

**One Year Bible Blog – Monthly Notes - www.OneYearBibleBlog.com
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Notes & Group Questions for April 1 - 30 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

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

4/1 - In Deuteronomy 18:15 today Moses prophesies about Jesus! *"Moses continued, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him."* These words of Moses' show that the coming of Jesus was not an afterthought, but part of God's original plan. In Acts 3:22-23 Peter quoted this verse to show that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, the prophet referred to here in Deuteronomy. Bob Deffinbaugh with Bible.org has a great commentary on Deuteronomy chapter 18 titled **"False Prophets"** [at this link](#). One good quote from this link from Bob is - "False prophets play down the majesty and holiness of God. They try, as it were, to 'bring God down' to our level. They make us feel comfortable around "God" (or the "gods"), and they even seek to convince us that we can manipulate God to our advantage. The true prophets did just the opposite." **Q: Think there are false prophets in our world today?**

4/2 - It is interesting to read about the cleansing for an unsolved murder in Deuteronomy chapter 21. I think God makes it crystal clear here that murder is such a horrible crime that affects the entire land and community. The Ten Commandments are obviously clear on "do not murder." These verses in Deuteronomy go into a bit of what happens to the land when one is murdered. Interesting to think about these verses on murder - and then realize that Jesus, whose blood was wholly innocent, was murdered on a cross. **Q: Was Jesus' murder unsolved? Who is guilty for this murder of Jesus? Whose sins put Jesus on the cross? Thankfully, whose sins does Jesus' blood cover? Who does Jesus rescue and redeem through His innocent blood shed on a cross?**

4/3 - There are quite a few miscellaneous and interesting regulations in our readings today! :) All in all, very good advice of course. Deuteronomy chapter 25 verse 4 tells us this wise advice - *"Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain."* I think it is quite fair for an ox to eat while he's working!

4/4 - Later this year in the One Year Bible when we read Galatians, you'll note that Paul powerfully references today's readings in Deuteronomy chapter 27 verse 26: *"Cursed is anyone who does not affirm and obey the terms of these instructions.' And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'"* One of the best things we can ever do when studying the Bible is simply let Scripture interpret Scripture. So here we go on Galatians chapter 3 verses 10 through 12: *"But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law." So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through obeying the law that a person has life.'"* **Q: How do these verses from Galatians speak to you? Do you agree that we cannot be made right with God by trying to keep the law? Do you think the way of faith is very different from the way of law?**

4/4 - Since we're in the Easter/Good Friday season, let me continue on with a few more verses here from Galatians chapter 10, continuing with verses 13 and 14: *"But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith."* **Q: Has Jesus rescued you from the curse pronounced by the law? Do you believe that Jesus took upon himself the curse for your wrongdoing? Have you received the promised Holy Spirit through faith?**

4/5 - I love the blessings for obedience that open up our Deuteronomy chapter 28 readings today! I actually first heard these read at a wedding several years back. The best man in the wedding read these verses as a blessing to the bride & groom. Somehow I missed the "obedience" to God's commands part of the blessing... Obedience is quite a word I think for Christians to consider. I'm not sure that it is a popular word for us sometimes. I do believe that we are called to obedience as followers of Jesus. Jesus himself was of course obedient - obedient even to death on a cross. **Q: Is there an area of your life where you feel God might be calling you to obedience? Will you obey? Do you think about "obedience" very often when it comes to your relationship with God? Do you think obedience is a very popular concept amongst Christians today? Do you think there are blessings that come along with obedience? Have**

you experienced blessings in your life because of obedience? Conversely, do you think there are consequences to disobedience?

4/6 - Deuteronomy chapter 29 verse 29 is intriguing today - *"There are secret things that belong to the LORD our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our descendants forever, so that we may obey these words of the law."* I think this is good for us to remember - there are secrets of God that we will not know this side of heaven. And I don't think we need to worry or speculate on what these secret things might be, because "the revealed things belong to us." God has revealed himself to us in the Bible! His very Word. He has revealed himself in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And he reveals himself in the life of the body of Christ today - the church. We have everything we need to know to love & follow God. And I think God's secrets can remain secret to us this side of heaven - I don't know about you, but I like a little mystery in God! :) **Q: Are you okay not knowing every single thing about God? Are you okay with a little bit of mystery in your faith in God?**

4/7 - *"Be strong and courageous!"* is the encouragement & exhortation we hear 3 times in chapter 31 today. It was said by Moses to the Israelites in verse 6, then by Moses to Joshua in verse 7, and finally by God to Joshua in verse 23. **Q: Why do you think this was said 3 times? Why would the Israelites and Joshua need to be reminded to be strong and courageous? And if these words were needed back then, do you think perhaps we might need to hear them still today? Do we need to be reminded oftentimes to be strong and courageous? Today, this side of the Cross, where does our strength and courage truly come from?**

4/7 - Today in Deuteronomy chapter 31 verses 10-12 we read - *"Then Moses commanded them: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. Assemble the people - men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns-so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law."* Incredible verses! I like that Moses was setting up a way for God's Word to continue to be taught & heard by God's People every 7 years! I think this gets at a couple of things - 1. We humans are very forgetful. We may hear something once, but we need to hear it over and over again - particularly if it is God's Word. 2. There is always a new generation of people coming up behind us. It is so important to educate this new generation about God's Word. So - **how do these verses above speak to you today? Are you hearing or reading God's Word on a consistent basis?** I know the answer is yes, for this year, as you're in the One Year Bible! And I know that many of you have been reading the One Year Bible for many years now. However, I know not everyone will read the OYB every year. Here's a suggestion - what about committing to reading the entire Bible - in the One Year Bible or Chronological or other format - once every 7 years? Thus, if you live to be 101, you'll have read the Bible through at least 10 times (not counting those early years :). Just a thought to keep in the back of your mind - please consider reading the entire Bible at least once every 7 years. Though, I would encourage you to at least read some portion of the Word each and every day, in each and every year. Next question - **Q: are you somehow involved in teaching others the Word? Are you encouraging your friends or family members to read God's Word? Maybe consider inviting your family & friends to participate in the One Year Bible next year? Are you somehow involved in teaching the younger generation coming up behind you to learn God's Word? Maybe through your church you can get involved in Sunday school ministries or maybe there is a younger person in your community that you can mentor and disciple?**

4/8 - These words of Moses today in Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 47 stood out to me - *"These instructions are not mere words--they are your life!"* Wow. **Q: Do you think this way about the Bible? Are these mere words you read in the Bible? Or are they your very life?**

4/9 - Allright, I don't know about you, but I'm getting a little teary eyed reading about Moses' final blessings of the tribes today! It reminded me of Jacob's blessings of his sons in [Genesis Chapter 49](#) - though, it seems to me that Moses' blessings were a bit more positive overall than Jacob's, no? Jacob's were a bit more realistic though perhaps... as we'll read later this year in the One Year Bible. The other thing about reading Moses' final blessings of the tribes today that makes me sad is the realization that we are in the 2nd to last chapter of the Pentateuch! (The first five books of the Bible - the books of the Law.) Tomorrow we'll read about the death of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 34 and then it's onto the Promised Land with Joshua! **Q: How does reading about the death of Moses and his final blessings stand out to you?**

4/10 - Today we come to the end of Moses' life in our readings! And - we come to the end of Moses' writings of the first five books of the Old Testament - the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. I will miss

reading Moses' writings - but - we only have to wait until January 1 next year when we will all embark on the One Year Bible adventure and Moses' writings once again, right?? :) **Q: How has reading the book of Deuteronomy been for you this year? What have you learned? How has your journey through the first 5 books of the Bible, the Pentateuch or the Books of Law, been for you this year? Have you ever read all 5 of these books in a row before? Are there any new insights you have learned from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy this year?**

4/10 - Today we begin the book of Joshua!

~Joshua~

Author: Probably Joshua

Date: Either fourteenth century or twelfth century B.C.

Content: After the death of Moses, the leadership of the nation passed into the hands of Joshua and he was their commander-in-chief throughout the entire time of conquest when Israel was taking over the land. While still in the plains of Moab, Joshua mobilized his forces and prepared them for battle. There were three campaigns fought, one in the north, one in the central region, and one in the south, and all described, though not fully. After the initial victories, the land was divided among the various tribes of Israel. Joshua then exhorted the people and died in peace.

Theme: The book of Joshua shows that God is true to his promise. He had promised his people a land and they were now entering in to possess it. However, it was not automatic; God required of them that they actively engage in warfare in order to gain what he had given them. God's judgment upon the sin of the Canaanites in the form of Israel's armies is also a prominent feature. (*Above commentary is from "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 3-4*) More commentary on Joshua is [at this link](#).

4/10 - Today in Joshua chapter 1 verse 9 we read one of my favorite verses in the Bible – *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* Incredible verse! God spoke these words to Joshua just before he was about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. And I do believe these words can apply to us today in our lives as well. **Q: Do you believe it is possible that God has commanded you to be strong and courageous? In what areas of your life might you need to really hear this command from God? Do you believe that God will be with you wherever you go?**

4/10 - In verse 8 – just one verse prior to the verse above – we read – *"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."* **Q: How does this verse speak to you today? Is it possible that you should not let the Bible depart from your mouth? Do you meditate on the Bible day and night, so that you are careful to do what is written in it? Do you believe meditating and following the truth of God as described in the Bible will allow you to be prosperous and successful?**

4/11 - Today is a major day in our readings as the Israelites cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land! The significance of the events in today's readings cannot be overstated. The Israelites 40 years in the Wilderness are over. God's Promise made to Abraham is being fulfilled! I am intrigued by verse 5 in Joshua chapter 3 today as the Israelites are about to cross the Jordan - *"Then Joshua told the people, "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do great wonders among you.""* I'm wondering what the Israelites did to purify themselves? Some sort of ritual purification I'd guess - likely similar to the purification before meeting God at Mount Sinai, which included washing all their garments as well as themselves. **Q: I also wonder what we do in our lives today to purify ourselves?** The first thought comes to mind that we are of course purified today completely by the blood of Christ. But, then, I also know that once we have made the decision to follow Christ we will still sin on occasion. **And then, is purification needed? Not from a salvation standpoint - but from simply having a pure heart before God?** I'm thinking that our purification today is confessing directly to God our sins and repenting. And I think through this process God's grace arrives in a nanosecond and purifies us. I think we're purified by God's grace today. But, I think in part we need to recognize our own need for purification and confess to God our shortcomings and repent. Let me know what you think on this in the Comments below if you'd like. Again, I'm not looking at this from a salvation / justification perspective - more of the sanctification perspective. I like the thought of purification - of being pure before God. I pray for this for each of us. No dark corners. No secrets. Just a pure heart before our heavenly Father. **Q: How did reading about the Israelites crossing the Jordan river stand out to you? Were you relieved for them that the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness was over? Have you ever crossed any symbolic "Jordan Rivers" in your life – from the wilderness to the Promised Land?**

4/12 - Fascinating! verses today in Joshua chapter 5 verses 13 - 15 - *"As Joshua approached the city of Jericho, he*

looked up and saw a man facing him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you friend or foe?" "Neither one," he replied. "I am commander of the LORD's army." At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. "I am at your command," Joshua said. "What do you want your servant to do?" The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for this is holy ground." And Joshua did as he was told." Tyndale's One Year Bible Companion says this about these verses - "The captain of the host was no mere angel. His presence was an appearance of Christ in person. Joshua worshipped the captain; his worship was accepted and he was neither rebuked nor instructed otherwise." **Q: Whaddya think? Was this Jesus in these verses?? Do you think Jesus made appearances in the Old Testament days?**

