sexual immorality. What we don't find out until Numbers chapter 31 verse 16 is that Balaam was the principal instigator of the idea of leading Israel toward this sexual sin & idolatry: *"They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD's people."* Revelation chapter 2 verse 14 also refers to Balaam's hand in the incidents that took place: *"Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality."* Reading about these incidents in

chapter 25 today – **Q: do you think people today still live in this tension of serving God versus being seduced by idols? What saves us from this tension?**

3/17 - Today in Numbers chapter 26 we read about Israel's second census, which was commanded by God. (We'll read later in the Bible a census conducted by David that was not commanded by God, which was a sin.) This 2nd census in numbers was taken approximately 38 years after the first census. The first census in Numbers chapters 1 & 2 was taken after Israel had left Egypt. This second census is being taken just before the conquest of the Promised Land. In verse 51 today we read: *"So the total number of Israelite men counted in the census numbered 601,730."* This total of the second census compares to 603,550 from the first census, so is very comparable. These second census numbers obviously reflect the 24,000 deaths we read about in chapter 25 - so this number would have been higher. To me, overall, to see the numbers so similar over 38 years in the wilderness shows that God's hand of blessing was so clearly upon the Israelites. They were flourishing in the desert. Hopefully this is encouraging to us today. If we are in right relationship with God, I believe our lives will clearly flourish in whatever circumstances we might find ourselves in - even if we are in the desert! **Q: Have you ever found yourself in a spiritual desert? How did God bring you living water and back to abundance? Do you look forward to heaven, where there will be no more deserts?**

3/19 - I read an interesting commentary today that said the giving of the instructions of the offerings for the festivals in today's readings was done as part of the transfer of power from Moses to Joshua that was coming up soon. As we saw in yesterday's readings with the census, there are 600,000 men about to enter the Promised Land - potentially 2 million or so total including women & children - who these instructions for the offerings for the festivals were given by Moses from God, as we see in chapter 29 verse 40 today: *"So Moses gave all of these instructions to the people of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded him."* **Q: How do you see transfers of power in your church take place today? Are they done well and orderly? How can you serve to help in times of transition in your church? Will be a helper?**

3/20 - Today in Numbers chapter 30 we read about the various complexities of vows, particularly related to women making vows. (and how their fathers or husbands can void them on day 1, etc.) Apparently the Jewish system and tradition of vows and what counts and didn't count got even more complex over the years between this chapter in Numbers and when Jesus was born. I love that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus simplifies the whole complex system of vows! Check out Matthew chapter 5 verses 33 through 37 where Jesus says: *"You have also heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord.' But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, 'By heaven!' because heaven is God's throne. And do not say, 'By the earth!' because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, 'By Jerusalem!' for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. Do not even say, 'By my head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one."* Let's let our yes simply mean yes and our no's simply mean no's! **Q: Do you make vows today? Do you think vows are a good or bad idea? How about legal contracts – are these a good idea in our world today? When should they be used? Or not used? Prenuptial agreements – good or bad idea? (nice hot topic of conversation... :)**

3/21 - Today in Numbers chapter 32 verse 23 we read this strong warning from Moses to the Reubenites & Gadites about their promise to fight with Israel and their desire to settle in the land east of the Jordan river: *"But if you fail to keep your word, then you will have sinned against the LORD, and you may be sure that your sin will find you out."* I think this is powerful for us to keep in mind in our lives today as well! It's important for us to keep our word! If we're not sure we can keep our word, we shouldn't give it. But if we do give our word, and we fail to keep it, we have sinned. And I do believe the sin will still find us out today. **Q: How are you at keeping your word these days? Is there an area of your life where you gave your word and you now are wavering? Can you keep your word in that area? Will you pray to God to give you strength to do so?** Let us not be people who fail to keep our word or who stretch the truth!

3/22 - Today in Numbers chapter 33 we read about the other nations in Canaan. In chapter 34 we read about the boundaries of the Promised Land. In chapter 35 verses 10-12 we read about the Cities of Refuge - *"When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, designate cities of refuge for people to flee to if they have killed someone accidentally. These cities will be places of protection from a dead person's relatives who want to avenge the death. The slayer must not be killed before being tried by the community."* Reading about the Cities of Refuge reminds me of our current day laws of "innocent until proven guilty." It seems like the Cities of Refuge idea still lives on in our justice system today in some regards. **Q: How did the Cities of Refuge stand out to you? How do the Cities of Refuge foreshadow Jesus?**

3/23 - Today we wrap up the book of Numbers and begin Deuteronomy, the last book of the Pentateuch (or 5 Books of

the Law)! And as we all Learned to Love Leviticus this year, my prayer is that each of us will be Diggin' Deuteronomy as we read through it this year! :)

~Deuteronomy~

Author: Moses

Date: 1420 or 1220 B.C.

Content: The book consists of a series of addresses given by Moses in the plains of Moab prior to their entering into Canaan, as well as some specialized regulations and the appointment of Moses' successor, Joshua. In Moses' addresses he summarized the events that led up to that day, exhorted the people to faith and obedience, called the Israelites to rededicate themselves to the task God had given them, and then led them in worship and song. After the appointment of Joshua, Moses left the people and, after viewing the Holy Land from afar one last time, he died. With Moses' death the old order passed away and the destiny of Israel moved into the hands of the next generation.

Theme: The faithfulness and power of God to save are stressed throughout the book. A look at Israel's past shows that God led his people through their darkest days and gave them hope for the future. What God did in the past he could do again. The need for faith and obedience on the part of God's people is also stressed. God's richest blessings are given only to those who will use them for his glory. (Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 3) Great commentary on Deuteronomy is at this link: http://bible.org/page.php?page_id=885 In Deuteronomy chapter 1 verse 1 today we read: "This book records the words that Moses spoke to all the people of Israel while they were in the wilderness east of the Jordan River."

3/24 - Okay, I think we've come across quite an understatement in our readings today in Deuteronomy chapter 2 verse 1 when Moses says: "We wandered around Mount Seir for a long time." Indeed... it was a long time of 3 decades plus of wandering... :) But, it's important for us to remember why it was such a long time of wandering - because of the Israelites' sin in not entering the Promised Land when they were first instructed to do so by God. And, I think about this in our lives today. When we sin. And particularly when we consistently sin - with a bad habit or addiction that we know we should not be indulging in - we can become just like the Israelites, wandering around in the wilderness for a long time... My fear is that we can get so used to our sin and wandering around in the wilderness that we don't ever break free from it. We stay in bondage to the sin. And then we stay in the wilderness. The wilderness for us today may simply be living life half-heartedly in a bit of a haze or a bit of a funk. With some sort of cloud hanging over us. It's no way to live life. I guess I just want to encourage you that if you are struggling with what seems to be an unreleaseable sin to not give up. Don't ever give up on victory! Continue to take the sin to Jesus over and over and over again. Take it to God over and over and over again. Pray about it continuously. Seek wise counsel from friends and pastors and professional help. Freedom awaits you. You can get out of the wilderness. The Promised Land awaits you. Please don't continue to "wander around Mt. Seir for a long time".... **Q: Is there a time in your life where you felt like you were spiritually wandering? What got you back on track?**

3/25 - Today in Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 29 we read: "But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul." **Q: How does this verse speak to you today? Do you believe it is true? Have you sought God with all of your heart and with all of your soul?** This verse also reminds me of Jesus' teaching of one of the two great commands - which he quoted from Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 5 - "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." **So - if you have sought after God and found him, do you now today love God with all your heart and with all of your soul and with all your strength? What does this look like in your life? How do you love God in your life today?**

3/26 - Today we get a nice recap of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy chapter 5! We originally read these in Exodus chapter 20 and then again in Exodus chapter 34. There are some differences in the wordings of the Ten Commandments in each of these chapters, but not enough to worry about. :) Check out a quick overview of some of the differences between these 3 chapters' presentation of the Ten Commandments [at this link](#). Bible.org has a great overview of the Ten Commandments, based on Exodus chapter 20, [at this link](#). I love Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 4 through 9 in our readings today! These verses are 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. They are the last words a Jew says prior to death. More very interesting information about The Shema from a Jewish website is [at this link](#). "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. Write them on

the doorposts of your house and on your gates." **Q: How does the Shema stand out to you?**

