

**Notes & Group Questions for May 15 - May 31 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)**

**1 SAMUEL 17:1 - 2 SAMUEL 17:29**

5/15 - We are beginning the story of David, which is always a blessing to read. As you know, David wrote many of the Psalms, so we've been reading some of David's writings already this year. Now we begin his story! Hang on! This is a wonderful part of the Bible – reading about David and reading the Gospel of John at the same time. . . great stuff! Bob Deffinbaugh with Bible.org has a terrific overview of David becoming Israel's King [at this link](#). Today in 1 Samuel chapter 17 read about David & Goliath. In verse 45 we read – *"David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty."* **Q: How often in our lives today are we like Goliath, where we try to make things work or do things with our own strength or our latest technology? Goliath relied on his strength and sword and spear and javelin – and perhaps we today rely on our intellectual pride and Blackberry and career and money. David simply relied on God. David moved in the name of God. How often do you move in the name of God today? How often do you completely rely on only God today? Can you move beyond relying solely on your "strengths" and "technologies" and instead move and breathe and rely on God in every circumstance in your life?**

5/16 - This is a powerful verse in First Samuel 18:14 today: *"David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the LORD was with him."* I think that is so important to know - David succeeded in all he did because God was with him. And I believe this applies to us today as well. We will succeed in all we do if God is with us. Now - don't get me wrong - when I say succeed, I do not mean "succeed" as the world might define this word. I mean we will succeed spiritually in all we do if we are in a loving and growing and obedient relationship with God the Father through Jesus the Son (who is God). This success might mean that we actually become "poor" in the world's eyes and serve overseas or in our own town in a ministry that won't make us a million. But - if we are living in right relationship with God than we have truly succeeded in life. Nothing else matters. **Q: Is God with you today? How do you know? How do you invite God to be with you in your daily life?**

5/16 - It is great to see Jonathan asking his father Saul to not murder David in First Samuel chapter 19. I read a commentary that said Jonathan had really been won over by David after David killed Goliath. It is thought that perhaps David shared with Saul and Jonathan his faith in God and why he was fearless of Goliath early in chapter 18 or late in chapter 17 (in yesterday's readings), and that Jonathan believed David's faith was true. In any case, we do see in chapter 18 verses 3 & 4 these words: *"And Jonathan made a special vow to be David's friend, and he sealed the pact by giving him his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt."* Jonathan is obviously living up to this pact here in chapter 19. **Q: How do you win friends and influence people in your life today? Is it on your own? Or is it through your faith and actions? How would you define a true friend?**

5/17 - Great readings about Jonathan & David today! 1 Samuel 20 verse 13 today seems to indicate that Jonathan realizes that David will be the king after his father Saul: *"May the LORD be with you as he used to be with my father."* Verse 17 is beautiful - *"For Jonathan loved David as much as he loved himself."* **Q: Who are people in your life that you love as much as you love yourself? Do you think that there should be people in your life that you love as much as you love yourself? Do you love Jesus as much as you love yourself? Do you think that God loves you as much as He loves Himself?**

5/18 - Very sad readings today in First Samuel 22 as we read about the slaughter of the priests. Sadly fitting that Doeg betrayed the priests to Saul and then Saul commanded Doeg to kill the priests, because no one else would. This whole incident shows how far Saul has strayed away from God. He has lost his moral compass completely. It's interesting to recall earlier in our First Samuel readings how Saul looked like he might be a decent king initially. But, then he was disobedient to God. And then his sin continued and continued to where he is in today's readings. This should be a warning to each of us to not stray from God like this. If we are allowing ourselves to be disobedient to God or if we are continuing in a sin, we are slaves to that sin. And this slavery to sin can grow and grow until we lose all moral control, as Saul has. **Q: Have you ever been a slave to sin? Are you a slave to sin now that you need to repent of? Have you ever seen others enslaved to sin? How can you or they be truly free of that enslavement to sin?**

5/18 - I love the mini-reunion of Jonathan and David in First Samuel 23 verses 16 & 17 - "*Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God. "Don't be afraid," Jonathan reassured him. "My father will never find you! You are going to be the king of Israel, and I will be next to you, as my father is well aware."* **Q: What great words of encouragement from Jonathan! Who is the last person you encouraged? Do you make it a habit to encourage people around you regularly? Who is someone you can encourage big-time today or tomorrow?**

5/19 - Interesting chapters today! David is essentially put to the test by God over the next 3 chapters - 2 tests today and 1 tomorrow. And the test is this - obedience. You'll recall that Saul fails the test of obedience early in his kingship. David passes the tests - he does not kill Saul and he does not kill Nabal. He could have killed both. First Samuel 24 verses 5 through 7 are a great look at David's character when Saul was in the cave - "*But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe. "The LORD knows I shouldn't have done it," he said to his men. "It is a serious thing to attack the LORD's anointed one, for the LORD himself has chosen him."* So David sharply rebuked his men and did not let them kill Saul." **Q: Have you ever been tested in your obedience to the LORD like David was? When have you remained obedient and faithful in the face of great temptation?**

5/19 - How impressive is Abigail in First Samuel chapter 25! Her speech to David in verses 24 through 30 is awesome. She takes all the blame. Calls out Nabal. Gives David gifts. And smartly lets him know he doesn't need this blood on his hands. David is clearly impressed. **Q: Have you ever met someone with amazing wisdom displayed like Abigail's? How might we obtain wisdom in our lives today? Does our world value wisdom today?**

5/20 - Interesting... in First Samuel 28 Saul bans mediums - wise - and then becomes desperate for one - unwise... The medium seems to get quite freaked out that she has called up Samuel. Commentaries suggest that she is used to calling up satanic / demonic forces. She (possibly) connected to Samuel somehow here and was freaked out by it. And Samuel tells Saul exactly what he probably knows in his heart. God has left him - a long time ago - because of his disobedience. Consulting a medium is just one more disobedient act in a string of them. I pray that no one reading this consults mediums or does tarot cards or gets into palm readings or any of that garbage. It is spiritually dangerous and risky to get into any of that. Unfortunately, I know that things like "tarot card reading parties" are somewhat popular today. I have been invited to them and have not gone - and told the hosts why I was not attending. Please avoid this spiritually risky stuff. It is no joke dangerous. **Q: Have you ever had to flee from risky activities like tarot card readings or psychics? How can we help our friends flee these activities?**

5/21 - We finish the book of First Samuel today! Second Samuel is up tomorrow! First Samuel chapter 29 verse 8 read a bit strange to me: "*What have I done to deserve this treatment?" David demanded. "Why can't I fight the enemies of my lord, the king?"*" It seemed odd, at first read, that David would say this to King Achish of the Philistines. Commentaries suggest that David may have purposefully made an ambiguous statement here, such that Achish (and maybe us) would think he was referring to Achish - when perhaps he was referring to God or Saul as David's "lord, the king." With David's madman acting and wisdom, this ambiguous type statement with another meaning would not be surprising... In First Samuel 31 today we read about the death of Saul. At the very end Saul did what he always did - took things into his own hands. Relied on himself. Fell on his own sword. Perhaps sometimes in our lives today we are not so different from Saul. Maybe we try to take things into our own hands. Rely on ourselves. But hopefully never fall on our own swords... We should instead be leaving things in God's hands and relying fully on God. **Q: What did you learn from reading 1 Samuel this year? What did the life of Saul teach you?**

5/22 - Today we begin the book of Second Samuel!

