

**Notes & Group Questions from June 13-19 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)**

**1 KINGS 11:1-21:29**

6/13 - Wow... things go south in today's readings big time for Solomon! Why? Simple. 1 Kings 11 verses 5 & 6 tell us: *"Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. Thus, Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's sight; he refused to follow the LORD completely, as his father, David, had done."* This is sad stuff to read. Solomon had a great life, great relationship with God and he plain and simple fumbled the ball. He knew God and knew he was not to worship other gods. And he did so anyway? Why? Well, yeah, maybe having 1,000 wives & concubines was a bit of a distraction - but I don't blame them per se. It was Solomon that decided to marry outside of Israel and it was Solomon that decided to have all those wives and concubines (and polygamy is not God's plan - God's plan since Adam & Eve was one man, one woman - not one man, many women). And it was Solomon that decided to worship other gods. He was running a strong race early on - but stumbled. Fumbled. This all reminds me of Paul's wisdom in 1 Corinthians 9 verses 25 through 27: *"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."* Paul wisely realized that even with all of his preaching to others, he still had to be diligent to make sure that he himself would not be disqualified! Incredible wisdom...

**Q: Think Solomon could have learned from these words of Paul? Think you and I can learn from these words of Paul? And can we learn not to repeat Solomon's mistakes? How are you running the race? Are you running in such a way as to get the prize?**

6/14 - Well, Jeroboam didn't last very long before worshipping other gods! Keep in mind Jeroboam's name as we continue to read through the book of Kings - you will continue to hear about "Jeroboam's sin" and "the sin Jeroboam caused Israel to commit" many times in our upcoming readings - even long after he is dead. Not a legacy one would want to leave behind... Interesting story about the man of God from Judah prophesying against the altar at Bethel. The man of God delivers his prophecy and then shuns Jeroboam's invite to go to his palace for food and a gift. The man of God appears very strong. And then later... he lets down his guard. And he falls prey to the lie of the old prophet. Now why on earth the old prophet decided to pursue the man of God and tell this lie is beyond me. If anyone has insights on this, please post up in the Comments below. I think the lesson here for us today is this - we cannot let down our guard when it comes to spiritual matters. I think sometimes we think we can - but we simply cannot! If we do let down our guard, then we often stumble. And thanks to God's grace we can recover from that stumble. But, there is always the dangerous risk that our stumble could be very severe, as it certainly was for the man of God in today's readings... **Q: Have you ever let your guard down and stumbled? How do you keep your guard up from the tricks and attacks of the flesh, the world or the Enemy?**

6/15 - Alright, now we are getting into the story of the Kings! I really like this portion of the Bible. I am fascinated by the back-and-forth stories and timelines of the Kings of Israel and the Kings of Judah. The one very unfortunate thing you will notice over and over are verses like 1 Kings 14 verse 22: *"During Rehoboam's reign, the people of Judah did what was evil in the LORD's sight, arousing his anger with their sin, for it was even worse than that of their ancestors."* Or verses like 1 Kings 15 verse 3: *"Abijam committed the same sins as his father before him, and his heart was not right with the LORD his God, as the heart of his ancestor David had been."* And we will read far too few verses like verse 11 as we read about the Kings of Judah and Israel: *"Asa did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, as his ancestor David had done."* I think what is interesting to note in all of these verses - and in the verses to come about future Kings we will read about - is that it really didn't much matter what the Kings "did" in their reigns. Their wars or their building of cities or whatever really didn't matter compared to did they sin against God or not? Did they lead Israel or Judah into sin or not? Did they love God or not? And I think this is the same for our lives today. God does not so much care what our careers are or what our social status is or how many friends or how much money we have. God cares whether we love Him with all of heart, mind, soul and strength. God cares whether we are sinning against Him or not. As Jesus tells us: *"seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all of these things will be yours as well."* So, yes, God ultimately does care about our lives and careers and friends and such too - but he first wants us to seek a right relationship with Him - and then everything else will flow from our relationship with God. Someone should have let some of these Kings of Israel and Judah know this! **Q: What can you and I learn from the story of the Kings of Judah & Israel? How are you leading others and yourself toward God or toward sin in your life today?**