3/27 - Today in Deuteronomy chapter 7, the New Living Translation has the chapter titled "The Privilege of Holiness." Keep in mind that these chapter headings - or headings within sections of chapters - are not Biblical text. They are not from the original manuscripts, but are basically brief summaries from the viewpoint of modern-day translators. Generally speaking though, you can trust what they are telling you - but just remember, they're not Biblical text. All this to say, I was intrigued by this chapter's title in today's readings. Israel was indeed privileged and called to holiness. I think an important for us to keep in mind is that in the Old Testament, Israel was God's chosen people. So, yes, we do read in this chapter and future OT chapters God favoring Israel over all other nations. However, keep three things in mind. One, Israel is the people of God's covenant going to back to Abraham and God is just forming Israel as a nation. Two, the other nations at that time were immersed in sin and idolatry to other gods. Three, through Jesus' ministry, God indeed shows love toward all nations today and wants all nations to be in relationship with him. But, prior to Jesus, we see clearly in this chapter that Israel is, per verse 6: *"a holy people, who belong to the LORD your God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure."* **Q: Do you believe we are called to holiness in our lives today? How are you moving forward in holiness in your life?**

3/27 - Today in Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 10 we read: *"When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you."* What a great verse! Many say that it is because of this verse that we traditionally say grace at meal time. Interesting that this verse indicates that the Israelites were to praise God after eating - which, actually, is sometimes how I say grace today now too - when I forget to say grace before eating! :) I think the other thing this verse above gets at is that we humans have a tendency to "forget" God in the good times. In the bad times, maybe we do a decent job of praying to God and trying to stay close to Him. But in the good times, I know that sometimes I can forget Who really blessed me with the good times. I think it is so important for us to remember each and every day this one thing - God has given us *everything*. Every single good thing we have in our life comes from God. Our family. Our friends. Our physical abilities. Even the very air we breathe. It ALL comes from God. And, while I think it is pleasing to God for us to praise him for these good things - I also think it is ultimately healthy for us to praise God for the good things he has given us. Because, when we truly thank God each and every day for even very simple things - our eyesight, our 12 year old car that still runs fine, etc. etc. - we realize how very blessed we really are, and then I think we have less of a chance of feeling sorry for ourselves. We are blessed! **Q: How are you doing on praising God for the good things he has given you in your life? Now that we are in this Easter & Spring season, will you make a conscious effort to really praise and thank God each and every day? Think this might be pleasing to God? Think this might be healthy for you? Do you say grace or offer up some sort of prayer of thanksgiving to God at each meal? Why or why not? Do you think it is pleasing to God when we do say a prayer at mealtime?**

3/28 - Okay, I'm really appreciating the New Living Translation little commentary headers before sections of our readings - as I discussed in yesterday's post, these are not from the original manuscripts so should not be considered Biblical text. Nonetheless, I personally do find them useful. And I really do like the first header in Deuteronomy chapter 9 today in the NLT - "Victory by God's Grace." You'll note that you won't actually find the word "grace" in any of the verses that follow. However, I think we do get a good overview of how grace works in this section, and verse 6 gives an example of grace: *"I will say it again: The LORD your God is not giving you this good land because you are righteous, for you are not--you are a stubborn people."* This verse made me chuckle a bit when I read it. Because it is true. The Israelites were a stubborn people, as we've seen in our readings. And yet, God was still showing grace by giving them the Promised Land. This verse primarily made me chuckle because I think that we, today, are still oftentimes a stubborn people. Not a lot has changed in 3,000+ years. We humans are still a stubborn people. And God is still a God of grace. Then and now. God shows us humans his grace. Thank goodness! **Q: Are you righteous? Are you stubborn? How are you made righteous in Christ?**

3/28 - Later in Deuteronomy chapter 9 we read about the golden calf, and we get a great reminder of how Moses truly was a mediator between God and the Israelites - in some ways foreshadowing the mediator role that Jesus is now between God and all humankind. Verses 18 & 19 demonstrate Moses' mediator role well - *"Then for forty days and nights I lay prostrate before the LORD, neither eating bread nor drinking water. I did this because you had sinned by doing what the LORD hated, thus making him very angry. How I feared for you, for the LORD was ready to destroy you. But again he listened to me."* And check out this amazing image below of Moses laying prostrate before God on behalf the Israelites... **Q: Can you imagine doing this for 40 days and nights for someone? Particularly for someone who just sinned greatly against God? Do you pray with intercession for others?**

3/29- Wow. I like Deuteronomy chapter 11 a lot today. There are a ton of powerful verses in this chapter! I love verse 22 - *"Be careful to obey all the commands I give you; show love to the LORD your God by walking in his ways and clinging to him."* I really like that... show Love to God by walking in his ways - and clinging to him. I think I caught that term in our readings yesterday as well - "clinging." I know in our world today it's not too cool to be too clingy. :) But, I think God indeed wants us to be clingy when it comes Him! I pray that I cling to God each and every day. **Q: How about you? When it comes to God, are you clingy?**

3/29 - Verses 26 through 28 are terrific verses on the choice the Israelites could make back then - *"Today I am giving you the choice between a blessing and a curse! You will be blessed if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today. You will receive a curse if you reject the commands of the LORD your God and turn from his way by worshiping foreign gods."* I believe this choice has morphed but still continues today through the New Covenant. We can choose to follow Jesus or we can choose to follow our own ways. One way is a blessing and one way is truly a curse. Like the Israelites, we still have the choice of a blessing or a curse.... **Q: Which choice have you made? How are you choosing blessings in your life today? How are you avoiding curses?**

3/30 - Wow. Deuteronomy chapter 13 starts off with a strong warning today - *"Suppose there are prophets among you, or those who have dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, and the predicted signs or miracles take place. If the prophets then say, 'Come, let us worship the gods of foreign nations,' do not listen to them. The LORD your God is testing you to see if you love him with all your heart and soul."* **Q: Do you believe there are false prophets in our world today? Are there people in our world that tempt us to worship false gods? It is possible one of the false gods we can be tempted to worship today is even our own self? Will we reject worshiping false gods and love and worship the one true God with all of our soul and heart?**

3/30 - Verse 22 is powerful for us to meditate upon - *"You must set aside a tithe of your crops--one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year. Bring this tithe to the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored."* **Q: What might "crops we harvest" be in our modern world today? Is there a place we can bring a tithe to God today? Do you believe that tithing honors God?** On a side note, my wife and I generally try to practice giving 10% and saving 10%, and live on the remaining 80%. Our 10% giving is spread among the local church, local and international ministries, and nonprofits.

3/30 - Deuteronomy chapter 15 verses 4 and 10 & 11 stood out to me today - *"There should be no poor among you, for the LORD your God will greatly bless you in the land he is giving you as a special possession.... Give freely without begrudging it, and the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do. There will always be some among you who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to share your resources freely with the poor and with other Israelites in need."* **Q: How do these verses speak to you?** I find it interesting that these verses say both - there should be no poor and that there will always be some poor among you. **I wonder why this is?** It seems kind of like a kingdom of heaven ultimate reality and our fallen world temporary reality perhaps... **Do you think the command to share our resources freely with the poor and others in need is still valid today? How are you doing in giving freely to the poor?**

3/31 - Deuteronomy chapter 16 verse 18 is of note today: *"Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in all the towns the LORD your God is giving you. They will judge the people fairly throughout the land."* After Deuteronomy comes the book of Joshua, which is followed by the book of Judges. And then... Israel won't be satisfied with just judges. Israel will want a king... **Q: Who is your King today? Why do we look for earthly Kings? Should Jesus be enough, as our King?**

NEW TESTAMENT

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?**

3/6 - In Mark chapter 12 verses 41 through 43 today we read the powerful narrative of the Widow's Mite - *"Jesus went over to the collection box in the Temple and sat and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two pennies. He called his disciples to him and said, 'I assure you, this poor widow has given more than all the others have given. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has.'"* **Q: How does this narrative speak to you? When it comes to your time, treasure, and talents, do you give to God out of your surplus? Or do you give to God all that you have? What should we learn today from the widow about giving?**