### **Second Samuel**

Author: Unknown

Date: Probably tenth century B.C.

Content: Second Samuel covers approximately forty years, which is the bulk of David's reign as king. It begins with David's being proclaimed king and consolidating his position against others who claimed the throne. David moved the capital to Jerusalem, brought the sacred Ark of the Covenant there, and ultimately defeated the Philistines for all time. David's troubled career is described in some detail, including his family problems (his son Absalom) and his personal problems (adultery with Bathsheba). A summary of David's later years concludes the book.

Theme: The life of David is given as an example of good and of evil. The sins of David are exposed – so that too much trust will not be put in men. The victories of David are recorded – so that it may be seen what God can do with someone who wholly trusts in him. God used David in spite of his faults because he found in David a willingness to repent and start

again, no matter how far he had fallen. (Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 5-6) More commentary on Second Samuel is at these 2 links –

[http://bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=557](http://bible.org/page.php?page_id=557)

[http://bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=965](http://bible.org/page.php?page_id=965)

5/22 - Today in 2 Samuel chapter 1 we read about David's lament for Saul & Jonathan. This year in going through the One Year Bible, I have really been intrigued by Jonathan and David's relationship. They became incredible "brothers" it seems – much like we now have "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ today. And there seems to have been an amazing love between Jonathan and David – not sexual in any way, but a pure brotherly love. In verse 26 we will read – *"I grieve for you Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful."* Personally, I have been thinking about this word "love" quite a bit in recent months. I don't know if this is going to sound strange – I hope it's a good sign :) - but I find myself using the word "love" more and more often when referring to and thinking of others in my life. I have found myself saying recently, for example, "there are so many people in my church that I love and I believe love me." I guess I'm getting to this stage in my life that may seem at first glance sentimental – but I think it is something more. I believe God is love. And yes, God is judge and many other things. But I do believe that love is a very godly thing. And I guess I'm getting to the point in life where I realize that I truly do love so many people in my life – with a brotherly or sisterly love – and maybe perhaps a few love me too. **Q: I pray this is the case in some way in your life? Are there people in your life that you love with a brotherly or sisterly love? Are there people in your life that were like Jonathan was to David? Are there people in your life where you are like Jonathan was to David? How familiar are you with love as expressed in [1 Corinthians 13](#)? Did Jonathan have this type of love? Do you?**

5/23 - Today's Second Samuel readings are quite dramatic! We start off with the beginnings of what I think you could call a civil war between Judah and Israel in chapter 2 verses 15 through 17: *"So twelve men were chosen to fight from each side—twelve men of Benjamin representing Ishbosheth son of Saul, and twelve representing David. Each one grabbed his opponent by the hair and thrust his sword into the other's side so that all of them died. So this place at Gibeon has been known ever since as the Field of Swords. A fierce battle followed that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by the forces of David."* In chapter 3, it is interesting to see how David got so mad at Joab for killing Abner. Understandable for many reasons - murder being the main one - but also Abner was working to bring David's kingship to all of Israel. Joab's murder of Abner threatened the civil war between Judah and the rest of Israel to start up again. **Q: How does all the fighting and murder stand out to you in the Old Testament readings? Does fighting and murder continue in our world today? Why is this?**

5/24 - Second Samuel chapter 4 verse 11 stood out as David said this to the 2 murderers of Ishbosheth: *"Now what reward should I give the wicked men who have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed? Should I not also demand your very lives?"* Similar to the Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul and reported this news to David, David was not happy with the news. This all reminds me of the old adage that you cannot fight evil with evil - you'll get corrupted in the process. These 2 guys murdered an innocent man, thinking they were doing a greater good for David. David disagreed. **Q: Are there times in our lives where we do something wrong / bad / lie / evil for what we think might be a greater good? Aren't we then corrupted in the process?**

5/24- In Second Samuel chapter 6 when the Ark is brought back to Jerusalem verse 14 is phenomenal to imagine: *"And David danced before the LORD with all his might, wearing a priestly tunic."* And David's words in verse 21 are something for you and I to consider in our lives today - *"So I am willing to act like a fool in order to show my joy in the LORD."* **Q: Are you willing to act like a fool to show your joy in God? Have you ever danced before God with all your might? Think you ever could?**

5/25 - Second Samuel 7 today is a big chapter! God essentially establishes a covenant with David - it isn't expressly called a covenant, so I suppose it is more of a promise. Verse 16 is a nice sum-up of God's promise to David: *"Your dynasty and your kingdom will continue for all time before me, and your throne will be secure forever."* The throne is secure forever because from the lineage of David comes Jesus. Jesus is forever. Genealogies in [Matthew 1](#) and [Luke 3:21-38](#) will give you more details on this lineage. It is interesting that God does not want David to build him a temple, but lets David know one of his descendents will in verses 12 & 13: *"For when you die, I will raise up one of your descendants, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house--a temple--for my name."* We will later learn the reasons for this in 1 Chronicles 28 verse 3 when David says - *"But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.'" David was a warrior - as is very evident in Second Samuel 8 today. David's purpose was to unite and establish Israel. David's son Solomon will build the temple for God. I love*

David's prayer of thanksgiving to God in 2 Samuel 7 verses 18-29 today! **Q: How often do you pray prayers of thanksgiving like David did? Should we be thankful and express gratitude to God every day?**

5/26 - Interesting set of readings today in Second Samuel. We start off with David showing kindness to Saul's crippled grandson Mephibosheth and we end with David committing adultery, ordering the murder of one of his warriors, and making God very unhappy. What happened to change the course of events like this?? I think this is something that each one of us should take heed of - even when things are going very well in our walk with God, things can suddenly go the wrong direction if we are not vigilant in fleeing from sin and temptation. David was obviously tempted when he saw Bathsheba from his rooftop. He should have left that temptation there, and fled from it immediately - but instead he gave into it. He asked about Bathsheba (entertaining temptation...) and invited her over and then committed adultery. Then... things got worse. That's how sin goes. Once we let it start to *run* our life it can quickly start to *ruin* our life. David thought he could trick Uriah into thinking Uriah got his wife pregnant - but Uriah in chapter 11 was behaving much more honorably than the king! He would not sleep with his own wife when he knew other warriors were sleeping on the battlefields. Uriah acted honorably. David did not. David allowed sin to run the show. Below is a powerful painting by James Tissot showing the moment on the rooftop where David allowed temptation to take over... **Q: Again - back to our lives - have you ever seen a pattern of sin running the show in your life?** I know I have in the past. It's a dangerous pattern to see taking place in our lives. It can lead to all kinds of pain and suffering for ourselves and those around us. If you are perhaps even in the midst of sin running the show in your life now, there is hope. There is confession and repentance. David does give us this example in Psalm 51. Psalm 51 David wrote after the events in chapter 11 took place with Bathsheba & Uriah. Psalm 51 is a powerful Psalm of confession and repentance. You may be at the point where you need to pray this Psalm to God now. I think each of us does well when we pray this Psalm to God regularly. We certainly may not be at the point where David was in chapter 11 - but, we likely have sin to confess to God - even right now. [Click here if you'd like to pray Psalm 51 now.](#)