6/16 - 1 Kings 15 verse 26 stood out to me right away today: *"But he did what was evil in the LORD's sight and followed the example of his father, continuing the sins of idolatry that Jeroboam had led Israel to commit."* The key word that stood out to me in this verse is "example." I think sometimes we can forget that every action we take is an example to others. We are either exemplifying godly behavior or ungodly behavior. Obviously Jeroboam exemplified ungodly behavior - and unfortunately, since he was king of Israel, his bad example had far reaching effects. Even though you or me aren't king of any land, I do believe that the examples we set have bigger impacts than we realize. Our kids, our parents, our siblings, our neighbors, our co-workers, the stranger on the street, the person at the coffee shop, are all watching what we do. How we behave. Who we are. Our very lives are examples to so many people each and every day. **Q: What type of example are you setting with your life? Do you realize that people are literally following your example each and every day?**

6/16 - 1 Kings 16 is quite the chapter full of drama! It's like a soap-opera. As I was reading this chapter, and in particular when Zimri was plotting to kill Elah, I was reminded of Macbeth's old quote - "Heavy is the head that wears the crown." Indeed very true in this chapter! Great readings in 1 Kings 17 today! We are introduced to the prophet Elijah! And what an introduction. I love the visual of Elijah being fed by ravens. Elijah was completely dependent on God for his food delivery via birds. **Q: How are you dependent on God for your food? For your life?**

6/17 - Wow! Great readings today in 1 Kings 18. This is an amazing chapter of the Bible, and one that I heard a wonderful sermon on a couple of years ago. This is strong stuff. One thing that kind of got me chuckling was the subtitle the New Living Translation puts at the top of this chapter - "The Contest on Mount Carmel"! For some reason this got my mind thinking of WWF Championship Wrestling... yes... strange place for my mind to wander I realize. :) But then, this imagery kind of stuck with me throughout the readings and I definitely think Elijah threw down a WWF level taunt in verse 27 when the prophets of Baal were not having any luck getting their fire started: *"About noontime Elijah began mocking them. "You'll have to shout louder," he scoffed, "for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or he is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or he is asleep and needs to be wakened!"* Perhaps he is relieving himself?? The prophet Elijah puts even Hulk Hogan's WWF taunt's to shame! :) Okay... in all seriousness... 1 Kings 18 is an amazing chapter. There were several verses that stood out to me. First was verses 17 and 18 when Ahab meets Elijah - *"So it's you, is it--Israel's troublemaker?" Ahab asked when he saw him. "I have made no trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "You and your family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the LORD and have worshiped the images of Baal instead."* I love Elijah's directness and boldness to Ahab. Ahab tries to go after Elijah and maybe intimidate him, since Ahab is King. And Elijah does not back down one iota - he tells Ahab exactly why Ahab is the troublemaker. I love that. **Q: I wonder about our lives today. If someone comes after us and maybe attacks our faith or integrity falsely in some way, will we immediately stand up for our faith like Elijah did to King Ahab?**

6/17 - Verses 20 & 21 are powerful - *"So Ahab summoned all the people and the prophets to Mount Carmel. Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How long are you going to waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent."* **Q: What a great question - and one that we may need to ask ourselves - "How long are you going to waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him!" Are we wavering at all in our commitment to God? Are we being silent like the people were when Elijah asked this question? Let us not waver between two opinions... If the Lord is God, are you following him? Wholeheartedly?**