4/12- In Joshua chapter 6 we read about the fall of Jericho to the Israelites - but... things take a turn for the worse in chapter 7 with the defeat at the city of Ai. It is interesting to note why the defeat happened in Ai, in verse 1 - "*But Israel was unfaithful concerning the things set apart for the LORD.*" Think about it. Israel just had a great victory at Jericho and then they were unfaithful toward God. **Q: I wonder if perhaps we are like this in our lives today as well? Maybe something amazing happens in our life, and we get so swept up in the victory dance that we forget about God. And yet... it is God who gave us that victory. It is God who gives us every good thing we have in our lives. Are we being unfaithful in our lives concerning things set apart for God?**

4/13 - In Joshua chapter 7 today we continue to read about Achan's sin, which caused 36 Israelites to die in the first attack on the city of Ai. I realize that the destruction of Achan and his family may be tough for us to read, but I think it's important to remember Achan's sin caused other Israelites to die. I found Joshua's words interesting in verse 19 as he spoke to Achan: "*My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, by telling the truth.*" He has a fatherly tone here - and I like the thought of giving glory to God by telling the truth. **Q: How have you learned the value of telling the truth in your life? Is there glory in telling the truth?**

4/13 - In chapter 8 verse 1 we read this today - "*Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or discouraged."*" This repeats what we heard God say to Joshua in chapter 1 verse 9 - "*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*" This makes sense that in the midst of the conquest of the Promised Land that this would need to be repeated often. I'm wondering if we need to hear this in our lives today as well from God often - do not be afraid or discouraged. It is so true. With God in our lives we do not need to be afraid or discouraged! I need to be reminded of this often... **Q: How have you ever overcome discouragement in your life? How has God encouraged you in times of need?**

4/14 - As we read about the Gibeonites deception today, Joshua chapter 9 verses 14 & 15 teach a valuable lesson for each of us: "*So the Israelite leaders examined their bread, but they did not consult the LORD. Then Joshua went ahead and signed a peace treaty with them, and the leaders of Israel ratified their agreement with a binding oath.*" They did not consult the Lord - and thus signed a binding oath based on a deception. I know that I don't do this enough. I do know that more and more I have found myself praying "thy will - not mine - be done" when major decisions are before me. I am seeking God's will and guidance in my life. But, I'm not sure that I'm really consulting God all that often. And I'm afraid when I don't I can rush into quick & bad decisions... I pray each of us will consult God with all of our plans & decisions in our lives - be they major or minor. **Q: How about you in your life today? How often do you consult God on major decisions in your life? Even minor decisions?**

4/14- Today in Joshua chapter 10 we read about the day the sun stood still! Have you ever received the email about this chapter titled "NASA and the Bible?" - basically the email goes into how a man from NASA proved that the sun stood still. I have received this email a bunch of times over the past 5 years or so. This email does appear to be an Urban Legend, but it's a fun email. I have read many commentaries on this chapter and do believe that a miracle took place, as we read in verse 13 - "*So the sun and moon stood still until the Israelites had defeated their enemies. Is this event not recorded in The Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day.*" **Q: Do you believe this miracle took place? Do you believe in miracles?**

4/15 - An interesting note on Joshua 11 verse 21 - "*During this period, Joshua destroyed all the descendants of Anak, who lived in the hill country of Hebron, Debir, Anab, and the entire hill country of Judah and Israel.*" The descendants of Anak were the giants the Israelite spies feared some 40 years earlier in Numbers chapter 13 verses 32 & 33 - and you'll recall these verses kept the Israelites wandering in the desert for the next 40 years... "*The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.*" Interesting to see

how the fear of 40 years prior had turned into the faith and confidence here in Joshua. **Q: I wonder how this type of change can happen in our lives too? A change from fear to faith and confidence? Is there an area in your life where you might need this type of change?**

4/17 - It is interesting to read about the allotment of land to the tribe of Judah today! It reminds me of how different these days are for the Israelites, compared to the 40 years of wandering in the desert - or the slavery in Egypt prior to that. Times have changed! God's Promise is being fulfilled. I think this is important for us to remember in our lives as well. Maybe we're in a "slavery" period in our own life where we are looking for a Savior to free us. Jesus is of course that Savior to free us from our slavery to sin. Or, maybe we're in a desert period of our lives. We've decided to follow Jesus, but maybe we're really trudging through some hard times. If we're in this type of period, hopefully we can be encouraged by knowing that God's Promises to us will not fail. God will bring us peace that surpasses all understanding. God will bring us to the true Promised Land for eternity. Let us be encouraged in our own lives by our past few months of readings about the Israelites and their journey from slavery to now the Promised Land. God's Promises will not fail. They are eternal. And they are the only thing in this passing world that is eternal. **Q: Do you believe that God's promises are True and won't fail you? If you are in some sort of slavery to sin or perhaps in a desert place in your life right now, will you reach out to Jesus to save you and lead you into the Promised Land? Do you believe Jesus can Save you and Lead you? And will you follow?**

4/18 - In Joshua chapter 18 verse 1 today we read - *"Now that the land was under Israelite control, the entire Israelite assembly gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle."* Shiloh was located about 25 miles north of Jerusalem. The tabernacle remained in Shiloh throughout the period of the Judges, or about 300 years. We will later read about Samuel traveling to Shiloh with his family. [Click here for some interesting facts on Shiloh.](#) **Q: Have you ever traveled to Israel and visited Shiloh? Did the visit to Israel strengthen your faith? Do you want to travel to Israel someday?**

4/19 - Today we finish up reading about the Promised Land being divided among the tribes! In Joshua chapter 20 we read about the Cities of Refuge. I like that concept - a city of refuge. A place of refuge. This is what I think about Jesus today - He is our City of Refuge! No matter what our past sins are, Jesus can be our City of Refuge if we will run to Him, believe, confess & repent. **Q: How is Jesus your City of Refuge?**

4/20 - In Joshua chapter 21 we read about the towns given to the Levites, the priestly tribe appointed in the Mosaic Law for the service of the Tabernacle and of the Temple. It seems very wise that the Levites are given towns throughout the various tribes of the Israelites. In my mind this is spreading out the priestly tribe strategically. Can you imagine if the Levites were all in just 1 location? It seems to me that there would be a vacuum of spiritual leadership in the tribes if the Levites were not dispersed in the manner which they were. **Q: How does reading about the Levites being dispersed remind you of the church today? Is the church dispersed throughout the world today a good thing? What are your thoughts on the benefits or drawbacks of denominations?**

4/22 - Today we finish up the book of Joshua! What a book. I have definitely learned much from this book this year. And today's readings are no exception. Chapter 24 is a wonderful closing to this book where the Israelites renew their covenant with God. Verses 25 through 27 are awesome - *"So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day at Shechem, committing them to a permanent and binding contract between themselves and the LORD. Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. As a reminder of their agreement, he took a huge stone and rolled it beneath the oak tree beside the Tabernacle of the LORD. Joshua said to all the people, "This stone has heard everything the LORD said to us. It will be a witness to testify against you if you go back on your word to God."* **Q: How has the book of Joshua been for you this year? What have you learned?**

4/23 - Today we begin the book of Judges! Coming up in this book, we'll be reading about Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Delilah, and Micah - to drop a few names.

Judges

Author: Unknown

Date: Eleventh century B.C.

Content: The book of Judges covers a period of several hundred years following the conquest of Canaan, during which time the people were ruled by individual leaders called judges or saviors. Their task was primarily military, being to expel the enemy from the land. Throughout this period of Israel's history there is a tragic cycle to be observed - that of rebellion against God, followed by the judgment of God, usually in the form of foreign invasion. The children of Israel then cry to God for help and a "judge" is sent to save them. This cycle is repeated numerous times throughout the book. Tragically,

the people never seem to learn that rebellion against God is a sure road to disaster.

Theme: The grim lesson of Judges is that “the wages of sin is death: (see Romans 6:23). Sin takes many forms, from the sophisticated sins of kings to the barbaric events that close the book, but the net results is always the same: when everyone does his own thing, chaos and destruction are the inevitable outcome. Through it all, however, God in his faithfulness saves the people when they truly repent and turn to him. (Above commentary is from “The One Year Bible Companion” p. 4)

4/23 - Today in Judges Chapter 2 verses 1 & 2 we will read these words from the angel of the Lord – “I said, “I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars. Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this?”” The Israelites disobeyed God back then. **Why? Do we disobey God in our lives today? Why do we do this?** I have a hunch that maybe sometimes we are simply afraid. Afraid of fully following and trusting God. We may think that God really won’t live up to his promises. At these moments our faith is weak. And we end up disobeying God. Fortunately our inconsistencies do not affect God’s perfect consistency. God never changes. We do. And we can allow ourselves to either be changed by God such that we live in obedience to him – or, we can continue to disobey God and live tumultuous lives. It’s a pretty simple choice. One decision brings an amazing peace that surpasses all understanding and the other decision – grief and frustration. **Q: Do you ever disobey God in your life today? Why do you do this? How can we instead choose to obey God in our lives?**

4/24 - Today in Judges we read about Israel forgetting about God and worshiping other gods. Sad stuff! Judges chapter 2 verse 19 stood out: “But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They followed other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.” **Q: I wonder if we are so different today from the Israelites in the time of the Judges? Do we maybe shape ourselves up for short amounts of time - but then go back to our corrupt ways? Do we ultimately refuse to give up our evil practices and stubborn ways? Why is this? What is the remedy to this problem? Or - perhaps I should ask - Who is the remedy to this problem? Who can literally rescue us from this problem? Who can rescue us from ourselves? Will you allow Jesus to rescue you from any evil practices and stubborn ways?**

4/25 - Okay, women rule in today's readings in Judges!! :) Deborah basically tells Barak that he's being a wimp, so she'll help lead the military victory, and does. And then Jael, who is likely not an Israelite, finishes off Sisera, the commander of the enemy army of the Israelites, with a tent peg! Don't mess with Deborah or Jael! In Judges chapter 5 we read the wonderful song of Deborah and Barak, and it is of note in verse 31: “Then there was peace in the land for forty years.” Quite a song! Bob Deffinbaugh with Bible.org's commentary on Joshua chapters 4 & 5 today titled “**The Prophetess Deborah**” is [at this link](#). **Q: How do you see women leading in churches today? Do you think there should or shouldn't be distinctions between roles women and men have in churches?**

4/26 - Today in Judges chapter 6 verses 1 we read - “Again the Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight.” It is so interesting to see the back-and-forth relationship of the Israelites with God in the Old Testament. The Israelites did evil. They cried out to God. God saved them. Then... The Israelites did evil again... **Q: And I wonder - are we so different from the Israelites today? Should we be? Could we be? How?** I do believe that through a growing and loving relationship with Jesus, we can be spared of this back-and-forth relationship with God. I believe this is the only Way. Let us not have to spend our lives running back and forth to “caves” as we will see below... Let us only run into the arms of the Jesus!

4/26 - Today read about Gideon and the fleece. We also read about how the angel of the Lord comes to Gideon and tells Gideon he will save Israel out of Midian's hands, because he is being sent by God. In verse 15 Gideon replies, “But Lord, how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” You'll notice how this reply of Gideon's is reminiscent of Moses' reaction to God's call to serve in Exodus chapters 3 & 4 – “Why me? How can I?” etc. etc. And I think it is very useful for each of us to note that God often calls the seemingly lowly – like Moses and Gideon – rather than the seemingly mighty to act for him. This should be encouraging to us! **Q: I wonder if you and I are sometimes like Gideon and Moses? I wonder if perhaps we are being called to do something incredible for God in our lives, and we are making excuses like Gideon and Moses made excuses? Should we instead act in obedience to God's call and trust that he will lead us? If God has called us to something, shouldn't we have enough faith to believe he will give us the strength and wisdom needed for the journey? What is God calling you to do in your life that you are not doing? Are you making excuses like Gideon and Moses did? Will you instead move forward in faith and obedience to God in this holy calling in your life?**

4/27 - Okay, the big question from today's readings in Judges is are you the type of person that cups water in your hands and laps it up like a dog or are you someone who kneels down and puts your mouth directly in the stream to drink?? :) I confess I'm option #1, so I guess I would have gone on with Gideon for the battle. In all seriousness, a commentary suggested that God chose those that cupped water in their hands rather than kneeled down, because it meant those who didn't kneel down were always ready for any emergency situation that might come up. I guess I can buy that...