3/7 - In Mark chapter 13 today we read about the signs of the end of the age. For me personally, Jesus' words in verses 32 & 33 have always been so powerful when it comes to end-times considerations – *“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.”* I think this teaching from Jesus is so important for each of us to keep in mind. No one knows the day or the hour of the end of times. Only God the Father. I have some friends who are very into speculating and discussing end-times prophecies and events. For me personally, these verses above make me realize that we truly do not know when the end of time will come – but, yes, we know it will come. And therefore I believe we should live every day loving God and loving people around us – and not get so focused on speculation of end times that we forget about these 2 great commandments. . . :) My other thought on these verses is this – not only do we not know when the end of the age will come, but we do not know when the end of each of our lives will come. Hopefully we will live long lives. But it's not guaranteed. You know how life is – there is cancer and there are accidents and the list could go on. So, I guess I'd recommend this – don't worry about when the end of the age will be. Don't worry about when the end of your life will be. Instead, be on guard and be alert each and every day to make sure you are loving God and loving people – as if each day might be your last day. I am reminded of something I read on another Christian blog recently and it really did make me think. Here's how this blog put it, and I think this relates well to these Mark verses – *“Breaking News: mortality rate is STILL 100%! You are not guaranteed all the days you believe you have coming to you. What would you do differently if today was your last day alive?”* **Q: Powerful question for each of us to consider, no? What would you do differently if today was your last day alive?**

3/8 - In Mark chapter 14 today we read the beautiful story of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anoints Jesus, and as he tells us in verse 8 - *“She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time.”* A new insight I learned on this today is from Zondervan's commentary - In Jesus' day it was a normal Jewish custom to anoint a dead body with aromatic oils in preparing for burial. Jesus seems to be anticipating suffering a "criminal's" death, for only in that circumstance was there no anointing of the dead body.

3/9 - This week we will be reading about Jesus' passion in the Gospel of Mark. Today In Mark chapter 14 verses 35 & 36 we read this about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane – *“Going a little farther, Jesus fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”* What a powerful prayer here from Jesus! Jesus knows what is coming. He knows what the road to Calvary will bring. He knows that God has the power to take this suffering away from him – BUT, here's the amazingly important piece of this prayer, which I think each of us would do well in praying in our prayers – *“Yet not what I will, but what you will.”* This is such a powerful prayer from Jesus to God. We get a glimpse here of a prayer from the Messiah to the Father – and again, I think we would do well to pray this in our prayers as well. This of course is very similar to the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus taught in Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount, when we pray – *“Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be Done.”* Not our will, but Thy Will be done. **Q: In your prayer life, do you model Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and in the Lord's Prayer? Do you pray that not your will – but God's perfect will – be done?**

3/10 - Today in Mark chapter 14 we read an amazingly powerful statement from Jesus in verses 61 & 62 - *“Then the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the blessed God?” Jesus said, “I am, and you will see me, the Son of Man, sitting at God's right hand in the place of power and coming back on the clouds of heaven.”* Wow. This is it. This is a statement that changes everything. **Q: The question for us is this - is this more than just a statement from Jesus? Do you believe this is Truth?**

3/11 - It is interesting in the One Year Bible how we go through the 4 Gospels one after another in the beginning portion of the year. In some ways it may seem repetitive - but I think repetitive is good when we're talking about the story of Jesus... we really cannot hear and meditate upon this story enough. Also, what I like is the nuances of each Gospel - or maybe things that are indeed in a few of the Gospels that somehow just stand out to me in some new way in one of the Gospels. Today is one of those days where something jumped out at me that I have not really noticed before - and that is Pilate in Mark 15 verses 9 & 10 - *“Should I give you the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked. (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy.)* It's interesting that Pilate used the term King of the Jews here - and again later in the narrative - and that he also had this term nailed to the cross. And the question I have is this - did Pilate do this simply to try and irritate the leading priests? I think this is probably the case. But, I'm looking forward to some further study on this.

3/12 - Today we finish up the Gospel of Mark! The Gospel of Luke starts tomorrow. In Mark chapter 16 verse 6 is the key to our Christian faith: *"The angel said, "Do not be so surprised. You are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified. He isn't here! He has been raised from the dead!"* **Q: Do you believe this angel's proclamation? Do you truly believe that Jesus rose from the dead?**

3/13 - Today we begin the Gospel of Luke!

Author: Luke

Place: Perhaps Caesarea

Date: A.D. 60-65

Content: Luke was a physician and a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. He wrote his Gospel for a cultured Greek named Theophilus in order to show the true humanity of Jesus and his place in history. For this reason Luke was careful to examine all the evidence very carefully and give precise dates for the events that took place. He begins with an account of Jesus' virgin birth, giving many details not found elsewhere. Jesus' Galilean ministry is described, followed by a lengthy account of Jesus' trip to Jerusalem. After Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples are left rejoicing, waiting for the promised power of God from heaven to fill them.

Theme: Whereas Matthew shows Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah and Mark shows Jesus as the servant of God, Luke depicts Jesus as the perfect God-man whose genealogy may be traced back to Adam. Jesus is the greatest man in history and is placed within the flow of world events by Luke. He is the greatest man because of what he taught, what he did, why he died – and because he rose again from the dead. For this reason we ought to accept him as our Lord. (Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 22) More commentary on the Gospel of Luke is at this link.

3/13 - In today's readings in Luke chapter 1 we read about the birth of John the Baptist being foretold by the angel Gabriel. Gabriel shares with Zechariah this powerful message about John in verses 16 & 17 - *"He will persuade many Israelites to turn to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah, the prophet of old. He will precede the coming of the Lord, preparing the people for his arrival. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will change disobedient minds to accept godly wisdom."* This is a message for us to consider today – **Q: do we need to be persuaded to turn to God? Do we need our disobedient minds changed to accept godly wisdom? Can we open our ears to the message of John the Baptist some 2,000 years later? Will we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord?**

3/14 - In Luke chapter 1 verses 46 through 55 we read an amazing hymn known as Mary's Song or the Magnificat, which means "glorifies" in the Latin Vulgate translation. This is indeed a song from the mother of Jesus that glorifies God in a beautiful way. As you read through this song, below, please meditate upon its words. **Q: And maybe ask yourself this – are there ways in your life that you "sing songs" like this to God? Maybe it's not through literal song – but maybe you praise God through loving others, through serving others, through art, through prayer, through your church, and this list could go on... What is your unique way of glorifying God? Do you want to glorify God with all you do in your life?**

3/15 - I love Zechariah's prophecy in today's readings in Luke chapter 1! In particular verses 76-79 when speaking about his son John the Baptist: *"And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Because of God's tender mercy, the light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."* Amen! **Q: How has the ministry or life of John the Baptist spoken to you? Is there anything we can learn from John the Baptist about being zealous for God?**

3/16 - One thing that seems to be standing out to me quite a bit in reading Luke this year is how much Luke writes about Mary. I like how Luke gives us a little bit more of a glimpse of the mother of Jesus in his Gospel. We saw this obviously in our readings 2 days ago about the Magnificat. And then today we read about Mary listening to the shepherds' words in verse 19: *"Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often."* And then in verses 34 & 35 today we read: *"Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, "This child will be rejected by many in Israel, and it will be their undoing. But he will be the greatest joy to many others. Thus, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."* This last sentence of Simeon's seems to be the first glimpse of Jesus' suffering and death that will come later in his life.... **Q: How does reading about Mary stand out to you? What can we learn from Mary's life and obedience?**

3/17 - In Luke chapter 2 today we read about Jesus' wisdom at the young age of 12. How's this for a profound statement from Jesus to Mary & Joseph when they found him in the Temple in verse 49 - *"But why did you need to search?" he asked. "You should have known that I would be in my Father's house."* I like that! And I like that Jesus was paying such respect for the Temple as well - essentially calling it the house of God. I do believe this can be carried forward today to Jesus' love for his body, the church. I often think to myself, when I'm on my way to church, that "I'm going to the house of God." **Q: Do you believe that we can find Jesus today in his Father's house? Or are you searching elsewhere?** I do believe of course Jesus can be found outside of church... but I also know that I oftentimes experience his presence so profoundly at church - and Communion in church clearly being one such a time & place where I cannot help but find Jesus in a profound way. **Where do you find God these days?**