5/27 - We read a great parable from the prophet Nathan today to start the chapter! Wow. Convicting stuff for David... You'll note that David said in response to this parable in verse 6: *"He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."* Well, sure enough, David paid for the death of Uriah 4 times over through the future deaths of 4 of David's sons: the unnamed son who dies in this chapter, Amnon dies in chapter 13, Absalom in chapter 18, and Adonijah in First Kings 2:25. I read a commentary that said God forgave David of his sin, but God did not negate all the consequences of David's sin. **Q: Do you believe that even if we are forgiven of our sin that there still may be consequences of our sin?**

5/28 - Second Samuel chapter 13 is a sad chapter to read in so many ways! Amnon is David's first born son, so he is heir to the throne at this point. Absalom is David's third born son - but at this point he may have been second in line to the throne because David's 2nd born son, Kileab, was only mentioned once and may have died young. You'll note that there are unfortunately are some parallels in David's sin with Bathsheba and Uriah with his 2 sons' behavior in this chapter. David sinned sexually with Bathsheba - Amnon sinned sexually against Tamar in a horrible way. David sinned by ordering the murder of Uriah. Absalom sinned by ordering the murder of Amnon. Unfortunately we see a pattern of "like father, like sons..." in this chapter. I don't think this always has to be the case in our human condition - I do believe we can be redeemed and transformed and not act in sinful ways like our parents may have acted. But, I also do believe we need Jesus to save us from ourselves - in this regard of breaking the cycle/pattern of sin and in all regards. **Q: Have you seen instances of "like father, like son" in our world today? Can we break free from cycles of sin in our family histories? How?**

5/29 - Well.. this is a tough couple of chapters to read today! On one hand we see David showing much grace to Absalom and meanwhile Absalom is plotting to rebel against his father and then does so! At first glance it makes me wonder what on earth was David thinking? Why did he bring Absalom back to Jerusalem? But, I believe David was doing the right thing. Absalom was his son. David was trying to restore that relationship. I think about this with people in my life who have maybe "stung" me in some way. On the one hand I want to write them off - believing that they will sting me again. And maybe they will... but, I don't think writing people off is healthy ultimately for me and I don't think it is the right thing to do. I think showing grace, forgiveness and compassion is the right thing to do. I think David did this - and then he wisely got out of town when he realized Absalom was up to no good! So, he didn't completely let Absalom walk all over him. He still used wisdom. I don't know... this is a tough couple of chapters. **Q: What do you think? Did David do the right thing by bringing Absalom back to Jerusalem? Do you see any parallels in your life where someone has stung you - and then perhaps stung you again? Was it still maybe the right thing to do to show them grace and forgiveness? And maybe even to do so again?**

5/30 - We have more sad readings today in Second Samuel! However, it is impressive to see David's countenance in the midst of all of the chaos going on around him. I love David's words in verses 10 through 12 when Shimei is cursing David: *"If the LORD has told him to curse me, who am I to stop him? My own son is trying to kill me. Shouldn't this relative of Saul have even more reason to do so? Leave him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to do it. And perhaps the LORD will see that I am being wronged and will bless me because of these curses."* That is incredible faith and humility! David says first that perhaps God has told Shimei to curse him, so why try to stop it. Then at the end David basically says if God has not told Shimei to curse him, then perhaps David will be blessed by God because of these wrongful curses. Great stuff! **Q: How do you act in your life today if someone is cursing you or wronging you? Do you act like David does here? With patience and wisdom? Or, do you "react" with anger and spite? Which is the better way to go?**

5/30 - At the end of today's readings we read about Ahithophel advising Absalom to sleep with David's concubines. To sleep with a king's wives or concubines was to make a claim to the throne. It is sad to read about this advice to commit a horrible act that is *"beyond hope of reconciliation"*, as verse 21 says in today's readings. I read a commentary that said Ahithophel advises Absalom to do this horrible act so that all of Israel will hear about it. Well, Absalom is in such a deep state of sin and wickedness at this point that he wanted Israel to also see that he was committing this sin by setting the tent up on the palace roof. It is striking to me to see David's humility toward Shimei's curses in today's readings versus Absalom's complete pride and rebellion. **Q: See what unchecked sin can do in a life? Do you think Absalom knew he was going the Wrong Way? Or was he blinded by sin?** In a couple of days we'll read about where the Wrong Way leads Absalom...

5/31 - Interesting readings in Second Samuel today! The dynamics between Ahithophel's advice and Hushai's advice is fascinating. Hushai plays smartly to Absalom's ego and insecurity with the advice he gives. Ahithophel seems to realize that he's lost his status in Absalom's kingdom - and I wonder if maybe perhaps Ahithophel realized this kingdom of Absalom's would soon fall? And thus decided to kill himself? It was probably more of an ego / pride / status thing though that played into Ahithophel's tragic decision. Ahithophel, a betrayer of David, ended up taking his life in the same manner Judas, the betrayer of Jesus, does. (Not to be morbid here, but just fyi that there are 7 suicides documented in the Bible - you can view this list of 7 on bible.org [at this link](#).) It does make me very sad to read about suicide, even in the case of Ahithophel or Judas. I know obviously suicide happens still in our world today at alarming rates, which makes me incredibly sad. I just feel like all of us can have some serious down times in our life and maybe sometimes feel like just giving it up completely. I pray that if ever we really do get that down in our life, that we always remember there is redemption. There is hope. There is love. There is forgiveness. There is Jesus. No matter what we've done or what we've failed to do, let us not every give up on the everlasting hope that is Jesus in our lives. Jesus saves. Jesus even saves us from ourselves. **Q: Have you ever worked with someone to move them away from suicide? Are there any ministries, books or organizations you can recommend related to suicide prevention and assistance?**

#### **JOHN 8:21 - 19:42**

5/15 - I love John 8 verse 29 where Jesus says - *"And the one who sent me is with me--he has not deserted me. For I always do those things that are pleasing to him."* **Q: If Jesus always did those things that are pleasing to God, do you think that you and I should do those things that are pleasing to Jesus and to God? Meaning, it seems to me that Jesus was clearly very intentional with how he spent his time. He only did those things that are pleasing to God. How intentional are you and I in how we spend our time? Do we make sure we are only doing those things that are pleasing to Jesus (who is God) and God the Father?** I know I don't. I wish I did. I pray that I will spend more and more of my time doing those things that are pleasing to God. Let us pray that Jesus' personality permeates our personality and all that we do!