6/18 - Great chapter today! We are introduced to Elisha, who will be mentored by Elijah to succeed him as a prophet at the end of First Kings 19 today. However, before we get to Elisha, we read about Elijah being very "dejected" in the desert to say the least. Some commentaries on this early portion of chapter 19 are not super-kind to Elijah for heading to the desert. Commentaries I think wisely suggest that verses 9 & 13 demonstrate God trying to gently let Elijah know he's off course and feeling too sorry for himself, when asked twice in these verses: *"What are you doing here, Elijah?"* This kind of reminded me of Jonah fleeing from God's will on the boat. (which we'll read about later this year). And this kind of reminded me of me - and maybe you too. :) **Q: Have you ever had that nagging question enter your heart or mind when you suddenly realize that you are off course from God's will in your life? That question of: "What are you doing here??"** I know I have... Praise God when we are actually able to hear and understand that question and get out of the desert and back to life and back to loving this hurting world!

6/18 - Today in 1 Kings 19 verses 11 through 14 we read about how God appears to Elijah in a way that he was not expecting - *"Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the*

LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" The interesting thing to note about these verses is that Elijah was expecting or hoping God would appear in judgment to the Israelites in a windstorm, earthquake or fire. But God did not appear in any of these forms. Instead, God comes to Elijah in a simple gentle whisper. A gentle whisper. **Q: And I wonder about us in our lives today as well – do we often expect God to move mountains or to really show himself to us in big bold ways? When, perhaps, God may be speaking to you or me right now, but we're missing it? Why?** Well, is it possible that God is speaking to you right now with a simple gentle whisper? Is it possible that you have built up so many distractions or duties or activities or worries in your life that you cannot hear God's gentle whisper? I know that I have been in this place too many times – I've gotten myself so busy looking for God in all the wrong places. And then finally I will slow myself down for just long enough to hear God speaking to my heart in a gentle whisper! A gentle whisper that I am sure was there all along. . . but I was looking for God in the windstorm and earthquake and fires of life. When instead I should have simply slowed down and listened for God's gentle whisper. **Will you slow down long enough to listen for God's gentle whisper for you? Do you believe that God can speak to you in a simple gentle whisper this very moment?**

6/19 - In 1 Kings 20 today we read about King Ahab's battles with King Ben-hadad of Aram. Verse 11 today was sharp! *"The king of Israel sent back this answer: "A warrior still dressing for battle should not boast like a warrior who has already won.""* Not a bad little saying from Ahab to Ben-hadad! Sounds sort of like a Proverb. Actually, this really sounds like our modern day saying of: "Don't count your chickens before they hatch!" :) Alas, even though King Ahab was given victories by God's grace in today's readings, he goofs things up by letting King Ben-hadad of Aram go free. Then, as we get into First Kings chapter 21 today, things go from bad to worse for Ahab in terms of his relationship with God. Chapter 21 is a sad story of Naboth and his vineyard... **Q: Would it be safe to say that King Ahab was coveting Naboth's vineyard? Would Ahab be breaking a commandment in the Mosaic Law here...? Have you ever struggled with coveting?**

6/19 - I couldn't quite remember why Jezebel was cast in such a bad light in our readings a few days ago. Today I remember why... It is great to see Elijah show up on the scene and say to Ahab in verse 20 - *"I have come because you have sold yourself to what is evil in the LORD's sight."* How sad. **Do you see people today still selling themselves to what is evil in God's sight?**

#### **ACTS 9:1-13:15**

6/13 - Big readings today! Saul is converted to Christianity by Jesus himself! I think this is the most powerful conversion story in all of the Bible! **Q: In your life, what was your conversion story? Do you mind sharing your testimony here with others? Perhaps it may not be as dramatic as Saul/Paul's story, but do you think it is just as special in God's eyes?**

6/13 - As I was reading Acts chapter 9 today, I thought more about Ananias than I have before. Can you imagine being Ananias and being asked to go find Saul of Tarsus? Ananias demonstrated amazing faith in today's readings. God's words to Ananias about Saul in verses 15 & 16 are powerful - and as we now know, so very true: *"But the Lord said, "Go and do what I say. For Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for me.""* Great stuff... **Q: In your life, who might God be calling you to go visit - like he called Ananias to visit? Is there someone who is waiting for you to visit them, lay hands on them, and open up their hearts to receive the Holy Spirit?**