3/19 - You'll notice that Luke's genealogy in chapter 3 today is different from the genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 in a couple of ways: 1. Matthew starts with Abraham and goes to Jesus & Luke starts with Jesus and goes all the way back to Adam. This was done by Luke to show Jesus' relationship to the entire human race. Matthew focused more on Jesus' relationship with the Jews by going back to Abraham. 2. Matthew traces Jesus legal genealogy through his father Joseph back to Solomon son of David, while Luke traces Jesus bloodline through his mother Mary back to Nathan son of David. This is an interesting slight distinction. Line up Luke & Matthew's genealogies and you'll see the differences in the names between David & Jesus. **Q: How does today's genealogy in Luke stand out to you? Do you enjoy reading genealogies in the Bible? Do you trace any of your own family genealogies or family trees? Why do you think genealogies are important to people? Why are they important to God?**

3/20 - Today we read about the temptation of Jesus. This is a powerful narrative for each of us to consider. We all obviously face temptations in our life. Jesus faced temptations as well. The difference of course is that Jesus did not give into the temptations. He did not sin. I love the fact that Jesus combated the devil's temptations with the Word of God, the Bible. We each would do well to pay attention to how powerful the Word is in thwarting the devil's temptations of us today. Ever feel a cloud of temptation hovering above you? I know I have... And I know that faith in Jesus, calling upon Jesus' name, and bringing to mind the Word of God in times of darkness & temptation can send this cloud away from us! **Q: When faced with temptation in your life, have you ever brought to mind the Word of God? Did this change things? Do you believe that the Word of God can help us combat temptation in our life?**

3/21 - In Luke chapter 5 verses 10 & 11 we read - *"From now on you'll be fishing for people!" And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.* **Q: Can you imagine being called by Jesus? If you were called by Jesus to stop your "work" that you are doing now and instead work to bring people closer to God, would you do so? Can you imagine yourself today being like these disciples and leaving everything and following Jesus? do you believe that Jesus still calls his followers to be fishers of people today? Are you a fisher of people? How are you fishing for people for the Lord in your life today? What are some ways that Jesus might be calling you to fish for people today?**

3/22 - In Luke chapter 5 we read one of my favorite healings' of Jesus - where he heals the paralyzed man on the mat - in very large part because of the paralyzed man's friends who carry him to Jesus! I love that his friends did this. I pray if I was paralyzed I would have friends like these! Check out verses 18 through 20 - *"Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to push through the crowd to Jesus, but they couldn't reach him. So they went up to the roof, took off some tiles, and lowered the sick man down into the crowd, still on his mat, right in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."* I am fascinated by this - "seeing **their** faith" - I don't know if this is a quirk of the New Living Translation or if indeed Jesus literally saw the faith of the paralyzed man's friends. My hunch is that he did. And this makes me realize that sometimes when our faith is at a low point, maybe our friends can help carry us along and bring us closer to Jesus. And maybe we should act like these friends for someone in our life who is "paralyzed" by something.... Is there someone in your life that you can help "carry the mat for" and in doing so bring them closer to Jesus? Wow. I pray I have friends like this - and I pray I can be a friend like this to others... **Q: Have you ever had someone "carry you on a mat" when you were in a time of need? Have you ever had friends that demonstrated great faith in you? Conversely, have you ever carried friends on their mat when they were in need? Do you think we are called to carry each others burdens?**

3/23 - Today in Luke chapter 5 verses 31 & 32 we read this teaching from Jesus: *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* **Q: How does this verse speak to you? Are you healthy or sick? Are you righteous or a sinner? Do you need Jesus? Are you heeding his call to repentance? Do you believe that Jesus is the one true Doctor who can heal you for eternity?**

3/24 - In Luke chapter 6 verses 12 & 13 today we read - *"One day soon afterward Jesus went to a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles."* Every time I read about Jesus' calling of the apostles, I always think about myself. **Q: What would I have done if I was called by Jesus to be an apostle back then? What would I do if I was called to follow Jesus in this way today? What would you do? Would you leave everything behind and follow Jesus?**

3/24 - Today we read 3 amazing verses that I don't think we can hear often enough. And my hunch is that we don't follow these teachings often enough... they can seem initially so counter-intuitive - just like leaping for joy is when you are persecuted for loving Jesus. But these 3 verses are clearly such an important part of living the Christian life. And when you really meditate upon them, you'll see that they really are not counter-intuitive at all, but completely wise. Verse 28 - *"Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you."* And verses 35 & 36 - *"Love your enemies! Do good to them! Lend to them! And don't be concerned that they might not repay. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to the unthankful and to those who are wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate."* **Q: How are you doing on praying for the happiness of those who curse you or hurt you? How are you doing in loving your enemies and doing good to them? Do you believe we should be compassionate in these ways?**

3/25 - The passages on the faith of the centurion today are powerful - especially his words in Luke chapter 7 verse 7 - *"Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed."* **Q: Can we learn something from the faith of the centurion in our lives today?**

3/26- Wow.... Verse 35 in Luke chapter 7 is such a profound teaching of Jesus' for each of us to consider: *"But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it."* Take a few moments to really meditate on this verse and what it means. For me this verse is a reminder that sometimes in life we have to move forward in faith on something "wise" we've heard, but maybe not experienced - and then later see that the wisdom is true. I'm not sure if I'm going to explain myself well here... but my thought is that as followers of Jesus, I think we can get lazy in our faith at times. As just one example - maybe we don't think we really need to give financially to our church. We know the wisdom of [Malachi 3:10](#), but maybe we haven't really experienced the wisdom of giving. So, maybe we need to follow the wisdom first - and then we will later know the full truth and beauty of the wisdom. Hope this makes sense? I'd just say that if there is a struggle in your life that God is calling you to leave behind or move forward on - go for it! If you know you should be doing or not doing something - go with that wisdom you know and then it will "shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it." Please follow Wisdom! Please follow Jesus! **Q: How has Wisdom shown itself to be right in your life?**

3/27 - In Luke chapter 7 today we read about the "immoral" woman who kissed and put perfume on Jesus' feet. Verse 39 is a powerful testament to Jesus' character - *"When the Pharisee who was the host saw what was happening and who the woman was, he said to himself, 'This proves that Jesus is no prophet. If God had really sent him, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!'"* How ironic... this Pharisee thought that Jesus was not sent from God because he let a sinner touch him - when indeed it is this very act that proves that Jesus was sent from God! Jesus loved everyone - and still loves everyone today - and wants to be in relationship with all of us. No matter what this woman's sins were. No matter what our sins were or are. Jesus loves us and wants to be in relationship with us. **Q: Like the woman in this story, will we humble ourselves and come before the feet of Jesus? And will we ignore those who might suggest we're not "good enough" to be in relationship with God or Jesus?** Remember, Jesus came to call the sinners, the sick - and not the righteous. Let's not act righteous before Jesus, but come to his feet as we really are and worship Him for who he truly is!