5/16 - John chapter 8 verses 34 through 36 are such powerful teachings for each of us to recognize - *"Jesus replied, "I assure you that everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free."* **Q: Do you believe it is possible to be a slave of sin? Do you believe Jesus can set us free from the slavery of sin? Are you free?**

5/16 - I believe verse 58 is one of the most powerful statements Jesus makes in the Gospels - *"Jesus answered, "The truth is, I existed before Abraham was even born!"* Or the NIV of this verse is - *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"* Jesus is quoting Exodus 3:14 here when Moses asks God who he should say sent him to free the Israelites from Egypt and God says - "I AM. Tell them I AM sent you." Jesus here knows what he is doing

when he says that even before Abraham was born, I AM. Jesus is saying he is God. And He is. But, to the religious leaders at this time, this was blasphemy to their ears. And hence, they attempted to stone Jesus in the very next verse. **Q: Do you believe Jesus when he says, "before Abraham was born, I AM"?**

5/17 - Jesus' teaching in John chapter 9 verse 3 is powerful - *"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "He was born blind so the power of God could be seen in him."* Wow. He was born blind so that God's power could be seen in him. I wonder about this in our lives today. **Q: When we have challenges or struggles, is it possible that they are happening so that the power of God can be seen? I know this can be tough to fathom when you are in the midst of a challenge or struggle - or, if you are blind for example, like this man in John 9. But... no matter what life throws our way, do you think that God's power can be seen in any circumstance?**

5/17 - Verse 27 is great when the healed man says - *"Look!" the man exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"* Hmmm.... Verses 39 through 40 are a dialogue that each one of us should reflect upon - *"Then Jesus told him, "I have come to judge the world. I have come to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind." The Pharisees who were standing there heard him and asked, "Are you saying we are blind?" "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see."* **Q: How are we behaving today? Are we allowing Jesus to give us spiritual sight? Or do we think we can see well enough spiritually without Jesus? Without Jesus, can we see or are we blind...? Will we allow Jesus to heal us of our spiritual blindness right now?**

5/18 - I love Jesus' teachings today in John 10 verses 9 & 10 - *"Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. Wherever they go, they will find green pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness."* What a great analogy - Jesus is the gateway to salvation. Life in relationship with Jesus will be full of green pastures - this reminds me of [Psalm 23 verse 2](#)! And then Jesus tells us that his purpose is to give us life in all its fullness. I think all too often we look for fullness of life in all the wrong places... when all we have to do is walk through the gate. **Q: Have you walked through the gate? How can we help lead others in our life who don't know Jesus through the gate?**

5/18 - Jesus calling himself the Good Shepherd is so very beautiful and fitting in verses 14 & 15 - *"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep."* After we walk through the gate of faith to fullness of life with Jesus, he will be our Good Shepherd forever. He is a shepherd that knows us - and we know him. He will protect us with his rod and staff - again, a little [Psalm 23 verse 4](#). :) And more than anything else, this Good Shepherd has laid down his life for us. **Q: Do you consider Jesus to be your Good Shepherd? How does Jesus shepherd you?**

5/19 - John chapter 10 verse 30 is a powerful teaching from Jesus! *"The Father and I are one."* Many churches celebrate Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles in the Upper Room after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Thus, rounding out the Trinity. (Bible.org has a great overview of the Trinity [at this link](#).) The Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. **Q: Do you believe Jesus when he says, "The Father and I are one" ? Do you believe Jesus is God? Do you think the majority of our world believes Jesus is God?**

5/20 - Today in John chapter 11 verse 35 we read the shortest verse in the Bible – *"Jesus wept."* Though this may be the shortest verse, I do not believe it is small in meaning. What does it say to you that Jesus wept? What does it mean to you that Jesus wept? I love this verse because to me it shows Jesus' humanity (while at the same time he is divine). During his time living as a man on earth, Jesus experienced the full range of emotions that you and I experience today. Jesus was tempted. (though, unlike us, he did not give into temptation and sin ever) Jesus was joyful. Jesus was angry. Jesus loved. Jesus wept. **Q: Knowing this about Jesus, does this help you to realize that you can approach Jesus with absolutely any situation in your life that you might be struggling with? Do you believe that Jesus will understand you if you are weeping? Do you believe that Jesus will rejoice with you when you are rejoicing?** I do. "Jesus wept" says so much to me about who Jesus was, is, and forever will be. Jesus wept.

5/21- John 12 verse 10 stood out to me today - somehow I hadn't really noticed this verse before - *"Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus."* Lazarus was raised from the dead and they wanted him dead again... sad... The miracle had caused many to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Not surprising that those in that day who were against Jesus would also be against those close to Jesus. **Q: Think there might be some correlation in this regard in our world today? Is it possible**

**that the closer we get to Jesus, the more the Enemy might come up against us in various ways?** It cannot defeat us with God on our side. But it may come after us.

5/21- I like verse 19 today! *"Then the Pharisees said to each other, "We've lost. Look, the whole world has gone after Jesus!"* Unfortunately it was a bit of an exaggeration at that time and the 2,000 years following. **Q: But maybe in the future? How are you part of the Great Commission today?**

5/23 - Wow. Jesus' teaching in John 13 verses 14 - 17 are so powerful today: *"And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. How true it is that a servant is not greater than the master. Nor are messengers more important than the one who sends them. You know these things--now do them! That is the path of blessing."* **Q: Are you on the path of blessing? What might it mean to "wash other's feet" today? Yes, perhaps at times it literally means wash other's feet. Could it mean other acts of service as well that perhaps we maybe think we are "too good for" or "above" in any way? Jesus humbled himself to wash other's feet. Are you humbling yourself to serve others in ways that your ego might not like?**

5/24 - I love the dialogue today between Thomas and Jesus in John 14 verses 4 through 6! Somehow I didn't quite remember the context of Thomas' question setting up Jesus' profound statement in verse 6. Beautiful. Jesus starts us off in verse 4 - *"And you know where I am going and how to get there."* *"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We haven't any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"* Jesus told him, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."* These last two sentences of Jesus' we've probably all heard many times. But how often have we asked Thomas' question either to ourselves or to God or to now one in particular - "how can I know the way?" Jesus answers this for us perfectly. **Q: Have you ever felt in your life that you didn't know the way? Do you believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life?**

5/24 - Verses 12 through 14 today are so convicting for me - because I really rarely follow this teaching (or fully believe in it?) of Jesus' - *"The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father. Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!"* **Q: Do you believe that you can do the same works Jesus has done, and even greater works?** I'll confess - I'm not so sure that I do. I mean, it's encouraging to think that I could, even if I don't fully believe it. And, yet, I believe most everything else Jesus teaches. Why would I doubt this teaching? Maybe it's because I have some sort of inferiority complex - or maybe I think it would be prideful to think this. But Jesus teaches it quite plainly! Or... maybe... I haven't really asked Jesus for the guidance and wisdom to believe this - and asked for even just this in his name.

