

Notes & Group Questions from July 25 - 31 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

**2 CHRONICLES 14:1-29:36**

7/25 - Today in 2 Chronicles chapter 14 we read about the early year's of King Asa's reign, including his incredible prayer to God in verse 11! *"Then Asa cried out to the LORD his God, "O LORD, no one but you can help the powerless against the mighty! Help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in you alone. It is in your name that we have come against this vast horde. O LORD, you are our God; do not let mere men prevail against you!"* Unfortunately by the end of our readings today, in chapter 16, we read about Asa falling away from God and relying on a foreign king and physicians without any prayer for healing from God. He replaced God in his life with mere men. **Q: I wonder how often we do this in our lives today? Can you think of any times in your life where you have relied on people in the place of relying on God? How did that work out?** I do think we can rely on people certainly - if we are also relying on God more so and if God is in the midst of the relationship with the people we are relying on. I think all would have gone well with King Asa in his later years if he had only been taught this motto that we teach our kids today: "Be a FROG!" :) Fully Rely On God! **What about you in your life today? Are you a FROG?** :) Let us all be FROG's!

7/26 - Today in 2 Chronicles 18, King Ahab of Israel is not happy about the Arameans occupying Ramoth-gilead! Unfortunately for King Jehoshaphat of Judah, he entered into a political alliance with Ahab by having his son marry Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. This basically bound him into going into battle with Ahab - but even worse, as we'll read in the coming day's readings, Ahab's daughter Athaliah nearly kills all of the descendants of David in Judah.... more on this sad drama is coming up in chapter 22. A good location-profile of Ramoth-gilead is [at this link](#). King Jehoshaphat of Judah wisely suggests that they should consult God before going into battle against the Arameans. At which time King Ahab of Israel trots out his 400 yes-men "prophets" who say they should definitely go to war and that they will be victorious! I love Jehoshaphat's reaction to these 400 yes-men in verse 6 - *"But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the LORD around, too? I would like to ask him the same question.""* Ahab's reaction in verse 7 is quite telling... *"There is still one prophet of the LORD, but I hate him. He never prophesies anything but bad news for me! His name is Micaiah son of Imlah."* This verse really stands out for me in a big way in our world today. I wonder if sometimes we - you and me - look for supposed "prophets" of the Lord that are yes-people to our particular likings - instead of looking for Truth. Meaning... and I'm just putting this out there, so bear with me. **Q: Do we sometimes maybe even decide to attend a particular church because it tells us basically what we want to hear?** It keeps us in our comfortable place... we get yes-messages... **When, instead, should we be okay with attending a church that will give us some challenging and convicting messages on occasion?** Biblical messages mind you - which surely can be challenging to our modern ears at times. I heard somewhere once before that church should be a place that "comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable." I like that... Now, don't get me wrong. I am not saying we need to be in super-strict churches per se. I just think we should really watch for churches that are giving a yes-message all the time to our particular likings verses churches that teach the Truth. I don't think church is the only area of where we might default to looking for yes-messages. I think this can happen in books we read, TV we watch, or even with friends or with work. **Are we listening to 400 yes-people in our lives or are we okay with 1 Micaiah coming in and sharing a perceived "bad-news" message?** (which may ultimately be very good news if we'll just listen to it... if Ahab had really listened to Micaiah's message in today's readings, think he still would have rushed out to battle?)

7/27 - Today in Second Chronicles chapter 19 verse 7 we read: *"Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you."* It is important to realize that this verse was said not as a curse upon someone, but really as a blessing and perhaps a warning. Jehoshaphat says these words to judges he is appointing. **Q: Why would Jehoshaphat say these words to judges? Why should judges have the fear of the Lord upon them? What is the fear of the Lord?** I believe it is a healthy and strong sense of God's presence – a sense so strong that it would prevent these judges from administering any injustices. Because they know God is in the room. **How about for you and me in our lives today? What if I were to say to you right now – "Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you."? Would you accept this as a blessing? Or would you think of this as some sort of curse? Do you want the fear of the Lord to be upon you? Why or why not? Right now in your life – is the fear of the Lord upon you? Will you consider praying for the fear of the Lord to be upon you?**

7/29 - Today in Second Chronicles 24 verse 1 we read - *"Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty years."* This is quite a young age to be crowned king! **Q: Can you imagine such a young**

**king running your country?** Did you notice in today's readings that Joash followed God in his early years, when Jehoiada the priest was alive (verses 1-16), and then turned to evil and idolatry after Jehoiada's death (verses 17-27)? One of the saddest parts was Joash's murder of Jehoiada's grandson Zechariah in verse 20. (Note that the text says son, but scholars believe Jehoiada's son was Berekiah, and Zechariah was Berekiah's son - Biblical genealogies sometimes skip a generation.) Jesus Himself references the atrocity of this murder when facing His own murderers in Matthew 23:35! This quote of Jesus' comes just after delivering his seven woes in [Matthew 23](#): *"And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar."* **Like Joash, have you seen people start their lives strong in their faith, and then fade away from their faith as they grow older? Why do you think this happens?**