3/28 - As you are receiving God's Word in your heart, check out Luke chapter 8 verse 18 in today's readings - *"So be sure to pay attention to what you hear. To those who are open to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But to those who are not listening, even what they think they have will be taken away from them."* This is a powerful truth. When we are open to God's Word and really study it we will be given more and more insight over time. It should be a lifelong journey of learning from God's Word. I know there are many of you going through the One Year Bible for more than the 1st time - one of you has even gone through the One Year Bible 16 years in a row! And my hunch is that if we were to ask the person going through the OYB for the 16th year if she was still learning and gaining new insights from God through his Word, the answer would be a resounding yes! I do worry to a degree when someone goes through the Bible in its entirety once, and then puts it on the shelf. I think that is risky. I know that we're not all called to read the Bible in its entirety in One Year every year, but I do think it is extremely wise for us to be engaged in the Bible in some way each and

every day. Otherwise, perhaps, as the end of the verse above says, *"to those who are not listening, even what they think they have will be taken away from them."* Let us pray that our love of learning from God's Word each and every day will not be taken away from us. **Q: Are you enjoying this process of reading the Word daily this year? Are you learning and growing? Do you think you'll read the Word daily next year and future years?**

3/29 - Today in Luke chapter 8 verses 29 through 31 we will read some sobering verses – *"For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss."* Jesus then expels these demons from the man into a herd of pigs. The One Year Bible Companion has an interesting commentary on these verses that says Jesus did not simply destroy or send these demons into the Abyss, "because the time for such work had not yet come. But it will come. The book of Revelation records the future victory of Jesus over Satan, his demons, and all evil." This is news for each of us to pay attention to! Satan, his demons and all evil are still out and about in our world today. And honestly - make no mistake - we each need to be very cognizant of the evil that can pursue our hearts. I don't mean to scare you – but also, I do mean to scare you. :) When I first became a Christian 9 years ago, I instantly understood God's love and grace and goodness. And I honestly thought for a short while that the world was just so good, and that there wasn't really any evil in the world. There were just humans that made bad decisions. Well, fortunately I shared this viewpoint with a wise Christian friend of mine. He prescribed that I read 2 books – 1. [This Present Darkness by Frank Peretti](#) and 2. [The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis](#). My friend also told me this – "The devil's greatest trick is making you think that he does not exist. If you don't believe he exists, then you won't even realize it when he's tempting you." Wow. So true. If you are like me, where I was a few years ago, and you are not so sure that there is an actual presence of evil in our world – an evil that pursues people's hearts – then I prescribe these 2 books above to you as well. Now – the good news – Jesus is still the answer to expelling demons and evil and sin away from us today! Jesus is Risen and is so infinitely more powerful than any of the evil that is out there. So – more important than reading those 2 books above, my prescription to you really is to stay as close to Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit as you possibly can in this life. And you will have no need to fear evil. Stick with Jesus. Q: Okay, I've typed a lot here without a question. . . Here it is. **Q: Do you believe in the existence of evil in our world today? Do you believe that Satan exists? Do you believe that demons exist? Do you know the one true Remedy and Salvation and Protection from all evil? Will you run into Jesus' arms for this safety forever?** And my last piece of very serious advice if you are struggling with a sin that you know is putting you in contact with evil – you must must must leave that sin behind. I know that all sin is risky and dangerous and dumb, but I think you also will know if you are really entertaining a sin that is leading you down a very dark path. Please confess that sin to Jesus and God and repent. Seek counseling and professional help immediately if it a serious sin or addiction. God will give you victory. Yes, it may be a long and painful process of getting free from the addiction, but you must take this journey to freedom. The freedom will justify the pain it takes to get you there. Paul tells us to flee from sin. Flee from evil. **Will you flee?** Please flee.

3/30 - The structure of today's readings in Luke chapter 8 are amazing. The narrative starts with Jairus asking Jesus to heal his daughter who is about to die - but, then, in the middle of the narrative Jesus' journey is stopped by a woman who simply wants to touch Jesus' robe so that she will be healed from a 12-year suffering. And verse 48 in this portion is just so beautiful as Jesus says to the now healed woman - *"Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has made you well. Go in peace."* You know what is really beautiful about this verse? This woman is the only individual in all of the Gospels that Jesus addresses as "daughter." What a beautiful Savior we have... **Q: How has your faith made you "well?" How has Jesus healed you?**

3/31- In the beginning of Luke chapter 9's readings today we read in verse 7 - *"When reports of Jesus' miracles reached Herod Antipas, he was worried and puzzled..."* This is of note. Herod was running the show in Jerusalem, and Jesus had made him worried and puzzled. Why? Maybe because in part Herod realized that he was not fully in "control" of everything as he thought he was... and I wonder about this today... Does Jesus maybe continue to make people worried and puzzled in our modern world today? Is it perhaps because, like Herod, we get worried and puzzled about Jesus when we start to realize we are not fully in "control" of things... that maybe there is something bigger going on around us. I pray that Jesus continues to make people worried and puzzled today - such that they realize that there is someone who is truly in Control and one to whom we can truly surrender our "control" to. For, in doing so, we will find true peace, joy & happiness for eternity. **Q: How have you given the control in your life over to Jesus? If not, is now perhaps a good time for you to hand the "remote control" of your life over to Jesus? Will you?**

3/31- Verses 23 through 26 are so amazing and I cannot personally read and meditate upon these verses often enough.

They are beautifully convicting me once again today... *"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose or forfeit your own soul in the process? If a person is ashamed of me and my message, I, the Son of Man, will be ashamed of that person when I return in my glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels."* Putting aside our selfish ambition... this is tough folks! I know I am still struggling to do this. I still have so much selfish ambition within me... but, I am thankful that through Christ and through learning to carry our cross each day - slowly though surely it may be - our ambition will be morphed from selfish into godly. We know we are arriving closer and closer to true life when we care about the things God cares about. When we think about the things God thinks about. When we are ambitious for the things God is ambitious about. **Q: How are you doing with selfish ambition in your life? Will you drop the things you are carrying so tightly due to your selfish ambition, so that you can instead take up your cross daily?**

3/31- Verse 13 I found intriguing - *"But Jesus said, "You feed them.""* **Q: If Jesus said this to his followers 2,000 years ago, think he might say this to us today as well? You feed them. Who might Jesus be calling you to feed in your life? Maybe feeding someone spiritually, mentally, or literally? You feed them...**

PSALMS

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.?**

3/6 - Psalm 49 verses 1-3 are a fantastic teaching that the Word of God, the Bible, is for everyone, no matter what our lots in life may be - *"Listen to this, all you people! Pay attention, everyone in the world! High and low, rich and poor--listen! For my words are wise, and my thoughts are filled with insight."* Are you listening today? Are you paying attention to the wise words and insights of the Bible? Are you truly studying the Bible and then applying the Bible's teachings to your life? Then, verse 15 in this Psalm is beautiful: *"But as for me, God will redeem my life. He will snatch me from the power of death."* **Q: How about for you? How has God redeemed your life? Like the parable of the lost sheep that we read about in [Luke 15:3-7](#), how has Jesus saved you from being snatched from the power of death?**

3/7 - Psalm 50 verses 14 & 15 are beautiful words from God to Israel - *"What I want instead is your true thanks to God; I want you to fulfill your vows to the Most High. Trust me in your times of trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory."* **Q: Do you believe these words can apply to us today as well? Are you giving true thanks to God each day? Are you trusting in God in your times of trouble? Are you giving God glory for all that he has done for you? How often do you say "thank you" to God?**

3/8 - Today we read one of my favorite Psalms! Psalm 51. Psalm 51 is David's humble prayer for forgiveness and cleansing after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband Uriah killed in battle. I believe that this Psalm can continue to be a humble prayer for forgiveness and cleansing for each of us today. This Psalm is read by many liturgical churches during the season of Lent as a penitential Psalm. A brief quote about Psalm 51 from this Bible.org is this – "The application of the psalm to believers today should be obvious. We, like David, can and must have complete cleansing before we can fully and freely serve God in any capacity. Our eternal destiny may not be in doubt when we sin as believers, and neither was David's because he appealed to that covenant relationship, but our fellowship and service will be. God will not tolerate unconfessed sin, and so will hold us accountable if we do not confess." I've been trying to figure out my favorite portion or two of this Psalm to share with you. . . but I can't just pick one portion. It is all so powerful! Tell you what – I'm going to copy the full Psalm below in the NIV translation (my favorite for this Psalm). Please take a few moments to meditate upon this Psalm. **Q: My questions for reflection are these – Do you confess your sins to God? Do you confess your sins to others? And ask them to hold you accountable? When was the last time you confessed your sins to God? Do you have sins to confess to God today? Will you do so now? How does Psalm 51 speak to you? Can you imagine yourself praying any of these lines to God? Have you ever prayed Psalm 51 to God? Or have you prayed other Psalms to God?**

3/9 - Verse 9 in Psalm 52 stood out to me today - *"I will praise you forever, O God, for what you have done. I will wait for your mercies in the presence of your people."* **Q: Are you looking forward to praising God forever? Are you willing to wait for God? If things don't seem to be moving as quickly as you would like them to in your spiritual life, will you still wait for God? And will you do so in the presence of God's people? Do you believe that being part of a church community can help you during a time of waiting for the Lord? And do you believe that you can help others in your church to wait as well?** Then, together you can look forward to praising God forever for what he has done and will do.