5/25 - Wow. Today's John chapter 14 readings start off strong with a very short sentence of teaching from Jesus in verse 15 - *"If you love me, obey my commandments."* Not too complicated there, eh? :) Really... it's quite easy to understand. And believe. But to obey... hmmm... I've been thinking about that "obey" word quite a bit lately. In fact, it's a word that has been spray painted around my neighborhood lately - "obey" - I think for some political statement reasons. It's not really a popular word. But it's a pretty straightforward teaching from Jesus. Obey. Obey my commandments. *"If you love me, obey my commandments."* I really do believe that true freedom is found in this. When we are obedient to Jesus' teachings and God's will in our lives, we truly will be living "free" lives. I know it sounds like an oxymoron. But I believe it is true. The more we obey Jesus' teachings, the freer we truly become. **Q: Do you think this is true? Are you obeying Jesus' teachings in your life? Do you feel freer?**

5/25 - Well, if we are wondering how on earth we can possibly obey Jesus' teachings, He graciously answers this for us in the next two verses in today's readings: *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you."* Basically, we cannot obey Jesus' teachings on our own. Using our own will power or smarts or strength, we will fail. We need the Holy Spirit, living with in us, to give us the grace and strength to obey Jesus' teachings. The Holy Spirit rounds out the Trinity and leads us and guides us. **Q: Are you looking for the Holy Spirit? Do you recognize the Holy Spirit living within you? Do you believe the Holy Spirit is leading you into all truth?**

5/26 - Today we read one of my favorite chapters in the Bible - John 15. I cannot tell you how much this chapter means to me and I hope to you as well. John 15 takes place just after the Last Supper, the night before Jesus dies on the cross, so

this is one of Jesus' last teachings to the disciples – and to you and me. It is so beautiful. My quick personal story on this chapter is that I have only preached verbally once – and it was when I was in Bulgaria several years ago on a short-term mission trip. Our team ended up going to a small Roma church – and I mean small – in a village outside of the capital city of Sofia. As we drove up to the village where the church was located I saw rows and rows of grape vines in and around the village. I knew I would be preaching that evening – each person on our team took a turn every night. And initially I was planning to preach from a Psalm – but, when I saw the vineyards I quickly decided to preach from John 15, and it turned out to be so beautiful. I literally ended up outside of the church – all of us could not fit in the tiny 1 room church - under some grape vines preaching from John 15. God showed up. I cannot even remember what I said, but God moved. I pray that as you read John 15 today God moves for you as well. John 15 is something special. (John 16 & 17 are something special as well. . .) **Q: Have you ever been on a mission trip and had a powerful experience that you can share with your group?**

5/26 - Today in John 15 verses 12 & 13 we will read these words of Jesus - *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."* **Q: Why would Jesus give us such a command as this? Why would Jesus give this command the night before he died on the cross? How did Jesus show his love for us? Do you agree that there is no greater love than laying down one's life for his friends? Did Jesus do this for you and me? If we are to love each other as Jesus loved us, how do we do this? When we look at Jesus' life and how he lived it, what might we be able to model in our lives? When we look at Jesus laying down his life for us, how might we be able to "lay down our life" for our friends? Do you love others as Jesus loved you?**

5/27 - John chapter 16 is amazing today! I love verse 8's teaching from Jesus about the Holy Spirit: *"And when he comes, he will convince the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment."* One commentary on this verse and verse 9 today says: "Apart from the Spirit's convicting work, people can never see themselves as sinners." Wow. This is powerful to reflect upon. **Q: Did you ever have a time in your life that you did not see yourself as a sinner? Was this time before you experienced the Holy Spirit? Do you believe this to be true - that many in our world today cannot see themselves as sinners, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and Jesus?** This I think should demonstrate to us who is truly doing conversion work in our world - not us, but Jesus and the Spirit. We cannot convert anyone on our own human power. The Holy Spirit must enter the room...

5/28 - John 17 is such an amazing chapter... this is Jesus praying! So powerful. I honestly am at a loss for words on this chapter. I could probably try to write something about each and every verse. But, maybe what makes the most sense is for you to re-read this chapter again. **Q: Do you see Jesus praying for you in this chapter? What does it mean to you that Jesus prayed for you?**

5/29 - Sad to see this parallel... David was betrayed by Absalom in today's readings and Jesus was betrayed by Judas... David kissed Absalom, his betrayer. Judas kissed Jesus to betray Him. Seems that betrayal has been a part of our human condition for maybe all time? Well, since the Fall to be sure, which is pretty much all time for us humans... (you'll recall just after the Fall Cain murdered Abel - yet another betrayal... ) **Q: Do betrayals continue today? Why do you think this is? What can free us from betraying each other? Or should I ask Whom can free us from betraying each other?**

5/30 - Today in John chapter 18 verse 38 we come across what many say is the most ironic question asked in all of history, as Jesus stands before Pilate: *"What is truth?" Pilate asked.* Why is this ironic? Because Pilate asks what is truth, when Truth is standing right before him! Jesus is Truth! And Pilate couldn't see it. Wow. . . think there are people in our world today who see Jesus so dimly, like Pilate does in this painting? I pray you and I see Jesus much more clearly, and much more as the Light! What is truth. This is a question that is still asked today of you and me. **Q: What is truth? Who is truth?**

5/31 - I read an interesting commentary on John 19 verse 25: *"Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene."* Zondervan's commentary says that Mary Magdalene appears in the crucifixion and resurrection narratives of all four Gospels, but outside of these narratives we only read about her in Luke 8:2-3. It is interesting to note that these are the only places in the Gospels where we find Mary Magdalene - though crucially important places in the Gospels! It is amazing to read about the actions of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two secret followers of Jesus on the Jewish council, in verses 38 through 40 - *"Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for*

permission to take Jesus' body down. When Pilate gave him permission, he came and took the body away. Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night, also came, bringing about seventy-five pounds of embalming ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Together they wrapped Jesus' body in a long linen cloth with the spices, as is the Jewish custom of burial." That is a beautiful scene - these 2 men. They were risking much to do this. They were risking this for Jesus. **Q: What about you and me? Would we have taken this type of risk back then? Would we take this type of risk even today? What might be a risk - for Jesus - that we could take but that we are not taking today?**

#### **PSALM 111:1 - 119:152**

5/15 - Psalm 111 is a wonderful Psalm of praise! I love the way it ends in verse 10: "*Reverence for the LORD is the foundation of true wisdom. The rewards of wisdom come to all who obey him. Praise his name forever!*" **Q: Do you believe that reverence for God is the foundation of true wisdom? Do you believe that there are rewards of wisdom if you obey God? Will you praise his name forever?**