4/28 - Judges chapter 8 verses 23 & 24 are an intriguing look at beautiful humility mixed with a unique request - *"But Gideon replied, 'I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you! However, I have one request. Each of you can give me an earring out of the treasures you collected from your fallen enemies.'"* It is awesome that Gideon says he will not rule over the Israelites- but that God will. But then, his ask for a piece of gold from each person is intriguing. We read in verse 27 that Gideon made a sacred ephod from the collected gold - so, this does appear worshipful perhaps at first glance. But then verse 27 tells us: *"But soon all the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping it, and it became a trap for Gideon and his family."* Yikes! Not exactly what should have happened here... It's interesting. **Q: I wonder if we do this in our lives today as well. Perhaps we are very humble in one regards - but then maybe we make some sort of unique request of those around us... and that unique request goes awry. I don't know if I can give you a good example of this. But perhaps this will ring true for you in some area of your life? If so, can you abandon the false idol you are worshiping as quickly as possible? Particularly if this false idol was born out of something that was initially worshipful. Will you let it go?**

4/29 - Alright, I don't know about you, but I'm seeing quite a bit of pride flowing around in Judges recently - particularly in today's readings. And we all know the old saying, "Pride goeth before the fall." And indeed we are seeing people fall after their prideful fits. In fact, Satan himself was guilty of the sin of Pride. He wanted to be equal with God. He thought he was all that and a bag-o-chips. But he ain't. Never will be. So, maybe the saying in regards to Satan certainly is "Pride goeth before the Fall." And that's Fall with a capital "F" unfortunately. We saw Abimelech's deadly pride in yesterday's readings when he had killed 70 of Gideon's sons - his half brothers - so that he could rule the people of Schechem. Pride & Power. Deadly combination then - and still is today. We then read Jotham's parable in yesterday's readings and see that his words came true in today's readings. I am amazed at the depth of Abimelech's sin of pride even in his dying moment when we read in chapter 9 verses 52 through 54 today: *"Abimelech followed them to attack the tower. But as he prepared to set fire to the entrance, a woman on the roof threw down a millstone that landed on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. He said to his young armor bearer, 'Draw your sword and kill me! Don't let it be said that a woman killed Abimelech!'"* Wow... Now - don't get me wrong. I think for me to say that Abimelech was completely prideful and that I am not is the same sin - pride. It would be prideful for me to put myself above Abimelech. He's not a lot different than we are today. I think pride is something we all probably struggle with at some level or at some point in our lives. I know I do. We are all sinners. And as I read about Abimelech in Judges today - or reflect upon Satan's Fall - I realize that pride is a sin that we really must vigilantly watch our entire lives. If we don't, I think we can get blinded to the fact that we're prideful - and we'll say dumb things like "don't let it be said that a woman killed (fill in your name as if you were to say this about yourself in the 3rd person, cuz that's how you refer to yourself when you are prideful)!" :) Pride kills... let us pray for humility in our lives today. God can redeem and heal us from our pride! **Q: Have you ever struggled with pride? Do you think pride might be an ongoing struggle for most of us (all of us?) for most of (all of?) our lives?**

4/30 - Today we read about Jephthah and his daughter - and the related vow. It is interesting to note that some Biblical scholars do not think that Jephthah actually killed his daughter, but that she simply died a virgin, as verse 38 says. However... verse 38 also says he kept his vow. Keep in mind that oftentimes the Bible reports "just the facts," which does not necessarily mean the "facts" or actions of what us humans did was pleasing in God's sight. Human sacrifice was not part of God's laws or plans. It is clearly forbidden in Leviticus chapter 20 verses 1-5 and in Leviticus chapter 18:21 - *"Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD."*

NEW TESTAMENT

4/1 - Today in Luke chapter 9 we read about the Transfiguration! I read an interesting commentary that said Peter was suggesting that 3 shelters be made because Peter thought at that time that the faith was built on these 3 pillars: The Law (Moses), the Prophets (Elijah), and Jesus. Whereas, Peter later understood that through the New Covenant our faith is now built on Jesus, "a chosen and precious cornerstone" (1 Peter 2:6). In Luke chapter 9 verse 46 today we read - *"Then there was an argument among them as to which of them would be the greatest."* Hmmm.... think this sort of thing still goes on today? :) Sure it does, because I've participated in this sort of thing. No, I guess I've never straight out argued

with someone that I'm greater than them in the kingdom of God... but I've thought it. How sad. How very sad. Why sad? Because if we consciously thinking about ourselves as being better than someone else, then we are spending precious time focused on the wrong thing in life - ourselves. God calls us to love & serve others in so many more valuable ways. When we are focusing on ourselves, and thinking we are all-that-and-a-bag-o-chips we are not loving anybody...

Praise God that Jesus teaches the disciples - and you and me today - that there is a better way. Verses 47 & 48 continue - *"But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he brought a little child to his side. Then he said to them, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest.""* **Q: Are you working to be "great" in your life? How are you humbly serving others in your life?**

4/2 - Luke chapter 9 has a couple of challenging teachings for us from Jesus in verses 60 & 62 - *"Let those who are spiritually dead care for their own dead. Your duty is to go and preach the coming of the Kingdom of God... Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God."* How do these verses speak to you? Today verse 62 is standing out to me - once we start our Christian journey we should not look back toward the life we left behind. At least not in a way where we wish we were back in that old life. Once Jesus rescues us, we are now His forever. We have put our hand to the plow. We will preach the coming of the Kingdom of God in the way we live our lives. We should not look back longingly toward our old life. It is behind us. **Q: How have you set your hand to the plow? How are you looking straight ahead joyfully?**

4/2 - Continuing this agricultural / farming theme - in Luke chapter 10 verse 2 today we read this teaching from Jesus to the disciples - *"These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. Pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest, and ask him to send out more workers for his fields."* **Q: Do you believe that the harvest is great? Do you pray to God to send out more workers for his fields? Are you one of those workers? How are you participating in the harvest? If you're not participating in the harvest in some way, will you pray to God to show you where He would have you participate in the harvest?**

4/3 - Luke chapter 10 verse 20 is an incredible teaching from Jesus for us to heed even today - *"But don't rejoice just because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered as citizens of heaven."* I do think that sometimes we rejoice over the wrong things - secondary things. The primary thing is our relationship with Jesus. And then there are secondary good things that perhaps we do or are involved with in the Kingdom. But, don't rejoice over those. Rejoice that you are in an eternal relationship with Jesus Christ. That is the one thing that matters. Today in Luke chapter 10 verse 21 we read - *"At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."* What a great opening line - Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit! In your life today - are you full of joy through the Holy Spirit? Do you want to be? I read a great commentary from the One Year Bible companion on this verse with this wonderful Q & A - "What was Jesus' relationship to the Holy Spirit? Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, baptized by the Holy Spirit, anointed by the Holy Spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and filled with the Holy Spirit. He lives in union with the Holy Spirit, and was dependent upon the Holy Spirit." **Q: What is your relationship with the Holy Spirit today? Are you dependent upon the Holy Spirit in your life?**

4/4 - Today in Luke chapter 10 we read about Jesus visiting Mary & Martha and Martha becoming upset with Mary for sitting at Jesus' feet and not helping her work in the kitchen. To which Jesus says to Martha in verses 41 & 42 - *"But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are so upset over all these details! There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it--and I won't take it away from her."* **Q: What do you think is the one thing worth being concerned about Jesus is referring to? Is this really the only one thing you are concerned about in your life today? Or are you possibly being distracted by other "details"? Did you personally identify more with Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet, or Martha, who became upset because of her busyness? Which one of the two would you like to identify with more? Do you think that sometimes as Christians we can get too busy and miss out on spending time at the feet of Jesus? Will you examine your daily schedule and look for ways that you are "overbooking" yourself, and thus missing out on quiet time with the Lord? Will you resolve to be more like Mary and spend some quality time with Jesus - particularly during this Easter season?**

4/5- Jesus' teaching in Luke chapter 11 verse 23 is so important for us to understand - *"Anyone who isn't helping me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me."* How does this verse speak to you? For me it convicts me. Yeah, maybe for some of my time I am helping Jesus and the Kingdom of God, but I think there is

a lot of time where I am not working with Jesus. I am maybe indulging in some seemingly harmless trivial pursuits or material pleasures - but they aren't really working with Jesus. And am I then, at those times, actually working against Jesus? I don't know. I want to pray on this more. I do know that we are called to rest & relaxation in our lives - a time of Sabbath rest each week. We don't have to be frantically seeking to "do" & serve Jesus 24 x 7. But, I do think it's possible that we can live our lives more "intentionally" - meaning, examine the intent of why we do what we do. And ultimately, is what we are doing with our time helping and working with Jesus? Or is it not? I think being intentional with our time and how we are spending our lives is so important... because time flies as we all know. **Q: How are you helping Jesus in your life today? Are there any ways that you might actually be working against Jesus?**

4/5 - Jesus' teaching in Luke chapter 11 verse 36 is powerful for each of us to consider! *"If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight is shining on you."* That second little clause there I think is key - with no dark corners. I'll admit that I have traveled through life with some dark corners. And it is no way to go. The dark corners do affect the Light really shining in you and through you - and the dark corners I believe can affect your relationship with God. I pray that if you know you have a dark corner in your life, confess it to God and Jesus. Pray for forgiveness and repent! God will fill you with light - a light that will penetrate and remove those dark corners in your life. But, you've gotta confess them & repent of them with God... You know it's worth it. To live a radiant life, as though a floodlight is shining on you is the only way to live! **Q: How is God's light filling your life? Are there any dark corners in your life? Will you hand those over to Jesus' healing Light?**

4/6 - Wow... Jesus goes after the Pharisees in Luke chapter 11 today... Verses 39 through 41 are powerful: *"Then the Lord said to him, 'You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are still filthy-- full of greed and wickedness! Fools! Didn't God make the inside as well as the outside? So give to the needy what you greedily possess, and you will be clean all over.'"* I think these verses are important for us to meditate upon as well today. **Q: How are we clean inside? Or do we put on a show and just clean up our external appearances for others? As we saw in Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew - God is very interested in the condition of our hearts. Our insides. Are our insides clean?** Bob Deffinbaugh with Bible.org's great commentary on our Luke chapter 11 readings today titled "Fundamentalists in Formaldehyde" is [at this link](#).