3/10 - If you've ever asked yourself - or ever been asked - **why do we need a Messiah? What is our need of Jesus?** Well, I think this question is clearly answered in verses 2 & 3 of Psalm 53 - *"God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if there is even one with real understanding, one who seeks for God. But no, all have turned away from God; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not even one!"* This is why we need Jesus. With Jesus, we indeed seek for God. With Jesus, we are blessed with the Holy Spirit to begin to have some real understanding. But without Jesus.... well, it reminds me of the old DC Talk song "In the Light" - "What's going on inside of me? I despise my own behavior. This only serves to confirm my suspicions, that I'm still a man in need of a Savior!" Amen...

3/11 - I like Psalm 54 verse 4 a lot - *"But God is my helper. The Lord is the one who keeps me alive!"* **Q: Is this true in your life? Is God the one who keeps you alive? Or are you trying to lean on other things as your source of life?** I believe it is such a blessing to surrender more and more to God until we get to the point where truly this true for us - God is the one - and only - who keeps us alive. I am not saying I am there yet - but I'm trying to get there. I'm trying to surrender more and more each day to Jesus and the Father - all that I am - all that I am living for. I pray that in your life and in mine God will be the one who keeps us alive!

3/12 - Today we read Psalm 55 verse 22, which is a beautiful reminder to all who believe in the risen Lord! *"Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall."* Please do meditate on this verse a bit. **Q: Do you make it a habit of giving your burdens to the Lord? Or do you try to carry your burdens on your own strength? Is there a burden you are carrying today that you can give to the Lord? Will you? And do you trust that he will take care of you and not permit you to slip and fall?**

3/13 - Psalm 56 verse 10 makes a One Year Bible blogger quite happy :) *"O God, I praise your word. Yes, LORD, I praise your word."* **Q: Does this verse make you happy? Do you praise God for the gift of the Bible? Do you praise God's very Word, the Bible?**

3/14 - Psalm 57 verse 8 is amazing - *"Wake up, my soul!"* What 4 great words. . . wake up my soul! Do you ever feel like you need to say this to your soul? I know that I have in my past. There have been times in my life where I have felt spiritually asleep. Just completely slumbering. . . and I have begged my soul to wake up! Fortunately, I finally learned that I could not wake up my soul on it's own. I needed the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to wake up my soul. . . and the Spirit keeps it awake today. If you feel that you need your soul to wake up, will you prayer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to indwell your soul and to wake it up? **Q: How do you wake up your soul? Have you ever felt spiritually asleep? What awakens you?**

3/15 - Psalm 58 verse 11 stood out to me today - *"There truly is a reward for those who live for God; surely there is a God who judges justly here on earth."* I think this is wise for us to remember that God indeed judges. We don't. We shouldn't. But God indeed judges justly. This verse also brings up the question – **Q: How are you living for God? What will your reward be? Are you looking forward to the reward?**

3/16 - Psalm 59 has some powerful imagery of the *"night of danger"* in verse 14 and the *"morning of deliverance"* in verse 16 - *"But as for me, I will sing about your power. I will shout with joy each morning because of your unfailing love."* I like that thought - shouting for joy each morning because of God's unfailing love. I pray that in some way I "shout" for joy each morning because of God's love. **Q: How about you? Do you in some way "shout" for joy each morning because of God?**

3/17 - I like the imagery of Psalm 60 verse 4 a lot - *"But you have raised a banner for those who honor you -- a rallying point in the face of attack."* I do believe that if we honor God, he will in some profound way "raise up a banner" for us. A banner that will rally and encourage us in the face of attack - in the face of doubt or despair or sickness or just plain old fashioned attack from the Enemy - I believe God will give us a banner of hope. This banner could end up being one of a million different things I think, depending on the circumstances. For me, certainly a banner that rallies me each and every day is God's very Word, the Bible. I believe the Bible is indeed a banner that rallies us in the face of attack... What are some banners in your life that God is providing to rally you in the face of attack? Uh-oh, this whole banner imagery has reminded me of an old childhood song... :) Remember that children's song that goes something like this (over and over and over again...) - "Peter built the church on the rock of our faith. HIS banner over me is love."? What a great simple song! God's love very well should be a banner in our lives! **Q: How is God's "banner" over you? What are some examples of God's "banners" in your life?**

3/18 - Today we read Psalm 61, which has some powerful verses for us to meditate upon when the storms of life come crashing down upon us. This Psalm reminds us of who is indeed our true Rock – our true Refuge. Verses 1 through 5 are so powerful to meditate upon when you are going through a storm in your life:

"Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

From the ends of the earth I call to you,

I call as my heart grows faint;

lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

*For you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the foe.
I long to dwell in your tent forever
and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.
For you have heard my vows, O God;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name."*

Q: Do you cry out to God in prayer during the storms in your life? When your heart grows faint, do you call on God's holy name, and allow him to lead you to his Rock? Do you believe that God can be your refuge? Your strong tower against the foe? Do you long to dwell in God's house forever? Do you long to take refuge in the shelter of God's wings?

3/19 - Today we read in Psalm 62 verse 11 - "*God has spoken plainly, and I have heard it many times: Power, O God, belongs to you.*" This is a powerful verse - no pun intended. . . :) Really, think about it. Where does power come from? Who gives power? Who takes it away? I think it is such a blessing when we truly understand this verse and then live it out. When we realize that we really have no power of our own. Any power - any thing - we have comes from God and God alone. And thank God for that. It's when we start believing we create or own or control power that we begin to get prideful or we'll misuse the power given to us. I think a great teaching on where power truly comes from comes from Jesus when he is before Pilate in John chapter 19 verses 10 & 11 - "*"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above."*" **Q: Where do you think your power to do anything at all comes from? Do you believe it was given to you from above? If so, how might truly realizing this change how you live your life? How might it change how you utilize the power given to you?**

3/20 - Psalm 63 is beautiful! So many amazing verses... The imagery in verse 1 is fantastic - "*O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.*" **Q: Do you earnestly search for God in your life? Each and every day? Does your soul literally thirst for God? Does your whole body long for God in this dry and weary land...?**

3/21 - Psalm 64 verse 10 is beautiful - "*The godly will rejoice in the LORD and find shelter in him.*" **Q: Do you consider God a shelter for your life? When storms come into your life, do you find shelter in God? How about the Bible? Is the Bible a sort of shelter in your life? Do you find refuge in the Bible?**

3/22 - Psalm 65 has some amazing verses about nature! I love verse 8 - "*Those who live at the ends of the earth stand in awe of your wonders. From where the sun rises to where it sets, you inspire shouts of joy.*" **Q: When is the last time you have been inspired to shout for joy to God for the beautiful sunset he created? Verse 7 of the Psalm says this - "You quieted the raging oceans with their pounding waves and silenced the shouting of the nations." When is the last time you have stood in complete silence before God because of his beautiful Creation?**

3/23 - Today in Luke chapter 5 verses 31 & 32 we read this teaching from Jesus: "*It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*" **Q: How does this verse speak to you? Are you healthy or sick? Are you righteous or a sinner? Do you need Jesus? Are you heeding his call to repentance? Do you believe that Jesus is the one true Doctor who can heal you for eternity?**

3/24 - Psalm 67 verse 2 today sounds very Great Commission-ish: "*May your ways be known throughout the earth, your saving power among people everywhere.*" It's interesting to read this verse when just recently I was reading a review in my local newspaper about a book that "exposes" evangelical Christians. (of which I am one) This book really dives into how "successful" evangelical Christians are in "recruiting" young adults ages 20 to 35 with their ministries. And this book reviewer - and the book author - were very disdainful of Christianity. Saying it threatened secular society... and this just made me realize that the more we do indeed make God's ways known throughout the earth - the more we introduce people to God's saving power among people everywhere - well, then the secular world will push back big time with books and reviews like the one I read. And the secular world will even push back in more severe ways as well. This makes me realize that indeed our efforts to make God's ways known - God's love, grace, mercy, salvation, call to repentance - are being noticed by others. But hopefully more than just being noticed by others, let us pray that our Kingdom work actually introduces others to God's only son Jesus, who transforms hearts and lives for eternity! **Q: How are you helping to make God's ways be known throughout the earth? Are you sharing with other's God's saving power? Do you want the life you live to reflect God's glory to others?**