6/14 - Wow. Something about Acts chapter 9 verse 31 really stood out to me as we read about the early church today: *"The believers were walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit."* Read this verse again. Whaddya think? The believers of the early church were walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. I don't know about you, but I want to walk like that! I love that dichotomy - that balance - of walking in fear and comfort. No - don't get me wrong - I'm not talking about a fraidy-cat type of fear. But I am talking about a healthy / respectful fear - I mean, just look at the image above again of the lion and the man of God. I don't mean to bag on the man of God by any means, but I think it is safe to say that he was walking in the "fear of the Lord" when he shunned Jeroboam's invite, but then he may have not been walking in the "fear of the Lord" when accepted the old prophet's lie. **Q: And, like the old prophet in today's Kings readings, do you think that people will lie to you and me today? Will the Enemy, the Destroyer, seek to lie to us? If so, do you think there is value in walking in the "fear of the Lord" today?** While - at the same time walking in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. There is something about the wisdom of this verse in Acts today that I really really like. This may be one of those verses to really meditate upon. I think there is so

much value in this verse for our lives... **Today - are you walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit?**

6/15 - I love it! Almost every time we see an angel visit someone the visited person is panic stricken by the angel! :) Verse 4 today - *"Cornelius stared at him in terror. "What is it, sir?" he asked the angel."* Seriously, it's pretty consistent that people in the Bible get freaked out by angelic visitors. Probably because it's a pretty rare thing. **Q: Don't you think you'd get freaked out / scared if an angel visited you?** I am pretty sure I would. Maybe that's why angels only show up in our human world visuals when something big needs to happen. Something big happens in today's (and tomorrow's) readings with Cornelius and Peter. **Have you ever had any spiritual experiences that have freaked you out? (positive or negative)**

6/15 - Before we get to the big thing that happens today with Peter, check the remainder of verse 4: *"And the angel replied, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have not gone unnoticed by God!"* Hmm... **Q: Think God pays attention when we give gifts to the poor? Have you found a consistent way to give gifts to the poor?** (If not, might I suggest one avenue? World Vision. I know they do amazing work caring for and creating self-sufficiency for the poorest of the poor worldwide. I've been sponsoring children with them for the past 7 years and volunteering with them the past three years. One very powerful thing you can do with World Vision - in addition to sponsoring a child, which I think is the most impactful - is that you can literally buy things like a goat or a cow or fruit trees for the poorest of the poor worldwide. And you can buy these things for someone you know, in their honor, as a gift. Really. So, next time you are struggling with what to buy the person who has plenty of stuff a wedding gift or a birthday gift or whatever, buy a goat in their honor at World Vision! It's a beautiful thing. All you'd ever want to know about the life-changing opportunity of sponsoring a child through World Vision is at this link - [www.WorldVision.org](http://www.WorldVision.org) - and click on [Gift Catalog link](#) for all the details on buying goats and cow and fruit trees. Thanks for considering.)

6/15 - Okay, back to today's readings and the big happenings. I think Tyndale's One Year Bible Companion answers the question well of "What was the meaning of the vision Peter saw?" as follows: "According to Jewish law, certain foods were forbidden to be eaten ([see Leviticus 11](#)). The food laws made it difficult for Jews to eat with Gentiles without risking defilement. In fact, the Gentiles themselves were often seen as 'unclean.' Peter's vision meant that he should not look upon the Gentiles as inferior people whom God would not redeem. Before having the vision, Peter would have thought that a Roman officer could not accept Christ. Afterward, he understood that it was his responsibility to go with the messengers into a Gentile home and tell Cornelius the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ."