4/6 - Jesus' teachings in Luke chapter 12 verses 2 through 3 are also important for us to reflect upon in our lives today - *"The time is coming when everything will be revealed; all that is secret will be made public. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!"* I once heard a pastor say during a sermon - "nobody sins in a vacuum. Meaning, nobody's sin does not affect others. When we sin - even when we are "alone" - it affects our community in ways we do not fully realize." I think this is so true. When we sin - even what we have done or said in the "dark" - we hurt not only ourselves, but others. And God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit, who is pure Light, have heard and know what we do in the dark. We cannot hide it from them. Better to confess it to God, repent, and be cleansed by the Light. Then, go, and sin no more. Plus - it's a darn scary thought to think that what we do in the dark might be shouted from the housetops for all to hear! :) Live your life such that no matter what you do or what you say, you wouldn't be embarrassed to read about it in tomorrow's papers... **Q: Do you believe that every single thing you do will be revealed one day? Do you believe that all of your secrets will one day be known? Are you living your life in preparation for meeting Jesus face to face?**

4/7 - Luke 12:10 today we read: *"And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven."* Below is a brief commentary from Bible.org on the "Unpardonable Sin" from Luke 12:10, which can be found on Bible.org:

"At first appearance this text seems to be warning the disciple that he might lose his salvation by denying the Savior, by his hypocrisy. This is not the case, however. There are several reasons why this cannot be the case.

- (1) Man's salvation is not based upon his works, or his faithfulness, but on Christ's shed blood and His faithfulness.
- (2) The Scriptures consistently teach that man did not choose God but that He has chosen man, and that the one who is saved is eternally secure.
- (3) In our text, there is a definite change from the second person ("you") to the third person ("whoever," "him," "everyone").
- (4) The unpardonable sin, referred to in verse 10, is elsewhere clearly a sin which an unbeliever commits, which terminates any further opportunity to be saved."

Q: How should we live our lives to ensure we never blaspheme against the Holy Spirit?

4/8 - In Luke chapter 12 verse 40, Jesus is speaking about his second coming at the end of the age - *"You must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected."* But, this verse also always seems to speak to me about

the end of my life here on earth as well. One of 2 things will happen during our life that will bring our earthly life as we know it to an end - 1. Jesus' second coming (which no one knows the day or hour) or 2. we will die. I know it's not something we all want to think about... but someday our earthly bodies will die. And I guess when I read verse 40 above, it makes me realize that not only do we not know the day or hour when Jesus' 2nd coming will be. We also don't know the day or the hour of the end of our life either. So... this verse then speaks to me clearly - you must be ready all the time! And, I don't view this as something to be anxious over. But, I do think it's serious for us to consider. I don't know about you - but sometimes I'm a procrastinator. And when it comes to our faith in Jesus, there is no luxury of procrastination. We must have faith in Jesus, be living for Jesus, and really, be willing to die for Jesus - today. Now. Not tomorrow. Today. **Q: Are you ready all the time? Are you looking forward to Jesus coming again in Glory?**

4/8 - Chapter 12 verse 48 is also a powerful teaching from Jesus for us today - *"But people who are not aware that they are doing wrong will be punished only lightly. Much is required from those to whom much is given, and much more is required from those to whom much more is given."* This is convicting... think about it. The more we begin to know about Jesus and God and the Bible, the more we essentially have been "given." And when this holy knowledge has been given to us - much is required. Much is expected. Maybe in our past we were not aware of our sins. Maybe we were not aware of sin at all really. Today, if we have been blessed with the knowledge of living by Jesus' teachings, we should not be acting as we did in the past when we did not know any better. **Q: Have you been given much? How are you living up to what is required of you?**

4/9 - I love Jesus' teachings in Luke chapter 13 verses 18 & 19: *"Then Jesus said, 'What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? It is like a tiny mustard seed planted in a garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds come and find shelter among its branches.'" I think if we can have faith in the seed that Jesus plants in our hearts - the Gospel - we will see an amazing plant grow that will ultimately bless others. From the tiniest beginnings, with patience and faith, can come the largest of plants. Q: Have you let Jesus plant a mustard seed in your heart? And will you be patient and allow the seed time & space to grow? And will you water and care for the seed of the Gospel planted in your heart so that one day it will be a beautiful tree of life for yourself and others you come in contact with?*

4/11 - Wow. Jesus' teachings in Luke chapter 14 verses 12 through 14 are so powerful - *"When you put on a luncheon or a dinner," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will repay you by inviting you back. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the godly, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."* **How often do we do something for others - in hopes of getting something back in return? Maybe it's simply praise? Or maybe it's indeed an invite to something else in the future?** Kind of the whole idea of "I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine." Jesus tells us there is another way - care for others that cannot repay you. Because God will repay you. And who would you rather receive repayment from for your good deeds - humans or God? **Q: Do you think that caring for the poor is giving to God? How do you give to God?**

4/11 - Today in Luke chapter 14 verse 27 we read – *"And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."* I don't know about you, but I'm not so good at carrying "crosses." I'm not so good at taking on perceived burdens. I'm not so good at suffering at all. I like to get my way. I often feel entitled to get a lot of good stuff in my life. . . And yet. . . Jesus says if I am to be his disciple I must carry my cross. And I must follow him. I think sometimes in our culture we want to keep up with our neighbors – be hip; be cool; be relevant; know the latest styles; wear the latest fashions; and this list can go on. Jesus tells us to carry our cross. And truly, this is the eternally hippest / coolest / most relevant decision any one of us can make – to take up our cross and follow Jesus. Nothing else matters. **Q: How about you? Are you a disciple of Jesus carrying your cross? Do you know what your cross is? Do you want to know? Are you following Him? Are you letting worldly and pop-cultural cares fall to wayside of your life as you walk along the true path of following Jesus?**

4/12- Beautiful verses today in Luke chapter 15 verses 8 through 10 - *"Or suppose a woman has ten valuable silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and look in every corner of the house and sweep every nook and cranny until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her because she has found her lost coin. In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."* **Q: Do you believe that there was joy in the presence of God's angels when you repented? Or... when you will repent? That is a beautiful thought indeed!**

4/13 - The story of the shrewd manager in Luke chapter 16 today concludes with some powerful teachings from Jesus.

Verses 8 & 9 stand out to me today - *"And it is true that the citizens of this world are more shrewd than the godly are. I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven."* I like that teaching - we should use our worldly resources to benefit others. So, I've been thinking about this a bit more lately. And I wondered what it would be like if I went through my days consciously trying to make other people happy. I don't think I've really ever done this over a sustained period. Maybe I've glimpses of using my resources to benefit others. To make them happy. I want to do more of this... **Q: How about you? Are you consciously using your resources (time, treasure & talents) to make others happy in your life each day? How?**

4/13 – Verse 10 is also a strong teaching from Jesus today - *"Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities."* I think there was a very popular book out there a while back called "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff." Well, it looks to me in this verse that God sweats the small stuff. And you and I should sweat the small stuff. We need to be faithful in small matters in our daily lives or else indeed we will not be faithful in large matters. **Q: Will you join me in sweating the small stuff when it comes to matters of our integrity before God? How have you learned to be faithful in small matters?**

4/14 - Today in Luke chapter 16 we read about the rich man and Lazarus. I have always found verse 31 to be such a great reflection on what it means to have having a soft heart and a strong faith - *"But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead.'"* Basically, Abraham is saying that people whose hearts are hardened to faith will not even believe it if a dead man returns to them and tells them to repent. They still won't repent even with this miracle. And I believe this is true. Let us pray that our hearts are soft and open to faith and that we can share the Good News of Jesus with others in our life whose hearts may be becoming more and more hardened with each passing day... **Q: Do you think it's possible to share the Gospel to people with hardened hearts? Have you ever seen someone with a hardened heart repent and come to faith in Jesus?**

4/14- Wow. I love Luke 17 verse 10 - *"In the same way, when you obey me you should say, 'We are not worthy of praise. We are servants who have simply done our duty.'"* **Q: I wonder if sometimes we do good works for Jesus expecting some praise or return on our works?** This is obviously not a good motive. We should simply be obedient to Jesus and not expect praise for our obedience - from Jesus or from others. It is simply a blessing for us to be called to Jesus' service. That is more than enough.

4/15 - Wow. I love Jesus' teaching in Luke chapter 17 verses 20 & 21 - *"Jesus replied, 'The Kingdom of God isn't ushered in with visible signs. You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is among you.'"* And truly, of course, literally the Kingdom of God was amongst those Jesus was speaking to with this verse - Jesus himself was there. But, also the Kingdom of God is still amongst us today. Jesus has risen from the dead. He lives in the hearts of men and women. We do not need to look for visible signs to which we can say - here it is! Truly, the Kingdom of God can be within you. And once the Kingdom of God is within you it is amazing to see how Jesus can transform your life and those around you through his peace, grace and power. **Q: How is the Kingdom of God among you? How are you sharing the Kingdom of God with others?**

4/16 - The story of the persistent widow is fantastic! I love it... Luke 18 Verse 4 may be one of the most humorous verses in the Bible - *"The judge ignored her for a while, but eventually she wore him out. 'I fear neither God nor man,' he said to himself, 'but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'"* Great stuff! Jesus teaches that persistence pays off, which I think is very good to consider with our own faith journeys. Verse 1 is the moral of the story: *"One day Jesus told his disciples a story to illustrate their need for constant prayer and to show them that they must never give up."* **Q: Do you pray constantly? Do you know that you must never give up?**

4/17 - Today we read the story of the Rich Man in Luke chapter 18! There are tons of commentaries on how to interpret this story - including this commentary from Bob Deffinbaugh at Bible.org titled "**Blessed Babes and a Miserable Millionaire**" [at this link](#). The verses that always speak to me the most are verses 29 & 30 where Jesus teaches - *"I assure you, everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, will be repaid many times over in this life, as well as receiving eternal life in the world to come."* These are really some powerful verses for us to consider. Basically, I read - and I know from experience - that truly following Jesus comes with some costs. The costs may be loss of wealth, or worldliness, or power, or glamour, or friends, or even family perhaps. But, if we are accepting these costs for the sake of the Kingdom, then they are in my estimation our crosses that we must bear to truly follow Jesus. Following Jesus is not always easy. The world's temptations will do everything they

can for us to not follow Jesus. "It's too hard to follow Jesus." "Come have fun." "It's too much cost to follow Jesus." But... we really need to stay in constant prayer and stay close to God to realize that following Jesus - along w/ all the costs that may be associated with following Jesus - is the only True way to live life. All other paths will lead to misery. Following Jesus and accepting the costs or our crosses ultimately leads to life in abundance. And life for eternity. **Q: Are there costs in your life that you are willing to accept to follow Jesus? What are they? Is there any cost you won't accept?**

4/18 - Today in Luke chapter 19 we read the awesome story of Jesus' interactions with Zacchaeus the Tax Collector. As we read through this story about Zacchaeus "the sinner," does anything maybe correlate with our life story today? Consider verse 9 – *"Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."* **Q: What does this mean that Jesus came to seek and to save what was lost? Did Jesus seek Zacchaeus? Did Jesus save Zacchaeus? Now, take a moment if you will to reflect back on your life and your interactions with Jesus. Like Zacchaeus, were you a "sinner?" Like Zacchaeus, did Jesus seek you? Are there moments in your life where you really have felt that Jesus literally has been "pursuing" you? (I know I have had these moments in my life – thank God for them!) And, most importantly – like Zacchaeus – has Jesus saved you?**

4/18 - Interesting! The Story of the Ten Servants is something I reflected on back in our readings of Matthew. But what stood out to me today was verse 11 - *"The crowd was listening to everything Jesus said. And because he was nearing Jerusalem, he told a story to correct the impression that the Kingdom of God would begin right away."* This is very interesting to note that Jesus told this story to correct the impression that the Kingdom would begin right away! The Jewish people were looking for a Messiah that would overthrow the Roman political structure. A fighting / revolutionary Messiah that would free Jerusalem from Rome. Instead, as we all know, Jesus died on a cross with nails that were driven into his hands and feet by Roman soldier. Not quite what the Jews at this time were expecting in a Messiah... And here we have this story that's purpose is to show the Kingdom would not begin right away. This makes sense. It is the paradox of the Kingdom of God being already / not yet. And while Jesus first came to usher in the Kingdom, its fulfillment is not complete until his Second Coming. **Q: And - while we are awaiting the fulfillment of the Kingdom, how are we utilizing the talents God has given us? How are we utilizing our time, treasure, and talents? Is it for the Kingdom's benefit?**