5/16 - Psalm 112 is a great look at a godly person's life. Today in verse 1 we read: "*Blessed is the person who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands.*" **Q: Is fear of the Lord healthy? Why or why not? Is fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? Are you blessed if you fear the Lord? Do you find great delight in God's commands? What are God's commands?**

5/16 - Psalm 112 verse 4 stands out - "*When darkness overtakes the godly, light will come bursting in.*" This is encouraging. When darkness overtakes us, if we stay true to God and Christ and faith, light will come "bursting in"! I like that... Know that the light is coming... And verse 9 is a great reminder - "*They give generously to those in need.*" **Q: Are you doing something in your life to serve the poorest of the poor? There are 1.2 billion people living in our world today on less than \$1 per day. Is there something you can do to give generously to those in need?**

5/17 - Psalm 113 & 114 today are very interesting and important Psalms! These are 2 of 6 Psalms, 113 to 118, that form the "Egyptian Hallel." These Psalms were used in Jewish liturgy at the great religious festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication, Weeks, New Moon. At Passover Psalm 113 & 114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115 - 118 were sung after the meal. **Q: As you read these two Psalms today, do you sense joy in the Lord's work? Justice? Glory? Power? Does reading these two Psalms make you want to celebrate and give thanks for the Lord and all he has done throughout history and in your life?**

5/18 - Today in Psalm 115 verse 1 we will read - "*Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory.*" (Chris Tomlin fans out there will recognize this as one of his many awesome worship tunes. . .) I don't know how this verse strikes you, but it strikes me hard. Which is good. I think sometimes I do things for my own glory. And this verse, and really the entire Bible, is clear that the glory is God's and not ours. Yeah, sure, we will live our lives full of "glorious" moments when we are loving God and loving people. But, we should not be living our lives to build up our own fame or our own glory. As Rick Warren states so well in the 1st sentence of the 1st chapter of his book "Purpose Driven Life"- "It is not about you." And this is true. It is about God. And this is good news! Really. I have tried to live my life in the past where it was all about me. And this was a miserable way to live life. I pray that you see the incredible wisdom in this verse - "*Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory.*" **Q: How are you living your life? Are you living your life to advance the fame and glory of God? Are you doing this by loving God and loving other people with all that you are? Or, are you by chance living your life to advance the fame and glory of yourself? And if so. . . how's this going for you?**

5/16 - Psalm 116 verses 1 & 2 are amazing- "*I love the LORD because he hears and answers my prayers. Because he bends down and listens, I will pray as long as I have breath!*" **Q: How is your prayer life these days? Do you believe God bends down and listens to your prayers? And answers them? Will you pray as long as you have breath?**

5/20 - Psalm 117 is the shortest of all the Psalms - and the shortest chapter in the entire Bible. This Psalm is said to basically be one long Alleluia. :) Actually verse 1 has a very important message - "*Praise the LORD, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth.*" This demonstrates that God was very interested in the salvation of the Gentiles and all the nations in the Old Testament. And not just in the New Testament as we get to the book of Acts. This was part of the plan all along... **Q: When was the last time you said "Alleluia" to God, outside of church?**

5/21 - I came across a wonderful speculation on Psalm 118! Zondervan's commentary suggested that Jesus and the disciples sang this psalm/hymn at the end of the Last Supper. Matthew chapter 26 verse 30 tells us - "*When they had*

*sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."* Adds a bit of a new dimension to this Psalm, no? The reason for this speculation is because this is the final Psalm in the Egyptian Hallel of Psalms 113 through 118. These Psalms were used in Jewish liturgy at the great religious festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication, Weeks, New Moon. At Passover Psalm 113 & 114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115 - 118 were sung after the meal. Perhaps, even after the Last Supper by Jesus and the disciples? Verse 8 in this Psalm stands out to me big time: *"It is better to trust the LORD than to put confidence in people."* Kind of strong words I know... but what do you think? Might people, on occasion, let you down? Obviously, we know the answer to this one. People will let us down. Even our closest friends and family at some point will let us down. However - I don't think this means we give up on investing and loving friends and family! It just means we should not be surprised when someone let's us down. That's human nature. None of us is perfect this side of heaven - you will obviously let people down too. Realizing this, I think all of us should be prepared to forgive others and to ask for forgiveness of others. However, what do you think on this question: **Q: Will God ever let you down? Will Jesus ever let you down?** Please know He won't! In fact, I believe that He's holding you up right this very moment...

5/22 - Psalm 118 is the last half of the psalm possibly sung by Jesus and the disciples after the Last Supper - see yesterday's posting below for details. What an amazing Psalm... Verse 22 was quoted by Jesus in Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17 and he used this verse to refer to himself - *"The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone."* **Q: Do you believe this verse applies to Jesus? Is Jesus the cornerstone in your life?**

5/23 - Whoo-hoo! Today we begin Psalm 119, the longest Psalm and chapter in the Bible! This Psalm is a beautiful meditation on God's Word and how it helps us stay pure and grow in faith. Almost every verse in this Psalm mentions God's Word. I pray that this Psalm is encouraging to you as you read through the One Year Bible! Today in Psalm 119 verse 11 we read: *"I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* **Q: Have you hidden God's word in your heart? So that you might not sin against God? Do you realize that all sin is indeed a sin against God? Are you memorizing Scripture on a regular basis? And, more importantly, reflecting on Scripture?** Check out this link for some great free online resources to help you memorize Scripture - <http://www.memoryverses.org/>

5/24 - Wow. Psalm 119 verse 29 is powerful: *"Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your law."* Do you ever lie to yourself? If you answered no, are you lying to yourself now? :) I think that lying to ourselves is part of our fallen human condition. I think we're probably pretty good at it. And I think that maybe the cure for this is even found in this same verse - the prayer of *"give me the privilege of knowing your law."* It is a privilege to know God's Word. It is a free privilege, but a privilege that I think we can often take for granted or simply ignore. Through our study of God's Word let us pray that we allow God to show us any area of our life where we might be lying to ourselves. And let us allow God to redeem that area and give us the clarity of Truth. **Q: Like this Psalmist, will you pray to God and ask Him to keep you from lying to yourself? Will you pray this prayer often?**

5/25 - Today in Psalm 119 verses 47 & 48 we read – *"I delight in your commands because I love them. I lift up my hands to your commands which I love, and I meditate on your decrees."* **Q: Do you believe it is possible to delight in God's commands? Why might this be a good thing? Do you believe it is possible to actually love God's commands? What are God's commands? Where can we find them? (okay, I'll give you a hint – the answer is all over Psalm 119 :) - God's Word, the Bible is where we can find God's commands) Do you meditate upon God's decrees as found in the Bible? Do you love the Bible? This seems like a strange question to ask in some regards. . . but, maybe ask yourself this – do you love books in general? I think many of us would say we love books. (Maybe using the term loosely. . .) So, if we were to consider just one book that it would really make sense to invest our time in; to meditate upon; to read for all of our lives; to love – what would that book be? Why would it be that book? Are you a bookworm when it comes to the Bible?**