6/16 - Acts 10 verses 25 & 26 stood out to me today - *"As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell to the floor before him in worship. But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human being like you!"* This reminds me that this type of stuff can still happen today. I am afraid that sometimes we can end up worshiping people today, instead of worshiping God. And I'm afraid that this can oftentimes happen in the context of our churches. I have to say that I have seen what almost looks like worship of Pastors at churches. And that ain't a good thing... Pastors are human beings just like us! Yes, they are called to a very high standard in Paul's letter to Timothy, which we'll read later this year. But Pastors are not God. They are not divine. They should not be worshiped. Yes, they can help lead us in worship of God in great ways and with great messages. But let us make sure we are directing our worship at the true Rock and Light and Author of All who will never fail us and never let us down - God. So, stand up before your pastor. Pastors are humans just like us... **Q: Why do you think we sometimes place our pastors on pedestals? Have you ever made this mistake?**

6/16 - Peter's words in verses 34 - 36 are so powerful and are a huge turning point in the Gospel beginning to be preached to the Gentiles (non-Jews) - *"I see very clearly that God doesn't show partiality. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. I'm sure you have heard about the Good News for the people of Israel--that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all."* **Q: Do you believe that God does not show partiality? Do you believe that in every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right? Do you believe there is peace with God through Jesus? Do you know this peace?**

6/17 - I love how Peter answers his "critics" in Acts chapter 11 today. He simply tells them the story of what happened. And through this plain and simple act of telling his story truthfully we get to verse 18 - *"When the others heard this, all their objections were answered and they began praising God. They said, "God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of turning from sin and receiving eternal life."* **Q: And this makes me wonder about our lives today. How do we answer our "critics" when it comes to our faith? Is it possible that we can answer our critics simply by telling our story? Just like Peter simply answered his critics with his story? Is it possible that our story of how God reached out and changed our lives could be very effective in winning hearts and minds for Jesus? I think**

sometimes we underestimate the power of simply telling our story. It is our story - and after we tell it, how can anyone really criticize it? Or argue with it? It is our story. Let us tell it. And let us tell our story often and with great love. I believe God can work wonders when we simply tell our stories...

6/18 - There is a lot going on in today's Acts readings as Peter is freed from jail by an angel! I love verse 5 in this chapter as Peter was put in jail - *"But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him."* **Q: Who are you praying for very earnestly these days? Do you think that prayer changes things? How is your prayer life this very day?**

6/19 - Wow. It is fun to read about Paul's first missionary journey! A very cool thing to note about today's readings is that Paul started his missionary journey not after an extensive planning session / retreat / etc. (all our modern day stuff of what we have to do before embarking on something...) No! Paul started his missionary journey after a time of worship & fasting and being filled with the Holy Spirit! The Spirit moved and thus Paul moved! It was that simple. **Q: Think we can learn something from this in our lives today? Are you listening to the Spirit's prompting in your life today? What is the Spirit prompting you to do? Will you do it?** Check out Acts 13 verses 2 and 3 that show all it took for Paul to begin his missionary journey: *"One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work I have for them." So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way."*

#### **PSALM 131:1-137:9**

6/13 - Psalm 131 verse 2 is a beautiful reflection! *"But I have stilled and quieted myself, just as a small child is quiet with its mother. Yes, like a small child is my soul within me."* What a great reflection and reminder to take 1 day a week as a Sabbath day of rest. A day to still and quiet yourself. Just like a small child is with its mother. **Q: Have you been still and quieted yourself recently? Why would David, the Psalmist, write about this? Why would this be a good thing to do?**

6/14 - Psalm 132 is a fantastic psalm of the King David era! It is thought that this Psalm may have been written for the dedication of the temple or it may have been used in a coronation ceremony. Verses 4 & 5 stood out to me today as demonstrating David's dedication to God - *"I will not let my eyes sleep nor close my eyelids in slumber until I find a place to build a house for the LORD, a sanctuary for the Mighty One of Israel."* **Q: What in your life is keeping you awake at night? Is it something of God's will? Or perhaps something worldly (not of God's will)? Will you pursue God's will in your life, and leave worldly things behind you? Will you pursue building "a sanctuary for God" in your life above all else?**