4/19 - In Luke chapter 19 today we read about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem - and of course, this scene of people shouting "Hosanna!" will far too soon turn toward people spitting on and mocking Jesus on the road to Golgotha as he carries his cross. Bible.org's commentary on our Luke chapter 19 readings today titled **"The Untriumphal Entry"** is [at this link](#). Verses 41 through 44 are so beautiful as Jesus looks upon Jerusalem and cries. It makes sense because he knows that the destruction of Jerusalem is coming in 70 A.D. Per Tyndale's commentary today, "In 66 A.D. the Jews revolted against Roman control. Three years later Titus, son of Emperor Vespasian, was sent to crush the rebellion. Roman soldiers attacked Jerusalem and broke through the northern wall but still couldn't take the city. Finally they laid siege to it, and in A.D. 70 they were able to enter the severely weakened city and burn it. Six hundred thousand Jews were killed during Titus' onslaught." And so, Jesus wept over Jerusalem... **Q: Have you like Jesus ever wept over a city's condition? Should we be weeping over the condition of our cities today?**

4/20 - Okay, so it's every so often that I post up about the non-Biblical (not the original text) sub-headings that translations put into our daily readings. For some reason I got a kick out of the NLT's subheading above Luke chapter 20 verse 9, "Story of the Evil Farmers!" (okay, I added the exclamation point). Is it just me, or is that kinda funny? I mean, the evil farmers in the story are not funny - and what they did is certainly not funny... hmmm... I think I've dug myself into a hole here. :) I'm sure everyone probably picked up on that the point of the farmer story is that Jesus is the son who was murdered in the story. And Jesus is the stone rejected by the builders - who has now become the cornerstone of our Christian faith. Nice quote by Jesus of Psalm 118 verse 22 there in Luke 20 verse 17: *"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone."* **Q: How is Jesus the cornerstone of your life?**

4/21 - Bible.org's commentary on Luke chapter 20's readings today titled **"One Bride for Seven Brothers"** is [at this link](#) and commentary titled **"David's Son"** is [at this link](#).

4/22 - Bible.org's commentary on our Luke chapter 21 readings today titled "Jerusalem in the Last Days" is [at this link](#).

4/23 - Today in Luke chapter 22 we read in verses 3-6: *"Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the*

twelve disciples, and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted, and they promised to give him money. So he agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him when the crowds weren't around." Sad... Bible.org has a powerful essay on "**The Biography of the Betrayer**" [at this link](#). **Q: Do you think Satan can enter people today?**

4/24 - Today in Luke chapter 22 we read about the Last Supper! Every time I read verses 19 & 20 I am reminded of the amazing beauty of the Lord's Supper in our churches today: *"Then Jesus took a loaf of bread; and when he had thanked God for it, he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you--an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you."* **Q: Do these verses remind you of the Lord's Supper at your church? Do you find the Lord's Supper to be a beautiful experience at your church? Why do we participate in the Lord's Supper in our churches today?**

4/25 - I don't think I've really ever noticed this visit from an angel before in Luke chapter 22 verse 43 when Jesus is praying at the Mount of Olives! *"Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him."* **Q: Why do you think Jesus needed strengthening? What can we learn from Jesus' need of strengthening?**

4/26 - Luke chapter 22 verse 70 is powerful - *"They all shouted, "Then you claim you are the Son of God?" And Jesus replied, "You are right in saying that I am.""* Check out those last two words of Jesus' - I am. Sound familiar? Remember from Exodus 3:14 when Moses asks the burning bush who he should say sent him to free the Israelites from Egypt. And what did God reply? "I am. Tell them that I am is sending you." In Luke chapter 23 verses 8 & 9 today we read: *"Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer."* Herod wanted a miracle "performed." And Jesus simply stayed silent. Beautiful... **I wonder if there are moments in our life when we would do well to model Jesus here? - to stay silent in the face of a ridiculous request - or in the face of a ridiculous attack on our faith. Silence may be the perfect thing in the face of ridiculousness... Have you ever stayed silent in the face of an attack? When should we stay silent?**

4/27 - Today in Luke chapter 23 verse 34 we read this when Jesus was on the cross: *"Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people, because they don't know what they are doing.""* Tyndale's One Year Bible companion has a great commentary on this verse today, as follows - "There are **seven sayings of Jesus** uttered from the cross. They were spoken in the following order:

- 1) the word of **forgiveness**: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)
- 2) the word of **salvation**: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43)
- 3) the word of **affection**: "Woman, behold thy son"; "Behold thy mother." (John 19:26-27)
- 4) the word of **despair**: "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34)
- 5) the word of **physical torment**: "I thirst" (John 19:28)
- 6) the word of **triumph**: "It is finished" (John 19:30)
- 7) the word of **committal**: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Q: What do these 7 sayings of Jesus on the Cross mean to you? What does the Cross personally mean to you?

4/28 - In Luke chapter 23 verse 45 we read just before Jesus died on the cross: *"The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the thick veil hanging in the Temple was torn apart."* The tearing of the veil in the Temple symbolized that men and women could now access God the Father directly through Jesus the Son. No longer was the veil needed to keep separate the Holiest of Holy place in the temple, where God dwelled in the Old Testament. No longer could only the High Priest approach God in the Temple on behalf of men and women. Jesus' death and coming resurrection signified that the veil was no longer needed. God is accessible now directly through faith in Jesus! **Q: How do you approach God through Jesus? And how often?**

4/29 - We finish up the Gospel of Luke today! It's been awesome to read through Luke again this year. I hope it has been for you as well. And tomorrow... the Gospel of John!!! Yep, I'm excited. John is just one of those books in the Bible that speaks to me on a spiritual level - at a level I fully can't even consciously comprehend - every time I read it. By the way, I do think this happens actually with any and all books of the Bible that we read. I believe our spirit is fed in ways we do not even consciously realize when we read any and all portions of God's Word. But, somehow, when I read John, I know it's happening! Luke's wrap-up is fantastic today... The Road to Emmaus! This is a phenomenal portion of the Bible. I actually heard a sermon on this passage of the Bible not too long ago - just after Easter. And the pastor said that each of

us as Christians are journeying along the Road to Emmaus. And Jesus is coming up to walk beside us. He is with us. And all too often we do not realize that Jesus is with us! Our eyes are not opened. The pastor encouraged us to open our eyes - through prayer, reading God's Word, and reflection on God's Word - and realize that Jesus is journeying on the road to Emmaus with us. Let us not miss him. **Q: Do you believe that Jesus is journeying along side you in your Walk today? Yes, at this very moment, is Jesus with you?**

4/29 - I love Jesus' first words to all of the disciples in Luke 24 verse 36 - *"Peace be with you."* Wow... how simple - and profound - and true! Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He brings peace into our lives, minds and hearts if we will let him in. Do you believe that Jesus' words to you at this very moment might be - "Peace be with you." **Q: Will you accept the heavenly peace that can only come from Jesus? Do you know the heavenly peace that comes from Jesus?**

4/30 - I am so excited that we are starting the Gospel of John today!! I won't necessarily say that it is my favorite Gospel - because all 4 are amazing. But, I will say that John is different from the other 3. If by chance you felt like reading Luke these past few weeks has gotten repetitive when compared to Matthew and Mark, hang in there! John is different. Beautifully different. John Chapter 15 is definitely one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. I cannot wait to read it again! I actually have a powerful personal story to share with you all about John Chapter 15. I'll do so either in a future email or on the blog when we get to this chapter. One thing I'll recommend to everyone, if you have a chance this next week, is to watch the movie "The Gospel of John". Have you seen it? It is incredibly well done. It was released in theaters on a limited basis a few years ago, and I was fortunate enough to have caught it in the theater. It is a 3 hour movie that goes word-for-word through the Gospel of John, based on the Good News Bible translation. Or, perhaps you'll want to read the Biblical text first and then watch the movie later. Either way, I definitely recommend this film. You can hopefully pick it up at a video rental store. A friend of mine was surprised to have found it at the local supermarket little video rental section recently. The movie's website [is at this link](#).

The Gospel of John

Author: John

Place: Ephesus

Date: A.D. 85-96

Content: The Gospel of John was written many years after Jesus' death and resurrection by the apostle John so that those who read it might believe in Christ and thus have life through his name. John begins with a prologue unique to this Gospel where Jesus' preexistent life with the Father is depicted to show that Jesus was not simply a great man, but God. Miracles of Jesus as well as many of Jesus' teachings not found elsewhere are then described. A long section in John chapters 14 through 17 describes Jesus' teaching to his apostles before his death. After Jesus' death and resurrection, special place is given to Jesus' appearance to his apostles.

Theme: The Gospel of John more than any other Gospel stresses the deity of Christ and provides us with an interpretation of his life. He is explained in figurative terms as light, truth, love, good shepherd, the door, the resurrection and the life, living water, true bread, and more. The beautiful material found in John chapters 14 through 17 shows the deep love of Jesus for the believer and the peace that comes from faith in Christ. (Above commentary is from "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 22-23) **Great commentary on John by Bob Deffinbaugh at bible.org is at this link:** http://bible.org/page.php?page_id=2348

4/30 - Today in John Chapter 1 verse 14 we read - *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* **Q: Do you believe that Jesus is the Word John is referring to? What does this mean to you that the Word became flesh? Do you believe that Jesus was born into this world both fully divine and fully human (yet sinless)? Why would God send Jesus, full of light, grace and truth into the world? Why was this necessary?**

4/30 - Today in John Chapter 1 verses 10 & 11 we read - *"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."* **Q: Do you believe that the world was made through Jesus? Do you believe the world is Jesus' own? Have you ever gone through periods in your life where you have not recognized Jesus for who he truly is? (I know that I have) Have you gone through periods of your life where Jesus has come to you and you did not receive him? (Again, I know that I have) As you read through the Gospel of John this year will you prayerfully read it? Will you ask God to reveal to you through John's Gospel who Jesus really is? And will you ask God to make Jesus more known to you this year than ever before? Do you believe this is possible - for you to know Jesus more this year than in your prior years? Do you believe the Gospel of John and prayer can help you to truly know Jesus more?**

PSALMS

4/1 - Wow... Psalm 73 today is amazing! I love it. I actually had lunch with a good friend who said to me verse 13 almost verbatim - *"Was it for nothing that I kept my heart pure and kept myself from doing wrong?"* It was so sad for me to hear him say this... but he obviously is not alone. The Psalmist thought this too, and I imagine each of us might feel like this is at times. Praise God that the Psalmist rallies, as hopefully do we, in verse 23 - *"Yet I still belong to you; you are holding my right hand."* And then I absolutely love where he goes with verse 26 - *"My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever."* I can quickly think of people in our world today where this verse 26 is so applicable... let us pray that those in time of failing health and spirit have God remain the strength of their heart! **Q: How are you keeping your heart pure? How are you keeping yourself from doing wrong? Is God yours forever?**

4/3 - Psalm 75 verse 7 is so powerful and so true... I need to hear this over and over again - *"It is God alone who judges; he decides who will rise and who will fall."* You and I do not judge. Well, we might try to judge, but it's all in vain if we do. And we risk turning judgment onto ourselves when we do. God alone judges. God alones decides who will rise and who will fall. We do not. God is God. We are not. This is a very good thing to always remember! :)

4/4 - I love Psalm 76 verse 4's reflection on God! *"You are glorious and more majestic than the everlasting mountains."* I wonder how often we look at nature and forget that God created nature? I think so often we can look at a beautiful sunset or a mountain or a forest or an ocean and temporarily forget that God created these beautiful things. If God created these beautiful things, then doesn't it stand to reason that God is more glorious and more majestic than all of his created things? I've said this one before on this blog: before I believed in Jesus or really even God, I honestly think I was evangelized by creation. Meaning - I would look at a starry night with my friends and say things like, "How could there be so many stars up there like that and there not be a God? Things like that can't just happen by chance!" Praise God for his creation that was evangelizing me toward Him! **Q: Has creation ever evangelized you? Do you think creation might be able to evangelize your friends who do not yet know God?** Let us pray that we don't ever end up worshiping creation instead of the Creator. Let us be impressed and thankful and admire creation - but let us give the glory and the worship to the Creator, God, who is more glorious and more majestic than the everlasting mountains...