5/25 - Today in Psalm 119 verse 37 we read: *"Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word."* **Q: Are there currently things in your life that you are spending time on – focusing your eyes on – that are worthless? What are these things? Do you want to turn your eyes away from these things? Will you? Do you believe that your life can be preserved by the Word of God – the Bible? How will you continue to preserve your life according to God's Word on a daily basis? Do you consider the Bible literally to be a "life preserver" for you in the midst of the raging rivers of life? Will you hold onto this life preserver each and every day?**

5/26 - Wow. I love Psalm 119 verse 54 today - *"Your principles have been the music of my life throughout the years of my pilgrimage."* What a beautiful metaphor - God's principles being the music of our lives through all our years as we are on

our pilgrimage. Great stuff! **Q: How might God's principles actually become the music of your life? Do you think you'd need to be reading God's Word frequently to tune into his frequency? (did you catch that - frequently & frequency? :)** I commend you for reading the Bible each day this year as we go through the One Year Bible. I pray you'll continue to read the Bible daily in all of your years to come. I pray God's principles are and will be the music of your life.

5/26 - Verse 59 today is a great verse for each of us to consider - *"I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your statutes."* **Q: Have you ever reached a mid-life or maybe even a quarter-life crisis where you pondered the direction of your life? Do you like the direction your life is heading now? Do you want to change that direction? Will you turn to follow God's way? God's Truth? God's life for you? Do you believe that God's plans for you are so much bigger than any plans of your own that you could dream up on your own?**

5/27 - Psalm 119 verse 71 has an interesting take on suffering - *"The suffering you sent was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your principles."* **Q: Do you believe suffering can be good for you? Can it teach you to pay attention to God?** Christianity Today magazine had a great article on Suffering a while back, which you can read [at this link](#). (Note that the article starts out with this provocative statement - *"God loves you and has a difficult plan for your life."*) Also, I did find some reflections on Suffering & Grief on ChristianityToday.com that are worth reading [at this link](#).

5/28 - I am continuing to love our readings of Psalm 119! This is an incredible Psalm... I somehow am re-reminded of how amazing this Psalm is every 6 months that we read it in the One Year Bible. I could write something on each verse. For example, I love the imagery in verse 81 today - *"I faint with longing for your salvation; but I have put my hope in your word."* I faint! I long! I hope! And Verse 83 - *"I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, exhausted with waiting. But I cling to your principles and obey them."* I am shriveled! I am exhausted! I wait! I cling! I obey! I love this Psalm... Verse 95 is powerful: *"Though the wicked hide along the way to kill me, I will quietly keep my mind on your decrees."* **Q: How can you quietly keep your mind on God's decrees? Will you make this a habit to quietly keep your mind on God's decrees? Would this be a good habit?**

5/29 - Psalm 119 verse 105 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible! *"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path."* **Q: Do you believe God's Word, the Bible, is a lamp for your feet? A light for your path? To help put this in perspective - without God's Word, the Bible, is it possible that we would have no lamp for our feet? No light for our paths? That we'd essentially be groping in the darkness without God's Word, the Bible?**

5/29 - Verse 111 wow... *"Your decrees are my treasure; they are truly my heart's delight."* **Q: What is your treasure? Where is your treasure? Is God's Word, the Bible, truly your heart's delight?**

5/30 - Psalm 119 verse 114 is beautiful a beautiful reflection on our relationship with God and his Word, the Bible - *"You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my only source of hope."* This ties in so well with the reflections on false teachers above. The Bible is clearly a refuge and shield from false teaching! **Q: Is God's Word your only source of hope?** And remember, Jesus is the very Word made flesh, so Jesus would clearly be your only source of hope too, if the Word truly is. Let us take refuge in God's Word each day of our lives!

5/30 - Verse 127 today is powerful - *"Truly, I love your commands more than gold, even the finest gold."* I think this is something each of us needs to ask ourselves. **Q: Do we love God's commands - his Word - the Bible - more than we love any and all material possessions? Do we value the Bible above all the money this world could ever offer us?** This is an important decision to make... I pray we realize the eternal worth of God's commands compared to the passing and transitory nature of "even the finest gold." Let us always remember the great peril of ignoring God's Word and instead chasing after the world's "fool's gold..."

5/31 - Psalm 119 is continuing with its amazing verses about God's holy Word, the Bible, and how it can transform our lives. Verse 138 is just one more small example from this incredible Psalm - *"Your decrees are perfect; they are entirely worthy of our trust."* **Q: Do you believe that God's Word, the Bible, is perfect? Is it entirely worthy of our trust? Would you consider the Bible to be a perfect book of counsel for your life?**

5/31 - I love verse 130, which I used to have at the top of this blog in the NIV translation: *"The unfolding of your words gives light..."* **Q: Do you believe this is true? Does reading God's Word, the Bible, bring light into your life? If you**

**did not read God's Word would you be in darkness?**

**PROVERBS 15:11 - 16:13**

5/15 - Proverbs 15:11 today teaches us: *"Even the depths of Death and Destruction are known by the LORD. How much more does he know the human heart!"* Today's Proverb is a wonderful reminder that God not only knows us, he knows our very hearts! **Q: How is the state of your heart today? Does your heart belong to God?**

5/16 - Proverbs 15 verse 14 is so powerful - *"A wise person is hungry for truth, while the fool feeds on trash."* I will humbly submit that since YOU are going through the One Year Bible, you are a wise person who is hungry for truth! :) Well, really, I mean it. The Bible is the best place to find Truth. And trash? Well, interestingly I was having a conversation with 3 friends recently - 2 of whom participated in this One Year Bible with us last year - and we were discussing how each of us don't watch TV. We didn't quite use the word "trash" when discussing TV, but I think the term can fit... **Q: Can you imagine living your life feeding only on TV? Yikes... So, really, when you look at how you invest your time are you hungry and feeding on truth or perhaps are you feeding on some trash? Will you throw that trash away?**

5/17 - Proverbs 15 verses 16 & 17 today are so powerfully true - *"It is better to have little with fear for the LORD than to have great treasure with turmoil. A bowl of soup with someone you love is better than steak with someone you hate."* **Q: Do you agree with today's Proverb that it is better to have just a little and fear the Lord versus having much and much turmoil?**

5/18 - Proverbs 15 verse 19 today teaches us: *"A lazy person has trouble all through life; the path of the upright is easy!"* This is a great reminder that we should live our lives upright, intentionally, and not be afraid of a little hard work! **Q: Have you ever struggled with laziness? How did you overcome it and become diligent? Can Jesus help us overcome our laziness?**