6/15 - Psalm 133 is a great short Davidic Psalm about harmony! Verse 1 sets the pace of this psalm nicely: *"How wonderful it is, how pleasant, when brothers live together in harmony!"* **Q: Do you consistently seek harmony in your interactions with others? Do you pray for peace?**

6/16 - Psalm 134 is a great little Psalm! This Psalm is basically taking place as worshippers are leaving the Temple in Jerusalem for the night - and in the first two verses the Worshippers are speaking to the Levites (priests) in the temple - giving blessings to the Levites and asking them to bless God overnight. Then, in the third verse the Levites give a departing blessing to the worshippers as they leave the temple: *"May the LORD, who made heaven and earth, bless you from Jerusalem."* And that is certainly my prayer for each of you reading this - May God bless you! **Q: Does your church have closing benedictions or blessings, at the end of services? How does this impact you?**

6/17 - Today in Psalm 135 verse 3 we will read this very simple, yet profound verse - *"Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant."* The words I want to focus in on here are "the Lord is good." **Q: Do you believe this to be true? Do you really - in your heart - believe that God is good?** I think this is important for us to really meditate upon. I'm afraid sometimes we get into our minds that maybe God is not always good. Maybe we start to think that God is out to get us. Or out to trick us. Really isn't looking out for us. Doesn't really like us. Doesn't really love us. These are all of course lies that come into our mind from the Enemy, the Destroyer. God is obviously good. So good. All of the time. And maybe sometimes we really need to remind ourselves of this. Even in the midst of challenges and struggles and addictions and hardships - God is good. God is there with us. God is leading us - and maybe even taking us through a hardship to bring us to the Promised Land on the other side. Our human minds will often not understand God's ways. But, I think for us to always remember that God is good is so important for our continuing growth in our relationship with God. **So, again, do you believe the words of this Psalmist? Do you believe that God is good?**

6/18 - Psalm 136 is a liturgy of Praise to God as Creator and Redeemer. A Levitical priest singer likely led the recital, while either worshippers or a Levitical choir responded with the refrain. Fun Bible factoid here - the response "His love endures forever" is repeated 26 times in this Psalm, which is the numerical value of God's name "Yahweh" - back when Hebrew letters were also used as numbers. A lot of intricacies went into the Psalms... some of which do get lost in translation from Hebrew to English. Below is an image of the Hebrew letters yud, hey, vav, hey -- often depicted in English as YHWH or Yahweh -- spelling the name of God.

6/19 - Psalm 137 is a Psalm reflecting upon the Israelites exile in Babylon and about how much Jerusalem was missed. We also read about a call to punish Edom for their rejoicing in the fall of Jerusalem. Later this year we will read prophecies against Edom in the book of the prophet Obadiah. Verses 8 & 9 read: *"O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."* I realize that verses 8 & 9 in this Psalm may be troubling. I found a couple of links with essays / thoughts on this verse. I'll need to reflect on these - and study further - to see if I agree or disagree w/ what these are saying:

[http://www.learnthebible.org/q\\_a\\_dashing\\_little\\_ones\\_against\\_stones.htm](http://www.learnthebible.org/q_a_dashing_little_ones_against_stones.htm)