4/5 - Today in Psalm 77 verses 11 and 12 we read - *"I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds."* I think these verses get at one of the amazing things about each of us reading the One Year Bible this year - both the Old & New Testaments. We are reading perhaps for the first time - or maybe the 17th time - about God's miracles of long ago. We are "remembering" God's miracles for our spiritual ancestors, for ourselves, and for those around us in our lives today whom we will teach about God's saving love. **Q: As you are reading through the One Year Bible this year, are you truly "remembering" God's miracles of long ago? Are you meditating on all of His mighty works and considering His mighty deeds? Are you being transformed by this process? And will you now go forth and help others in your life "remember" and meditate on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit's miracles of long ago?** Let us pray for "remembrance" today for ourselves and for others in our lives.

4/6 - Psalm 78 verse 4 is a wonderful reminder that we have an important opportunity to disciple and teach others in the generation coming up behind us - *"We will not hide these truths from our children but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD. We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did."* **Q: How are you discipling or teaching someone about God's truth, deeds, and love? How are you helping the next generation learn about God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit?**

4/7 - Psalm 78 verses 41 & 42 stood out to me today - *"Again and again they tested God's patience and frustrated the Holy One of Israel. They forgot about his power and how he rescued them from their enemies."* I am continually amazed at how similar we are today to the Israelites when they were wandering in the desert. I am sure that we can on occasion test God's patience and frustrate him. I would also venture a pretty good guess that many of us forget about God's power. And forget how God rescued us from our enemies - and continues to rescue us daily. **Q: How about you - do you ever forget about God's power? Do you ever forget about how he has rescued you? What can we do to help ourselves remember? How do we stop testing God's patience and forgetting about Him?**

4/8 - Psalm 78 verse 57 is a metaphor that I pray is never used upon any of us! :) *"They were as useless as a crooked bow."* **Q: Can you imagine a worse insult? Well, yeah, I suppose there are worse. But coming from a Psalmist, this is no good. What does it mean to be a crooked bow? What does it mean to be a straight bow? How is your**

bow these days? Crooked, and perhaps focused on things of this world? (and thus basically useless) Or straight, and focused on advancing the Kingdom of God in your life and the lives of others around you? (and thus very useful)

4/9 - Psalm 78 verse 71 is awesome - *"He took David from tending the ewes and lambs and made him the shepherd of Jacob's descendants--God's own people, Israel."* This verse reminds me that we'll be reading about David later this year in the One Year Bible! It is interesting that the Psalmist refers to David as a shepherd and not king of Israel in this verse. The shepherd analogy seems like it might be foreshadowing Jesus, the Good Shepherd. **Q: How is Jesus your shepherd?**

4/10 - Psalm 79 verse 13 stood out to me today - *"Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will thank you forever and ever, praising your greatness from generation to generation."* I like that imagery of being sheep in God's pasture. And Jesus, of course, is our Good Shepherd. **Q: Are you content with the idea of being a sheep in God's pasture?**

4/11 - Psalm 80 verse 19 today is powerful - *"Turn us again to yourself, O LORD God Almighty. Make your face shine down upon us. Only then will we be saved."* I like that opening - "turn us again to you God." I don't believe that God turns himself away from us - but that we do indeed turn ourselves away from God. And like the Psalmist, maybe sometimes we literally need to pray that God will turn us back toward him. I kind of come up with the imagery of us maybe sometimes being like pouty kids with our arms folded and our backs toward God - and God is looking at us lovingly - all we simply need to do is turn our face toward God and his grace will heal that pout and whatever is troubling us immediately... **Q: Have you ever turned your back on God? How did you turn yourself again toward God? If you need to, will you turn yourself again toward God today?**

4/12 - I always like reading verses like 1 & 2 in Psalm 81 today - verses that speak of music & God - *"Sing praises to God, our strength. Sing to the God of Israel. Sing! Beat the tambourine. Play the sweet lyre and the harp."* Do you sing praises to God? Is God your strength? I'll go off on a tangent here, which is always a risky thing to do... :) I'll admit that I am a music junkie. Really. I have loved music immensely ever since I was a pre-teen and heard K-TEL's Hit Explosion with such songs as Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger." :) Well, ever since then music has played an interesting role in my life - both positive and negative. Bottom line is that I think God used music to bring me to Him. Seven years ago I ended up at a rock & roll postmodern evangelical church where I really first heard songs about Jesus in a rock song! It was a paradigm shifter for me... I ended up accepting Jesus as my Lord & Savior at that church two months later - thanks in large part to an amazing pastor there at the time and thanks in large part to the rock & roll worship. I have to confess that I do love any opportunity I can get to flat out worship God in a rock & roll worship way! :) I do realize the risks of high energy rock music... it can propel people to do very dumb things. But I think it can also propel people toward Jesus. Maybe music is like anything else - it's a double edged sword. I will share with you that a buddy of mine shared with me how he threw out every single one of his worldly / secular rock & rap CD's after becoming a Christian. He said he didn't want to be fed by that garbage anymore. I tried following his lead on this - and actually threw a few CD's in the trash... but I pulled them out before taking them to the dumpster. :) I'm starting to think though that I have a few CD's that need to get to that dumpster here sooner rather than later... I don't listen to them. **Q: But why keep them around at all? Hope you don't mind this long tangent. Does anyone else have any music / God experiences that you would be up for sharing with us all?**

4/13 - I love Psalm 82 verses 3 & 4 - *"Give fair judgment to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people."* I realize these verses were spoken to Israel's judges. But, I think they can speak to you and I today as well. Particularly, "rescue the poor and helpless" stands out to me today. What are some ways you are rescuing the poor and helpless in your life today? How are you delivering them from the grasp of evil people? This actually reminds me of a couple of friends of mine who are so passionate about rescuing young girls from the sex slave industry in some Asian countries - I think Thailand is where they do most of their work. Clearly, young girls that have to sell their bodies in this type of situation are under the grasp of evil people. And I am so humbled by my friends' work toward delivering girls from this grasp. My friends are only able to do this really well because of their relationship with Jesus. Jesus is the true rescuer - first of my friends and now through my friends to these young girls. But, wow, it makes me wonder if I am truly allowing Jesus to rescue the poor and helpless through me? **Q: How about you? How are you allowing Jesus to rescue the poor through you?**

4/14 - **Q: Ever feel like the Psalmist in Psalm 83 verse 1? - "O God, don't sit idly by, silent and inactive!"** I think the beauty of the Psalms is seeing some of our human emotions expressed so well. Considering this verse - I don't think that God is ever sitting idly by, silent or inactive. I believe God is a Living God who is always with us. But, perhaps sometimes

God's perceived silence in our lives is for a purpose that we may not fully understand now, but will later. If God seems very "silent" to you now, I would encourage you to pray to God - and really listen in your prayers - don't just speak. I believe you'll soon hear Him...

4/15 - Today in Psalm 84:5 we read: *"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage."* Where does your strength come from? God? Or your own will-power? Why might it be a good idea to rely on God for your strength rather than yourself? Have you set your heart on a pilgrimage? Is the pilgrimage toward God? Do you think this will be a life-long pilgrimage? Later in this Psalm, verse 10, we read: *"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere."* This is a song many of us have probably sung before at church. **Q: What does this verse mean to you? What does one day in God's courts look like for you? Why would one day in God's courts be better than one thousand days elsewhere? Do you look forward to spending an eternity in God's courts? Is your heart on a pilgrimage to God's courts?**

4/16 - Psalm 85 is awesome today! So many great verses.... I love verse 8 - *"I listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying, for he speaks peace to his people, his faithful ones. But let them not return to their foolish ways."* I like that thought - God speaks peace to his people. **Are we listening carefully to what God is saying? Are we receiving his peace into our hearts? And so importantly - are we not returning to our foolish ways?** Verse 6 reminds me of the Jeremy Camp tune "Revive Me", which is an amazing tune - *"Won't you revive us again, so your people can rejoice in you?"* **Q: Do you need God to revive you? Will you pray for revival?**

4/17 - Wow. Today in Psalm 86 we read an amazingly wise prayer of David to God in verse 11 - *"Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name."* **Q: How do you think this verse works as a prayer? Can you imagine praying it to God? Do you want God to teach you his way? Do you want to walk in God's Truth? What does it mean to you to have an undivided heart? It is possible that your heart is now divided in some way? Will you pray to God for an undivided heart? What does it mean to fear God's name? Why would David pray to fear God's name?** I read an interesting commentary on this verse saying that David is wisely praying for God to save him from his frailty within himself. Oftentimes in the Psalms we will read about David praying for God to deliver him from his enemies. In this verse David is praying for deliverance from what is within. This is a critical point to consider. I think sometimes we always look toward "external" circumstances as the cause of all of our problems. When perhaps we need to look at some "internal" things going on inside of us as causes of some of our problems? And in realizing that there are some internal things that need to be fixed, perhaps we can humbly pray Psalm 86 verse 11 like David did thousands of years ago? *"Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name."*

4/18 - Psalm 87 is a celebration of Jerusalem as the City of God, as we read in verse 3 - *"O city of God, what glorious things are said of you!"* As we continue to read through the One Year Bible this year it is amazing to reflect upon how much focus there is on Jerusalem as the city of God. Truly, so many of the Psalms glorify Jerusalem, often as a foreshadowing of the Heavenly City of God. Indeed, as this verse suggests, many glorious things are said of Jerusalem in the Bible! **Q: Have you been to Jerusalem? Did it strengthen your faith? Would you recommend others visit Jerusalem?**

4/19 - Psalm 88 is quite a Psalm! Interestingly many churches read this Psalm during their Good Friday liturgies, interpreting this Psalm as a prayer of Jesus suffering on the road to Golgotha. Take a read through this Psalm again with this perspective...

4/20 - Psalm 89 verse 11 is so powerful for us to remember - *"The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours--you created it all."* Everything in this world is God's. Everything. This means every single person we meet is God's. However... they might not realize it. But, I think it is important for us to remember that every single person we meet - no matter how "bad" they may seem or whatever - is still made in the image of God. And there is the possibility of that person getting to know they are God's. There is the possibility of redemption - not by our human power, but by the power of God. I think sometimes we go through our day thinking the world is bad. People are bad. It all is bad. And certainly, it is a fallen world. But it is still God's world - and yes, the devil is thrashing around his temptations as rapidly as he can in the hearts of men and women. This is the great spiritual battle. But, God is so much stronger than the devil. The name of Jesus expels the devil quicker than anything. So, know that while we are in a fallen world, it is God's world. Everything in this world is God's. **Q: What are you and I doing to let others know that they are God's - particularly if they don't know it? What are we doing to bless others with the knowledge that there is another**

Way than the devil's temptations in this world? What are we doing? Really. What are we doing with our lives to let others know about Jesus? Whew... this one gets to me for some reason. There are people suffering so much in our world. If only they knew there was another way.... Will you help to show them to the Way?

