

Notes & Group Questions from May 16-22 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

1 SAMUEL 18:5-2 SAMUEL 2:11

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=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?**

JOHN 8:31-12:50

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?**

PSALM 112:1-118:29

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 lets 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?**

PROVERBS 15:12-28

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?**

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.