7/30 - Today in Second Chronicles chapter 26 we read about Uzziah ruling in Judah - along with his sin and punishment. Uzziah, like other kings of Judah we've read about recently honored God in his early years, but then fell away in his later years. Sad! I pray that none of us fall into the trap of honoring God now and then dishonoring him later in our lives. **How do you suppose we can avoid this trap?** I think one of the key things is to read the Bible daily. But I also am realizing more and more that we need to be in community with other Christians consistently. Yes, church every weekend. But more than that - small groups, Bible studies, accountability groups, etc. We need to encourage and challenge each other in community to continue running our race strong! **Q: Are you in consistent community with other Christians in your life today? If not, will you consider joining a small group or Bible study at your church? If you're not going to church, will you start going to church this weekend? Do you see the danger of not being in community with other Christians, and ending up perhaps like some of the kings of Judah who dishonored God later in their lives?** Please, please, please - be in a consistent community with other Christians!

7/31 - We are re-introduced to King Hezekiah of Judah in today's readings! The quantity of the Chronicler's writings about the reign of Hezekiah is second only to the reigns of David & Solomon. We'll be reading about Hezekiah again in the coming days. Reading about Hezekiah today was such a breath of fresh air after the atrocities of King Ahaz in yesterday's readings... Hezekiah is a hero! He re-opens the Temple! He reinstitutes the sacrifices to God! You'll recall from our readings in Second Kings chapter 18 verses 5 through 7 we got an overview of who Hezekiah was - *"Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was never another king like him in the land of Judah, either before or after his time. He remained faithful to the LORD in everything, and he carefully obeyed all the commands the LORD had given Moses. So the LORD was with him, and Hezekiah was successful in everything he did."* **Q: Do you think it matters if our government leaders trust in God and carefully obey the LORD's commands?**

#### **ROMANS 9:1-14:23**

7/25 - Powerful readings from Paul today in Romans chapter 9! In verse 5 we read one of the clearest statements in the New Testament about the deity of Jesus! *"Their ancestors were great people of God, and Christ himself was a Jew as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen."* Paul says here that Jesus is God! **Q: So, what say you? Is Jesus God?**

7/25 - A portion of verse 6 made me think about Christians today: *"Not everyone born into a Jewish family is truly a Jew!"* **Do you think that everyone born into a Christian family today is truly a Christian?** I know our various denominations will have various degrees / times / ceremonies that will mark becoming a Christian. But I think many of us would agree that just because you are born into a Christian family doesn't mean that you are necessarily Christian. Meaning, I think there has to come a time in each of our lives where we consciously believe in faith that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. We need to own our faith at some point - not just be a "cultural" Christian because that's what our family and friends are. I believe at some point in our life we need to enter into relationship with God through his son Jesus through faith. Let us pray for our friends and family members who are perhaps currently "cultural" Christians. Let us pray that they will enter into a loving and growing relationship with God through Jesus. Side note - I was prayed into the Kingdom by some amazing friends! (thanks Chad & Becky & Becky & others!) It is true. Prayer for your friends and family is powerful. Please pray for them tonight... **Q: Who are you praying for today to become a Christian?**

7/26 - In Romans chapter 10 verse 1 today, Paul reminded me of the modern-day ministry called [Jews for Jesus](#): *"Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved."* Paul was certainly a Jew for Jesus! **Q: How about you - are you a Gentile for Jesus? Or perhaps you are also a Jew for Jesus? Whoever you are - are you for Jesus?**

7/26 - Without a doubt, Romans chapter 10 verses 9 & 10 are the most important verses some of us will read this year and really take to heart: *"For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved."* **Q: Do you believe these verses to be true? Have you prayed these verses with your heart and your mouth to God? If not, will you today?**

7/27 - Romans 10 verses 14 & 15 are a powerful call to share the Gospel with a world that so desperately needs it! *"But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*" **Q: Are you bringing good news to people in your life? Do you realize that you do not necessarily need to go abroad to share the Gospel with people who really have probably never heard it before? Yeah, sure, maybe in our hometowns people have heard the name Jesus. But have they really heard about the love and life and forgiveness and healing that Jesus offers? Do they really know who Jesus truly is? How will they know unless you tell them? Will you utilize the gift of your beautiful feet?**