3/25 - I always like the idea and reminder to sing to God! Do you sing to God at places other than church? Maybe in your car? Maybe at home with the headphones on? Do you "sing" to God with the way you live your life? Here's verse 4 in Psalm 68 today which I love - *"Sing praises to God and to his name! Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds. His name is the LORD-- rejoice in his presence!"* **Q: How do you sing your praises to the Lord each day? How many folks out there belt out worship tunes while driving in your car?? :) Feel free to fess up in the Comments below. I will confess here and now that I do belt out tunes from various worship CD's - Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin, Passion CD's, David Crowder lately. However, what's interesting is sometimes I feel a bit guilty spending so much time listening to music and singing along. I have one great friend who almost never listens to music - he thinks it's a waste of time and he wants to listen to news / preaching in the car instead. To try to learn something he says. And I can appreciate this... but I think it's still quite alright to sing our praises to the Lord on a frequent basis in the car! What say you?**

3/26 - Today in Psalm 68 verse 20 we read – *"Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death."* Do you believe God is a God who saves us? How did / does God do this saving? Do you believe that escape from death comes from God and his Son? I've been reflecting on this "death" aspect of our fallen world a bit lately, which has been sad to reflect upon. I had an experience with a few friends very recently where I was reminded of how self-destructive we can be in our lives. I think that without Jesus we can oftentimes not know where to turn for an escape from death – we do not know where to turn from an escape from our own self destructive behaviors. My friends need Jesus. I need Jesus. The world needs Jesus. Our God is a God who saves. From God and Jesus comes escape from death. May this season of Easter bring us, our friends, and families closer to the God who saves! **Q: How do tell people about our God who saves? How do you evangelize these days?**

3/27 - Psalm 69 verse 16 today is such a true statement that maybe we need to be reminded of today - *"Answer my prayers, O LORD, for your unfailing love is wonderful. Turn and take care of me, for your mercy is so plentiful."* God does answer our prayers - perhaps not in the way we "want" Him to, but always in the way that is ultimately best for us and the Kingdom. His unfailing love is wonderful. His mercy is so plentiful. But, yet, somehow I think I sometimes forget all of this. Why? I think I forget about God's love & mercy when I am not praying to him. **Q: How about you? Are you needing a reminder today about God's unfailing love and his mercy? Are you praying to God for these very things? Will you allow God to demonstrate both his love and mercy to you today? Will you offer up prayers and allow God to answer in his perfect way?**

3/28 - I love Psalm 69 verse 33 today - *"For the LORD hears the cries of his needy ones; he does not despise his people who are oppressed."* God hears the cries of his needy ones. **Q: Perhaps the question is then, do we hear the cries of God's needy ones? Do we hear the cries of those starving today? Sick from lack of clean water? Suffering from HIV / AIDS? Spiritually poor? Needing a friend? How is the soil of our hearts if we are *not* hearing these cries? Should we be hearing these cries? And if we do hear them, what then should we do?**

3/29- Psalm 70 verse 4 is awesome - *"But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, "God is great!""* Indeed, I think as Christians we should be filled with joy & gladness! Yes, there will be tough times. And suffering. But overall, I pray that we are filled with joy and gladness. And then the second sentence in this verse reminds me of an older Relient K song with lyrics that go something like this - "Your voice has broken my defense. Let me embrace salvation!" I like that thought. **Q: How are you embracing your salvation today? How are you loving your salvation today? Do you ever take your salvation for granted? Why?**

3/30 - Today in Psalm 71 verses 6 through 8 we read - *"Yes, you have been with me from birth; from my mother's womb you have cared for me. No wonder I am always praising you! My life is an example to many, because you have been my strength and protection. That is why I can never stop praising you; I declare your glory all day long."* So true that God has cared for each of us since we were in our mother's womb! This a beautiful thing to realize. There is an interesting thought in these verses - if our live is an example to many - and well, yes, it really is no matter what we actually do. Hopefully our life is a good example - but there could be seasons of bad example too. . . If our lives are good examples to many, why is this so? I agree w/ the Psalmist - it is simply because of God in our lives. **Q: Is God literally your strength and protection? Do you praise God unceasingly? Do you declare God's glory all day long? How do you do so? Also, what verses or insights stand out to you in today's readings?**

3/31 - I'll admit. I pay attention every single time the Bible talks about serving the poor. And it is a lot. And I think it is for

a reason. Here it is again in Psalm 72 verses 12 & 13, speaking about Israel's king - *"He will rescue the poor when they cry to him; he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them. He feels pity for the weak and the needy, and he will rescue them."* **Q: What about us today? Does this Psalm speak to us? Do we rescue the poor when they cry to us? (do we even listen for their cry?) Do we help the oppressed and those who have no one to defend them? Do we feel pity for the weak and needy? Do we rescue them? Do I? Do you?**

PROVERBS

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?**

3/6 - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 27 teaches us - *"Fear of the LORD lengthens one's life, but the years of the wicked are cut short."* **Q: Do you agree that the fear of the Lord lengthens your life? Why or why not? How is the fear of the Lord is a good thing?**

3/7 - Proverbs chapter 10 verse 29 teaches us today: *"The way of the LORD is a refuge for the righteous."* This is a great teaching that those who trust in God are covered with a hedge of protection. Thank God for this protection! I know I need it. And I believe that God oftentimes protects us in ways that we do not even consciously realize... As we pray in the Lord's prayer - *"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* Amen. **Q: How is God your refuge?**

3/8 - Proverbs chapter 10 verses 31 & 32 are great reminders of how very important the words that come out of our mouths are! They reflect the condition of our hearts... **Q: What are the types of words that are coming out of your**

mouth these days? Are they helpful to others? Do they give wise advice?

3/9 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 2 is so true and is something I personally need to be reminded of constantly - *"Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."* Let us pray for humility... **Q: Have you ever struggled with pride issues? How did you overcome those issues? Do you agree with the Proverb today that pride can lead to disgrace? Do you think it's true that wisdom comes with humility? Do you ever pray to God to keep you humble? Do you think this might be a good prayer to pray on occasion? Or maybe even very often?**

3/10 - wow... this is a powerful Proverb in chapter 11 verse 4 today - *"Riches won't help on the day of judgment, but right living is a safeguard against death."* **Q: Based on our Proverb today, what are you focusing your life on? Is right living one of your focuses? Think it should be? (right living through your faith in Jesus of course - not "trying" or "working" to live right on your own will or power...)**

3/11 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 5 stands out at me today, mostly because I've caught myself telling a couple of "white lies" recently.... and I so regret that I did so! There was no value in them.... I want honesty and not lies to come out of my mouth! *"The godly are directed by their honesty."* **Q: how about you? Are you directed by honesty? Do you place honesty as a major guiding principle in your life? Do you ever catch yourself telling white lies? Do you confess these to God and to others? Do you think we should we confess white lies? Why or why not?**

3/12 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 7 today teaches us: *"When the wicked die, their hopes die with them, for they rely on their own feeble strength."* This is a great reminder of why we should not only not carry our burdens on our own, but we should also not rely on our own strength. Our strength is fleeting... **Q: Will you instead rely on the Eternal Strength that will never fail you? Have you seen in your life how your own strength can fail you? Have you ever been strengthened by the Holy Spirit? How are you able to discern when you are doing things from your own strength compared to when you are being strengthened by the Holy Spirit? How do you surrender your own strength and instead rely on God's strength?**

3/13 - Proverbs Chapter 11 verse 8 today teaches us: *"The godly are rescued from trouble, and it falls on the wicked instead."* This is a great reminder that God rescues those who trust in Him! **Q: Has God ever rescued you? More than once? Are you willing to share with us in the Comments section below a time that without a doubt God rescued you?**