4/21- I love Psalm 89:15 today: *"Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, Lord."* **Q: Do you hear the joyful call to worship in your life? Do you worship God with a community of believers each week? (i.e. at a church...) Will you choose to walk in the light of God's presence each week?**

4/22 - Psalm 89 verse 48 is something important to keep in mind as I think it does help us think about how we are really living our short earthly lives - *"No one can live forever; all will die. No one can escape the power of the grave."* **Q: Knowing this, how are you living your life? Are you living your life with love? Are you loving God and loving other people with all that you are? Are you living your life intentionally? Are you living your life as God would want you to live your life?** I heard someone once state: "Just keep in mind that we're not going to live forever. 100 years from now on this planet? It will be all new people." That is an interesting thing to keep in mind... 100 years from now... all new people. Hopefully this is a fact that encourages each of us not to waste our precious time here on things that are not of God! No one escapes the grave. Our condition is terminal. (But of course our condition can be eternal through faith in Jesus!)

4/23 - Today in Psalm 91:11-12 we read the words quoted by Satan to Jesus during the temptation in the desert: *"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."* As you read this Psalm, do these words apply to Jesus only? Or to those who trust in the Lord as well? Do you believe that the Lord is guarding you in all your ways? Do you believe this is possible? (I hope your answer is yes) Do you recall Jesus' response to Satan in Matthew 4:7: *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Q: What do Jesus' words to Satan tell you about these words in the Psalm? Can we believe these words of the Psalmist, and also not put God to the test at the same time? As an example, maybe to just myself :), is driving over the speed limit putting God to the test? Is deciding to skip church one week (or for many weeks) because we have some chores to catch up on / or fun stuff to do / or because we're just tired, putting God to the test?*

4/24 - Today in Psalm 92 verse 4 we read a joyful verse! *"For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands."* **Q: When was the last time you reflected upon God's deeds? When was the last time you reflected upon God's work of his hands? Do you think this might be a good daily habit? Do God's deeds make you glad? Do you sing for joy regularly for the work of God's hands?**

4/25 - Psalm 94 verse 14 is fantastic today - *"The LORD will not reject his people; he will not abandon his own special possession."* I love this thought - that God will not reject us. He will not abandon us. We are his own special possession. **Q: Do you believe that you are God's own special possession? How does this make you feel? Act?**

4/26 - Wow.. Psalm 96 today is amazing! I love verse 1: *"Sing a new song to the LORD! Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!"* And I love the imagery in verse 12: *"Let the fields and their crops burst forth with joy! Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise."* **Q: is there a new song God is asking you to sing to him these days? Will you sing this new song to God?**

4/27 - Psalm 97 verses 10 & 11 are so spiritually powerful & true: *"You who love the LORD, hate evil! He protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. Light shines on the godly, and joy on those who do right."* I do believe that God protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. Honestly, I believe that God does this in our lives much more often than we even consciously realize. I am sure there are a few moments in our life when we fully realize we were being protected by God. But, I also have a strong belief that God protects us from unforeseen things that never entered our consciousness. Do bad things still happen to godly people? Yes, of course they do. Why? I can't answer this - I've heard C.S. Lewis' book ["The Problem of Pain"](#) gets at this a bit. I need to read it. We are in a fallen world. There is evil and an enemy in this world. Bad things do happen. But, overall, I believe these verses above are so true. I do believe that light shines on the godly and joy on those who do right. **Q: Do you believe these verses above to be true? Have you experienced the truth of these verses in your life? How have you experienced protection, light and joy in the Lord?**

4/28 - Psalm 99 is a great psalm of praise! This Psalm mentions the word Lord 7 times. I like verse 6 - *"Moses and Aaron*

were among his priests; Samuel also called on his name. They cried to the LORD for help, and he answered them." These were obviously some major characters in the Bible. I love Psalm 99 verse 3 - *"Let them praise your great and awesome name. Your name is holy!"* I think sometimes in our modern world we can forget that God's name is holy. Jesus' name is holy. These holy names change things. They change everything. If ever you are ever feeling like you are being confronted by evil - maybe even in your sleep in a dream - call upon Jesus' name and watch the evil flee from you immediately. It is true... Jesus' name is holy! God's name is holy! **Q: Do you believe God's very name is holy? How do you cry out to the LORD using His holy name? Do you believe if you cry out to the Lord for help, He will answer you too?**

4/29 - Today we read Psalm 100! I will copy this short Psalm below. Does this Psalm speak to you? Do you feel joy while reading this song? I have read much of ["The Life You've Always Wanted" by John Ortberg](#) (a great book!) and he has a great chapter on JOY being a spiritual discipline. It is amazing to realize that Joy is a gift from God we should be experiencing every day. **Q: How are you experiencing joy as a spiritual discipline? Think this Psalmist in Psalm 100 was?**

Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving thanks.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving

and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Q: When is the last time you shouted for joy to God? Do you regularly worship God with gladness? Do you come before our Heavenly Father with joyful songs? Do you know that you are God's? Is this fact alone worth being joyful about each and every day?

4/30 - Psalm 101 is a great Psalm of David today! Great verses, all of them. I like verse 3 - *"I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar."* This seems to be a bit tougher and tougher to adhere to in our modern world where pornography is getting more and more into the mainstream. But, it is such a beautiful and true Psalm of David for us to adhere to! **Q: Do you refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar? Do you avoid watching TV shows, reading magazines or papers, or going to see movies where you know you'll end up looking at things vile & vulgar?** Don't get me wrong - I'm not saying avoid watching all TV, reading all mags & papers or avoid all movies. I'm just saying that there are some of these forms of media that we know in advance that what they "sell" us will be vile and vulgar. Why would we "buy" that garbage? Refuse to look at it. Don't give it one inch of power over you! (or your kids!) A portion of verse 2 stood out to me today - *"I will lead a life of integrity in my own home."* This is powerful. **Q: How often do we have integrity outside of our home - but then not display integrity within our own home? Think this is healthy? How do you lead a life of integrity within your own home?**

PROVERBS

4/1 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 10 I kind of forgot was in the Bible - *"The godly are concerned for the welfare of their animals..."* Great Proverb for all you animal lovers out there! :) I'm an animal lover too... but as I know my weakness for even caring for plants, I have wisely not moved into caring for the animal kingdom in any way, shape, or form... I probably should not put this out there publicly. God may now put me to the test in this arena! :) **Q: How are you concerned for the welfare of animals in your life today?**

4/2 - Proverbs 12 verse 11 is so true on quite a few levels - *"Hard work means prosperity; only fools idle away their time."* I have been thinking about this "idling away time" issue recently. I know that I idle away and waste a lot of time in my life. And I know the Enemy wants us to waste time. The Enemy wants us to be distracted. The Enemy does not want us to work hard on things that are pleasing to God. The Enemy does not want the Kingdom of God to be prosperous. And if we buy into all of this that the Enemy tries to sell us each and every day, then indeed we are fools. Don't buy into the Enemy's Fool's Gold! **Q: Are you working hard in your life today? How are you redeeming the time?**

4/3 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 14 is a beautiful Proverb - "*People can get many good things by the words they say; the work of their hands also gives them many benefits.*" I think it is safe to say that we should speak and work and there will be benefits! :) It is true I think that work is a very good thing. I'm sure you're probably like me at times and dream about winning the lottery. This seems like it would be ideal. We wouldn't have to work. We could just do what we wanted. Trust me - this would be a curse. We need work. I think it blesses us immensely to work. And indeed it gives many benefits - and not just \$. The benefits include confidence and skills and friendships and socialization and this list could go on. The work of our hands gives us many benefits. Forget the lottery. You don't want that trouble. :) Let us get to work!

4/4 - Proverbs 12 verse 15 teaches us today: "*Fools think they need no advice, but the wise listen to others.*" This is a great opportunity for each of us to ask ourselves whether we think we need no advice or whether we are open to listening to others... **Q: Do you listen to others? Do you listen more than you talk?**

4/5 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 18 is such a strong reminder that the words that come out of our mouths can either build people up - and even heal them - or tear people down - "*Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.*" **Q: How are the words coming out of your mouth these days cutting people or how are they healing people?**

4/6 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 19 is a great testament to the strength of the Bible - now some 3,400 years old since the writings of Moses! "*Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed.*" **Q: Do you believe the Bible is Truth? Do you think the rest of the world thinks the Bible is Truth? Do you think the Bible will stand the test of time?**

4/7 - Today in Proverbs 12:21 we are taught: "*No harm comes to the godly, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.*" **Q: Do you believe this is true? Or does sometimes the opposite seem true?** I think sometimes the opposite of this Proverb may seem true this side of heaven. (though not always - I think wickedness reaps much trouble on this earth as well...) But I think clearly from an eternal perspective, this Proverb is absolute Truth. Eternally, no harm comes to godly, but the wicked have their fill of trouble... Let us not lose sight of our celestial horizons!

4/8 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 24 is great wisdom for each of us today - "*Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and become a slave.*" I do think each of us are called to be "leaders" in various aspects of our lives. Leaders in the home. Leaders at school. Leaders at work. Leaders at our church. Even if maybe you don't think you are a "leader" per se - maybe you're not comfortable with public speaking or whatever - I think you're still a leader. At the very least, we obviously have to *lead our own lives*. **Q: In all of the areas you are called to be a leader in your life, are you working hard? Or, by chance, are you being lazy in some areas? Will you work hard and become a leader? Will you work hard and walk the path of leadership?**

4/9 - Today in Proverbs chapter 12 verse 25 we read - "*An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.*" How is the state of your heart today? Is it anxious? Might I cheer you up with a kind word? :) You are amazing for reading the One Year Bible this year! Not many people take on this significant holy endeavor to learn more about God's very Word and to allow themselves to be transformed by it. **Q: Are there others in your life that you know are being weighed down with an anxious heart? Will you reach out to them today and tomorrow and the next day with a kind word to cheer them up? Never underestimate the power of a kind word toward others. It is life-giving. Please never fail to pass along life & joy to others through kind words as you journey through this life. And please accept kind words when they are given to you.**

4/10 - Proverbs chapter 12 verse 26 today teaches us: "*The godly give good advice to their friends; the wicked lead them astray.*" **Q: This is a great opportunity for us to reflect upon what type of advice or counsel we give to our friends. Is it wise? Or are we perhaps subtly leading our friends astray in any way?**

4/11 - Today in Proverbs chapter 12 verse 28 we read - "*In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.*" **Q: What is the way of righteousness? How does one find the way of righteousness? How does one share with others the way of righteousness? Do you believe there is immortality along the way of righteousness?**

4/12 - Proverbs chapter 13 verse 1 may at first glance seem to be speaking about young children - but... I believe it can definitely speak to how we also should respond to God, our heavenly Father - "*A wise child accepts a parent's discipline; a young mocker refuses to listen.*" **Q: How are you a wise child of God accepting His discipline in your life?**

4/13 - There is probably absolutely nothing I could or should add to Proverbs chapter 13 verse 3 :) - *"Those who control their tongue will have a long life."* **Q: Do you agree with this Proverb? How are you able to control your tongue? Or sometimes does your tongue control you? Any advice on how someone can control their tongue? Prayer, Grace, and the Holy Spirit are 3 antidotes that come to mind for me! :)**

4/14 - Proverbs chapter 13 verse 4 is brilliant - *"Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper and be satisfied."* Hard work pays off. It really does. I do thank God for the blessing of work in my life. I pray you do to. And I do thank him for occasional vacation days too! :) But - overall - I honestly cannot imagine a life of just "vacation." It would be a bit of a hell for me personally.... I do love and appreciate the opportunity to work! **Q: Do you agree with today's Proverb that hard work brings prosperity and satisfaction? How has work brought you satisfaction?**