5/19 - Wow. Proverbs 15 verse 21 is convicting to me - *"Foolishness brings joy to those who have no sense; a sensible person stays on the right path."* Sometimes in the past I got joy from foolishness... not a good sign! And yes, I noticed sometimes that when I was getting joy from foolishness I was no longer on the right path... I'd strayed off a bit... God brought me back and welcomed me back on the right path once I got my senses. I pray we can avoid foolishness and the fake joy that comes with it. There is a difference I believe between healthy rest & play - and foolishness. We should know better. **Q: How are you doing with discerning the difference between healthy rest & play and foolishness in your life today? Do you ever veer toward foolishness? Why do you suppose this happens? Is this healthy?**

5/20 - Today in Proverbs chapter 15 verse 22 we read - *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."* Wow. . . this verse really is convicting for me on a couple of levels. The first thought for me is God - and how often (or not often) do I pray to God for counsel on my plans for my life? Truthfully, not enough. I pray to God daily - but it's usually pretty brief. I believe God wants us to come to him often in prayer asking for guidance and counsel on our plans. Imagine that - with God as an adviser on our plans, do you think they might succeed?? :) Secondly, I think about community - other people. And I think about, first of all, am I in community? Am I in a community of people that I know well and that know me? And if so, am I consulting this community on my life plans? Am I allowing people I know and love to advise me on my life? Think this would be wise? **Q: How about you - do you pray often to God for counsel and leading in your life plans? Are you in community with others that you know well and that know you? And do you consult this community with your plans and ask for their advice?**

5/21 - Proverbs 15 verse 24 is a beautiful meditation - *"The path of the wise leads to life above; they leave the grave behind."* **Q: Are you on the path of the wise?**

5/22 - Okay, I'm going to go very topical here today with Proverbs 15 verse 27 - *"Dishonest money brings grief to the whole family, but those who hate bribes will live."* Has anyone seen the movie *Millions* by chance? It is definitely a feel good movie - with some interesting Christian themes (not all that I agree with how they portrayed in the movie - but overall good). I do recommend checking this film out. It really does this particular Proverb great justice. **Q: Do you agree with this Proverb? Have you ever seen it play out?**

5/23 - Proverbs 15 verse 30 today teaches us: *"A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones."* This is a great reminder to spread good cheer to others and to not hesitate in sharing good news with others whenever possible. It brings joy to the heart and health to the bones! **Q: How are you bringing good cheer to others in**

**your life these days? How and when do you share good news with others? How can we bring joy to the heart of others?**

5/24 - Proverbs 15 verse 32 I think is one great reason for us to be in community with others: *"If you reject criticism, you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you grow in understanding."* I think if we are not in community with others, we can avoid criticism. Which is just as good as rejecting criticism. But, if we are truly in community with others - and yes, community can and should be messy really - then we will inevitably be criticized at some point and in some way by those around us in community. But this is a good thing! We need to listen to correction from those around us. We need to grow in understanding. Let us live our lives in community! **Q: Are you in community? A community that will actually constructively criticize you from time to time? And will you listen to this criticism so that you might grow in understanding?**

5/25 - Wow... how powerful is Proverbs 15 verse 33 today? - *"Fear of the LORD teaches a person to be wise; humility precedes honor."* **Q: Do you believe this Proverb to be true? Does fear of God teach us to be wise? Why would humility precede honor?**

5/26 - Proverbs chapter 16 verse 3 is so very wise for each of us - *"Commit your work to the LORD, and then your plans will succeed."* **Q: Based on today's Proverb, do you commit your work to God? Do you pray about your work and pray that it will be pleasing to God? Do you pray for others at your work? Do you pray for specific projects and meetings? Do you commit your work to God each and every day?**

5/27 - Proverbs chapter 16 verse 5 today teaches us: *"The LORD despises pride; be assured that the proud will be punished."* This Proverb reminds me of a talk I recently heard by [Jim Collins](#), author of Good to Great. I am a huge fan of Jim Collins work and had the good fortune to hear him talk about his recent monograph titled ["Good to Great and the Social Sectors"](#), which I HIGHLY recommend to anyone who works in full time ministry or for a nonprofit - or even anyone who volunteers for either. It's only 42 pages long, but packed with incredible incredible insights. (secular business insights - but great stuff) Anyhow, Jim Collins wrapped up his talk with something that reminded me of this Proverb. He said something along the lines of, "As we go about our work and move our nonprofits/ministries from good to great, let us never fall into the trap of thinking that we've arrived. Let us not fall into the trap of ever thinking that we are great." **Q: Have you ever fallen into the trap of thinking you are great? Also, what verses or insights stand out to you in today's readings?**

5/28 - Proverbs 16 verse 7 is interesting today - *"When the ways of people please the LORD, he makes even their enemies live at peace with them."* Do you believe this to be true? I do... And I think I've seen this in action in my own life very recently. Sometimes I think we can get so worried about our perceived enemies or whatever else - when really all we should be focusing on is our relationship with God. And this other stuff will work itself out. It's secondary. Our relationship with God is primary. **Q: Is this true in your life today? Has God ever given you peace with your "enemies"?**

5/29 - Proverbs 16 verse 9 is one of those seemingly simple Proverbs, that I think has a lot more depth to it than first glance: *"We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps."* **Q: Do you think this is true? We make our plans - but God determines our steps. Do you see this to be true in your own life? Have you made plans before, but then seen your steps somehow be guided in perhaps a different direction - perhaps a more godly direction? And then do you realize that it was God determining your steps?** I have experienced this in my life - thankfully. I have made some interesting (i.e. bad) plans in my life in the past - and probably am still making some bad plans even today. But, I am trying to pray regularly to God to "lead me." I want God to determine my steps - and truly, I want God to determine my plans as well. But, if God's plan is not immediately clear for my life, I do believe he gives wisdom to discern direction - and then ultimately I believe God will determine our steps. Thank goodness!

5/30 - Proverbs 16 verse 11 is important for each of us to keep in mind in our daily work lives - *"The LORD demands fairness in every business deal; he sets the standard."* God cares about our work. He cares about our business deals. He knows if we are conducting our work fairly or not. If we are not fair in our business deals - if we are cheating our employer of our full and diligent work during our hours worked - then we are sinning. God sets the standard. Work fairly and honestly as if you were working for God as your boss. Because, truly, you are working for God in all that you do. No matter where you work. **Q: Do you believe that God cares about your work? Every single detail of your work?**

5/31 - Proverbs 16:13 today teaches us: *"The king is pleased with righteous lips; he loves those who speak honestly."* This Proverb reminds me of a worship song we sing in my church on occasion that goes: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight." Which, now that I type this I realize is Psalm 19:14. **Q: How are the words of your mouth these days? Are your lips righteous? Is speaking honestly pleasing to your King? Today, who is your King? Is your king yourself? Is your king Jesus?**

**Group discussions:**

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

**Each group is encouraged to close in prayer.**

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

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

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