3/14 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 11 today teaches us: *"Upright citizens bless a city and make it prosper."* This is a great reminder to each of us to be good citizens and to bless our cities! **Q: How are you striving to be an upright citizen blessing your city and helping to make it prosper? Do you see spiritual issues in your city today? How are you helping to right those spiritual wrongs in your city? Do you pray for your city regularly? Do you think you should? Will you join me in praying for our cities?**

3/15 - Proverbs chapter 11 verses 12 & 13 today talk about how foolish it is to belittle a neighbor or gossip about others: *"It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor; a sensible person keeps quiet. A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence."* I have to admit - these verses are convicting to me today - as I've been doing this recently. It makes me sad to realize that I have, but I have. I pray that instead of me thinking I am so righteous that I can talk behind someone's back that I will instead remain silent. I pray for silence upon my tongue when it comes to gossip or belittling others... **Q: Have you ever struggled with gossip? How did you overcome this temptation to gossip?**

3/16 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 14 teaches us today: *"Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers."* This is a great teaching that it is wise to seek the counsel of others! Whether it is a nation or in our own lives, this is wise advice. We can't figure it all out on our own. We need many others in our lives to help counsel us along The Way. We certainly need the Bible to help counsel us along The Way... **Q: Do you have advisers in your life today? Are there times that you try to figure things out just on your own rather than consulting advisers? Which way works better? Has the counsel of advisers in your life ever changed how you might have approached a situation on your own? If you don't have advisers in your life, do you think you should? Where do you think you can find wise advisers these days? In church? In a small group? In a Bible study?**

3/17 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 15 is saying one thing - which I get - but for some reason today, something else is being said to my heart. Here's the verse: *"Guaranteeing a loan for a stranger is dangerous; it is better to refuse than to suffer*

later." It's that last half of this verse that is jumping out at me - and in a way unrelated to loan guarantees. :) Here's the tangent this verse brought to mind for me today. I am someone who does not do a very good job of "refusing" much of anything. I say yes to way too much and take on way too much. And part of me really enjoys this - I feel wanted, loved, invited, needed, busy, etc. But then... I suffer later. I then feel overbooked, stretched thin, and just plain tired and grouchy. So, for me, the second half of this verse tonight is a good verse on boundaries - it's better to refuse than suffer later.... I like that.... I need that! **Q: How are you with setting boundaries? Do you know when to say No and when to say Yes? What are some disciplines you practice to make sure you set appropriate boundaries? Has anyone read the "[Boundaries](#)" book by Henry Cloud?** I hear it is fantastic from friends of mine that have read it! In fact, I heard it's great for small groups too. May be just what the doctor ordered for me...

3/19 - Today Proverbs chapter 11 verse 18 teaches us: *"Those who sow righteousness reap a sure reward."* **Q: How are you sowing righteousness in your life? Do you love others at the same level you love yourself? Are you working diligently for your employer? Are you serving the poor? Do you believe that the farming analogy of sowing and reaping in this Proverb is true? And like any good farming analogy, will you patiently sow and patiently await the time of reaping of your sure reward?**

3/20 - Proverbs chapter 11 verse 20 today teaches us: *"The LORD hates people with twisted hearts, but he delights in those who have integrity."* I find it interesting that this Proverb talks about twisted hearts. I pray that our hearts are not twisted! If they are twisted at all, I pray we allow God, Jesus & the Holy Spirit, the great surgeons, to untwist us. Only They truly can! **Q: Has your heart ever been "twisted?" How did it get untwisted?**

3/21- Proverbs 11:22 today teaches us - *"A woman who is beautiful but lacks discretion is like a gold ring in a pig's snout."* Well, I looked at the TNIV to see if "woman" might be changed to "person", but it wasn't. I think this Proverb can apply to men too. I think we are all beautiful, as sons & daughters of God! We are made in the image of God. **Q: What does it mean to you to have discretion? Is having discretion a good thing? Is it a common thing in our world today?**

3/22 - Today's Proverb 11:23 teaches us: *"The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath."* This is a great teaching that leading a godly life will lead to happiness. And leading a wicked life.... brings wrath. This is sobering to really ponder. It's a choice each one of us must make. What type of life will we lead? And where will that life choice ultimately lead us. I pray each of us are on the Path of Life toward and with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It's the only path that leads to eternal happiness. **Q: What are the desires of your heart today? Where are your desires leading you?**

3/23 - Today in Proverbs chapter 11 verse 24 we read – *"One person gives freely, yet gains even more."* **Q: Do you give freely? Do you give often? Do you believe that by giving freely you will ultimately gain even more?** I do believe this Proverb is so true. I heard a very inspirational speaker recently talk about how she was diagnosed with a chronic disease and how she became completely depressed. But, she somehow found the courage to begin giving to others in need in her community and she found that her life was completely transformed by simply giving. She was no longer depressed about living with the chronic disease, but found herself happier than ever before. Simply because she chose to give freely. **Q: How might God be calling you in your life to give more freely than ever before? Is it maybe by tithing to your church? Is it maybe by volunteering at a local charity once a month? Is it maybe by going to serve in another part of the world? Can you find the courage to give freely?**

3/25 - Proverbs 11:28 today teaches us: *"Trust in your money and down you go! But the godly flourish like leaves in spring."* Great proverb! It tells us that trusting in money is not godly and "down" we will go. Why? Because if we are trusting in money then we are not trusting in God. **Q: And who can ultimately hold us "up" - now and for eternity? God or money?**

3/26 - I love the imagery in Proverbs chapter 11 verse 30 today - *"The godly are like trees that bear life-giving fruit, and those who save lives are wise."* That is a powerful last half of the verse. Those who save lives are wise... Are you saving lives? How? How might you be able to save lives? My one quick thought on this is to get involved in ministries that are serving the poorest of the poor. I honestly believe \$1 a day can save a life, if not many lives. Sponsoring a child through [World Vision](#) or [Compassion](#) or another worthy organization is an amazing way to save a life. \$1 a day. **Q: Will you invest in a child who needs you today? Would this be wise? What are some of your favorite charities that serve the poorest of the poor worldwide? And in your own hometown? Do you think we should care that 1.2 billion**

people in our world today live on less than \$1 a day? Do you think we should get involved in this issue? Do you think we should serve those living in poverty both internationally and in our own hometown?

3/27 - Wow... Proverbs chapter 12 verse 1 is so to the point and so true. Please meditate on this one - *"To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction."* **Q: Do you love discipline? Do you want to learn? Do you hate correction? What holy discipline might God be bringing to you in your life today? Will you accept God's healing and holy discipline in your life?**

3/28 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 3 is a bit convicting for me personally - *"Wickedness never brings stability; only the godly have deep roots."* I oftentimes in my life feel a bit unstable. I jump from church to church. Job to job. Interest to interest. The roots don't seem so deep sometimes. I know the roots are deep with Jesus - and that's the one area that really matters - but I do worry about how my roots don't seem so deep in other areas of my life. I appreciate this Proverb. I have something to learn here... **Q: How about you? How are your roots? Are they deep? Are they stable? Primarily, how are your roots with Jesus today? Are your spiritual roots in Jesus growing each and every day? Do you want your roots to grow? Also, what verses or insights stand out to you in today's readings?**

3/29 - Proverbs 12:4 today teaches us: *"A worthy wife is her husband's joy and crown; a shameful wife saps his strength."* **Q: What do you think worthy means in this context? Why would a worthy spouse be the other spouse's joy and crown? What does shameful mean in this context? If you are married, do you seek to be a worthy spouse? If you are not married, are you preparing yourself today for potentially being a worth spouse in the future?**

3/30 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 6 is a powerful little proverb... *"words of the godly save lives."* **Q: How might our words save lives? Are the words coming out of your mouth in some way saving lives?**

3/31 - Proverbs 12:8 today teaches us: *"Everyone admires a person with good sense, but a warped mind is despised."* Let us pray for consistent good sense in our lives! A warped mind is a sad state of affairs indeed... **Q: How do we avoid warping our minds?**

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.

[Copyright © 2004-2012 One Year Bible Blog](http://www.OneYearBibleBlog.com)