4/15 - Proverbs chapter 13 verse 5 - *"Those who are godly hate lies; the wicked come to shame and disgrace."* **Q: Based on this Proverb above, is it ever okay to lie? I've spoken with friends who have said they believe it is okay to lie to preserve an innocent life. And I guess if you think about maybe someone who saved lives in the Holocaust by lying, then this would seem to be an okay instance to lie? I mean, you are lying to save an innocent life. Is that okay?** I realize the trick becomes where do you draw the lines on when it is okay to lie. We could rationalize almost anything saying it was okay to lie because of x, y, z greater good. This Proverb says those who are godly hate lies. I am sure we all do hate lying. **But is it ever okay to lie? To save an innocent life - is it okay?** One more thing I just thought of - Jesus never lied. I'm guessing this is a pretty strong hint to the answer to my questions above... but, as sinners, could we perhaps lie to save an innocent life and then confess it to God right away?? :) This is some tricky theology ground I'm treading - and probably not very well... I'm sure there are books written on this subject right?? Yeah, I know, the book by Moses about the Ten Commandments.... :)

4/16 - Proverbs 13 verse 7 makes me wonder how we might be "pretending" in our lives today - *"Some who are poor pretend to be rich; others who are rich pretend to be poor."* I wonder if really in some way all of us are pretending to be something we are not? I don't know if this will make sense - but I do know that sometimes I feel like an actor. A faker. A poser. And I know that the true path to being genuine and real is through a relationship with Jesus. True Sincerity comes from Christ alone. If we are confident in our faith in Jesus, we have absolutely no need to "pretend" or act like we are someone or something else. Christ is sufficient. **Q: Are there any areas of your life where you are acting or pretending? Will you turn those pretensions over to Jesus and be confident in Jesus alone? Why do you think we pretend to be rich when we're not? Or pretend to be poor when we're not? Why do we pretend at all?**

4/17 - Another wow... Proverbs chapter 13 verse 9 is so beautiful to reflect upon - *"The life of the godly is full of light and joy."* Ultimately, this is so true. As I posted above, yes, there will be times of trial and times of being in the desert. But, ultimately a godly life will bring light and joy - and if not in this life, then in eternity. There are of course martyrs who may not experience this light and joy externally in this life - but, my hunch is that they are experiencing the light and joy internally - and ultimately, they will experience light and joy forever in God's Kingdom. **Q: Is your life full of light and joy? Do you believe it will be someday? For eternity?**

4/18 - Proverbs 13 verse 11 is a great verse to consider as we watch those late night TV infomercials... :) - *"Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows."* Are we focusing our working lives on working hard or trying to get rich quick... **Q: Have you every fallen prey to the idea of "getting rich quick"? Do you see the wisdom of hard work over get-rich-quick schemes? From which avenue does true wealth ultimately come from? And, really, what is true wealth? Is it what the world offers or perhaps something God offers?**

4/19 - Proverbs chapter 13 verse 12 teaches us today: *"Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when dreams come true, there is life and joy."* Do you see the wisdom in this Psalm? I do hope that each of us realizes that faith in Jesus is not hope deferred. It is a dream come true in the here and now. Faith in Jesus brings life & joy now. And yes, faith in Jesus also brings the hope of glory for eternity. But, salvation is not all just hope deferred... It is life & joy now too! **Q: How has faith brought life and joy into your life? Do you believe faith in Jesus brings eternal life and joy as well? Are you looking forward to eternal life and joy in heaven, our eternal "city of refuge"?**

4/20 - Proverbs 13 verse 16 is great - *"Wise people think before they act."* And I agree with this. My one additional thought is don't think for too too long! I know some folks that like to think... and think.... and think.... and this is good.... but there is also a time for action. There is a time to move and get involved in the advancement of God's Kingdom. Yes, let's

think about how we'll do this - but then let us act! **Q: Are you someone that thinks before you act? Or do you sometimes act before you think? :) If so, can you meditate on this Proverb, memorize it, and put it into practice?**

4/21 - Proverbs 13:18 is so so so true: *"If you ignore criticism, you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you accept criticism, you will be honored."* I know this may sound strange, but I'm trying to get to the point in my life where I actually appreciate criticism and appreciate making mistakes. It means I'm learning. And the key to receiving criticism is indeed to not ignore it. Reflect on it. Pray on it. And yes, sometimes the criticism will be unfounded. But sometimes it may literally save your life... Let us be open and appreciative to constructive criticism! And let us not ignore it! Nor try to escape from it... **Q: How are you doing in accepting criticism in your life today? Do you accept it? Receive it? Learn from it? Or perhaps... ignore it? Why do you think this Proverb says if you ignore criticism you'll end up in poverty and disgrace? Do you think many people in our world today ignore criticism? Is ignoring criticism perhaps a selfish act?**

4/22 - Wow. Today in Proverbs chapter 13 verse 20 we read – *"He who walks with the wise grows wise."* There is so much wisdom in this verse. Basically, you can boil this down to "choose your friends with care" – but I think there is more going on here. This life we each live really is so short. And there are so many people in our lives that we can choose to spend our time with. And I think it would be very wise on our part to attempt to spend quality time with quality people. Wise people. Otherwise, we can get swept up in a myriad of pop-cultural distractions and cares. And who we choose to hang around with a lot is who we too shall become. Don't get me wrong – there are clearly times that we are called to minister or serve or love or spend time with people that may not appear "wise" – at first glance. I think if you truly are ministering or serving or loving someone who is down and out, you may be surprised how wise a down and out person can be – sometimes I think they can be closer to God in some ways. So – I'm just saying don't insulate yourself with only spending time with people who appear worldly & wise. :) Wisdom and wise people truly can be found in the most unlikely of places. Last point I'll make on this verse. When I read this verse – "He who walks with the wise grows wise" – it makes me think of how important it is for each of us to be attending a church each and every week. The church is the body of Christ. The church is truly "wise." And if we ourselves are not walking with other believers in the body of Christ by investing in a church on a weekly basis, then I think we are at risk of getting swept up in the pop-cultural cares of this fleeting world. Church is wise. Attending church on a weekly basis is wise. I believe attending church on a weekly basis will make you wise. **Q: Based on our Proverb today, how are you walking with the wise? Do you want to walk with the wise?**

4/23 - Proverbs 13:24 is true - *"If you refuse to discipline your children, it proves you don't love them; if you love your children, you will be prompt to discipline them."* The one thing that makes me a bit nervous about this Proverb is that I have a hunch us humans can over-do our discipline. I think there is obviously a difference between loving / godly discipline of our kids and mean / destructive discipline. I pray that we are led by God to know the difference. Yes, discipline is good. Godly / loving discipline. Mean / destructive discipline is not good. **Q: Do you agree with our Proverbs today that if you love your children you will be prompt to discipline them? Do you think this same logic applies to our relationship with God, our Father? If God loves us, do you think He will be prompt to discipline us?**

4/24 - Today in Proverbs chapter 14 verse 2 we read – *"He whose walk is upright fears the LORD."* What does it mean to you to fear the Lord? Is it possible that for us to have some fear of the Lord is healthy? Why would fear of the Lord be healthy? Don't get me wrong – I'm not suggesting we live our lives in abject fear of God all of the time. But - this Proverb is in the Bible - and it says that someone whose walk is upright fears the Lord. So, I do humbly suggest that there is a healthy fear of God that each of us should recognize. (along with a raging LOVE of God as well of course) **Q: Based on our Proverb today, do you fear God at all? Do you think that you should have any fear God? Why or why not?**

4/25 - I once heard a pastor say a few words about Proverbs chapter 14 verse 4: *"An empty stable stays clean, but no income comes from an empty stable."* Basically this pastor was talking about how things were a little bit hectic around the church - due to church growth and related growing pains. And he brought up this verse, with the point being that it is a blessing that the church is not "clean" - in the spic & span sense - because this means a lot of things are happening. There is "income". There are people getting to know God and Jesus. And yes, there are some messes. But it's better than a spic & span clean stable / church where nothing is happen. I like that analogy. I also once heard this same pastor refer to church as a "majestic mess." I like that too! :) Church is not a spic & span clean place all the time. There are messes. There are humans on staff with the church - and humans coming to the church. We are not spic & span clean people all the time. And that's okay. Church is indeed a majestic mess, in the best sense of the word! Speaking of empty

clean stables - let us not forget that our Lord Himself came to this world in a full & messy stable! **Q: Do you think it is okay for church to be a bit “messy” at times? How much mess is too much? Are you okay if the various “stables” in your life are not empty and clean all of the time? Do you see how a full & messy “stable” can demonstrate that “income” is being generated? Why do you suppose that Jesus came to this world in a full & messy stable?**

4/27 - Proverbs chapter 14 verse 8 is great wisdom - *“The wise look ahead to see what is coming, but fools deceive themselves.”* Jesus taught that we should live our lives not worrying about tomorrow. However - this Proverb does show there is wisdom in looking ahead to see what is coming. Don't worry about it - but pay attention to it! For example, we shouldn't deceive ourselves into thinking that we can be reckless with our health today - we should know what this will do to us tomorrow. We should see what is coming. **Q: How do you think we should balance wisely looking ahead to see what is coming versus not worrying about tomorrow? Should we be looking toward the future on occasion? Or just try to stay focused on today?**

4/28 - Wow. Proverbs 14 verse 9 I don't think I've ever really noticed before - *“Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation.”* How true is this? Wow... Guilt is real. Valid. And yes perhaps we can overdo it... but it's real and it's purpose is to call us to reconciliation with God. Great Proverb here... Let us not carry guilt around, but let us give our guilt over to Jesus! **Q: How do you acknowledge guilt? When you are guilty do you seek reconciliation with God?**

4/29 - How's this for a sobering Proverb in verse 12 today - *“There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.”* Things that make you go hmmm.... **Q: think this Proverb is true? I do. I know it is. And I think it is a Proverb that should make each of us stop and think about the path we are on now. Is it the path God wants us to be on? Or is it perhaps a path that looks attractive to the world (remember the Fallen world info at the beginning of this post...)? We all have paths to choose in our life. Many times over we will have to choose which path to walk upon. Are you walking upon God's path for you toward light and life?**

4/30 - Proverbs chapter 14 verse 13 teaches us today: *“Laughter can conceal a heavy heart, but when the laughter ends, the grief remains.”* This is an interesting look at laughter! Some say laughter is the best medicine... and oftentimes I agree. But, this Proverb tells us that laughter may not always heal a heavy heart... **Q: Perhaps something more than laughter is needed when we have a heavy heart? Perhaps - God is needed? Have you ever been healed of a heavy heart? How?**

Group discussions:

- Introductions.
- What were some of your favorite verses or passages from the past week's readings?
- What are some questions that were generated for you based on the past week's readings?
- What is something new you learned about God or the Bible from the past week's readings?
- How did God speak to you through the past week's readings?
- What is something you want to change or grow in your life based on the past week's readings?
- **Discuss the bold Questions in the Study Notes**
- Any prayer requests for the group for the coming week?

Each group is encouraged to close in prayer.

Daily questions for this next week's readings you may want to journal or pray through and discuss with your group next Sunday:

- My favorite verses or passages:
- What I learned from the readings:
- My questions for further study:
- How God spoke to me through the Word:
- Something I want to change or grow in my life based on the Word:
- My prayer points based on the Word:

Visit www.OneYearBibleBlog.com this next week for daily commentary and questions for reflection.

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