<http://www.jimmcguiggan.com/nonbelievers2.asp?id=6>

<http://www.brftwitness.org/Articles/1986v21n4.htm>

### **PROVERBS 17:4-17:16**

6/13 - Proverbs 17 verse 5 is quite convicting for us to consider: *"Those who mock the poor insult their Maker; those who rejoice at the misfortune of others will be punished."* That is a powerful realization - if you mock the poor, you mock God. If you care for the poor, you care for God. I have a friend who met Mother Teresa many years back at her home for the sick & dying in Calcutta. And my friend when he met her was trying to tell her all the great stuff he was doing in his life and in his ministry. But, Mother Teresa really didn't care to hear about all his ministry stuff. All she said to him was "Do you want to meet Jesus? Do you want to meet Jesus?" And of course he said "Yes! Of course I do Mother Teresa." So, she led him by the hand down a hall and into a room where a man was on his deathbed. She sat my friend down at a chair by this man's bed. And she placed my friend's hands on this dying man's hands. And she said, "Now you will meet Jesus." And she left the room... and left him in the room with the dying man for about 30 minutes. And you know what - my friend met Jesus that day in a way he had never done so before. **Q: So, how about you. Do you want to meet Jesus? If you've already met Jesus, when and where did you first meet Him?**

6/14 - Proverbs 17 verse 6 is an amazing Proverb today: *"Grandchildren are the crowning glory of the aged; parents are the pride of their children."* The obvious slam-dunk commentary is the grandchildren portion - and I've got an image below for you on that one. But I really want to camp out on "parents are the pride of their children." This is beautiful! You'd think it would go the other way around - and certainly it works the other way around nicely: Kids are the pride of their parents. But parents being the pride of their children - this is great! (and very reminiscent of the Commandment to honor your father and mother) And something each of us should really meditate upon and remember as our parents get older. They are going to need us to care for them. And they should be our pride! **Q: How are your grandchildren or parents your glory or pride? Why do you think the Bible places so much emphasis on the importance of family in our lives? Do you agree with the Bible?**

6/15 - Proverbs 17 verse 7 teaches us today: *"Eloquent words are not fitting for a fool; even less are lies fitting for a ruler."* This is a great reminder, once again, to not lie. One thing I've noticed that people do a lot these days is exaggerate... and I gotta say it makes me uncomfortable. Exaggerating feels like a lie to me. Why exaggerate? Why not just tell it like it is. I mean, I think it's okay to encourage or market or get excited about things truthfully. But, why exaggerate? Particularly when it comes to factual numbers... why exaggerate those? **Q: How about you - do you exaggerate? Think this might be a very close cousin to a lie? If so, can you focus on just telling things straight, like they are?**

6/16 - Wow. Proverbs 17 verse 9 is a challenging one for me today - *"Disregarding another person's faults preserves love; telling about them separates close friends."* I get the wisdom of it initially. Makes sense. Makes me think about a marriage relationship really... :) **Q: But, what about speaking the truth in love? Isn't there is a time and place to let folks know about something that is maybe a major issue that needs some attention?** If someone is doing something wrong that is harming them or others around them, shouldn't we speak up? I know there is a fine line here... I need to meditate on this Proverb a bit more... (This is the beauty of the Bible! We will not understand every single verse every single time. Could take years! The Bible's got depth, that is for sure. I am glad you are on this journey into the

depths of the Bible with me this year.) **What are your thoughts on this Proverb? When do we close our mouth to preserve love and when do we not close it?**

6/17 - Yikes... Proverbs 17 verse 13 is no joke - *"If you repay evil for good, evil will never leave your house."* Let us be diligent and prayerful to make sure we never repay evil for good... **Q: Have you ever seen this wisdom of this Proverb in your life or lives around you?**

6/18 - Proverbs chapter 17 verse 14 today is a great reminder that the best way to end a quarrel is to stop it before it starts! *"Beginning a quarrel is like opening a floodgate, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out."* Once the quarrel starts, the waters can quickly flow out of control like a flood. **Q: Is there a simmering matter in your life that you need to address quickly and head-on before it breaks out into a quarrel? Before the floodgate opens?**

6/19 - Proverb 17 verse 16 is interesting to consider: *"It is senseless to pay tuition to educate a fool who has no heart for wisdom."* This is a great question for each of us to ask ourselves. **Q: Today in your life - do you have a heart for wisdom? What type of "tuition" are you paying to gain wisdom / to be educated? Are you paying the "tuition" of time invested in studying the Bible each day?**

#### **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](http://www.OneYearBibleBlog.com) this next week for daily commentary and questions for reflection.**