7/28 - Paul bursts out in some great praise and worship of God today in Romans 11 verses 33 through 36: *"Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods! For who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who knows enough to be his counselor? And who could ever give him so much that he would have to pay it back? For everything comes from him; everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory. To him be glory evermore. Amen."* Great stuff! I love that second to last full sentence that tells us that everything is intended for God's glory. So true. And yet so easy for us to forget. You my friend are intended for God's glory! It is a beautiful truth to consider. **Q: Are you living your life fully for God's glory? Are there any areas of your life that would not be seen as giving glory to God? Will you let those un-glorious aspects of your life go? Will you walk fully in the LIGHT of God's glory?**

7/29 - Wow! Could Romans chapter 12 be one of the most powerful chapters in the Bible?? I love this chapter... Please take a moment to re-read this chapter if you can. Verses 1 through 3 have been so powerful for me personally since the early days of my Christian walk - *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."* I really don't know what commentary I could add to these words of Paul's. I love the thought of our bodies being living sacrifices to God. (There is of course the old joke that the only problem with a living sacrifice is that it tends to crawl off the altar... :) And the warning to not conform any longer to the pattern of this world is so so so true.... and we all know it. But I find myself still falling prey to the pattern of this world. Its temptations do not cease. But! We can be transformed by the renewing of our minds to test and approve what God's will is. Through a loving and growing relationship with Jesus, we can overcome the temptations and the death this world will offer us all too frequently. **Q: In view of God's mercy, will you offer your body today as God as a living sacrifice? How will you do this?**

7/30 - Tyndale's One Year Bible Companion has a great overview of three historical interpretations of how Christians are to submit to the government per Paul's writings in Romans chapter 13 verse 1 today: "1. Some Christians believe the state is so corrupt that Christians should have as little to do with it as possible. 2. Others believe that God has given the state authority in certain areas and the church authority in others. Christians can be loyal to both and can work for either. They should not however confuse the two. 3. Still others believe that Christians have a responsibility to make the state better. They can do this politically by electing high-principled leaders. None of these 3 views advocate rebelling against or refusing to obey the government's laws or regulations unless those laws clearly require you to violate the moral standards revealed by God." Bible.org's commentary on this subject titled "**The Christian and Civil Government**" is [at this link](#). I lean toward a mix of #2 and #3 these days. I think there is much value in Christians paying attention to local and national and international governments, and getting involved. **Q: How are you involved in your local and national government?**

7/30 - How incredibly powerful are Paul's words in Romans 13 verses 8 through 10 - *"Pay all your debts, except the debt of love for others. You can never finish paying that! If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill all the requirements of God's law. For the commandments against adultery and murder and stealing and coveting--and any other commandment--are all summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to anyone, so love*

satisfies all of God's requirements." Wow... great stuff. Love satisfies all of God's requirements. **Q: Do you believe this to be true? What type of love do you think Paul is talking about here? A passive love? An active love? Who is the last person you paid the debt of love to? Who is the next person you will pay the debt of love to? Will you pay the debt of love to somebody in your life each and every day?**

7/31- Paul's writings in Roman's chapter 14 about the dangers of criticizing and judging others are powerful! I love verses 12 & 13: "Yes, each of us will have to give a personal account to God. So don't condemn each other anymore. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not put an obstacle in another Christian's path." Wow... that is something for each of us to consider. That we ourselves can actually put obstacles in another Christian's path toward God! **Q: Do you think that you have ever done this in your life?** I do think that I have. Never intentionally. But, when I have stopped loving and serving others and instead began judging and criticizing others, I do believe I have placed obstacles in other people's paths! Not to mention my own path! Let us pray that we are not obstacles to others by judging and criticizing...

#### **PSALM 19:1 - 24:10**

7/25 - Today we read Psalm 19, which is one of my favorite Psalms! In large part this Psalm is one of my favorites because one of my former pastors taught from this Psalm 3 a few years ago in such a powerful way. **Have you had this type of experience? Where you hear a sermon on a chapter of the Bible and then that chapter becomes one of your favorites?** I do hope that this One Year Bible experience will allow you to tune-in a little bit more whenever you hear your pastors or ministers or priests teaching you from the Bible in church. I know this is the case with me. Thanks to reading the Bible each day, I now have better context of what is being taught from the pulpit and it makes going to church a richer experience overall. I also now often catch some Bible verses in the worship songs or hymns we sing as well. And this adds a lot to my worship of God now through music. **Q: This year, as you go through the One Year Bible and as you go to church, are you tuning in to the sermons and the songs in church more than ever and looking for and appreciating how they tie in to the Bible?**

7/25 - Psalm 19 – I do encourage everyone to really read through and meditate on every verse in this Psalm of David and how this Psalm might be speaking to you this week. Please do take a few minutes to go through the Psalm twice if possible and really reflect upon it. You may even want to journal to God some thoughts or ideas or prayers that come to you through reading this Psalm. I find verse 14 in this Psalm to be so powerful – again in large part because one of my former pastors often sang a worship song that simply repeats this verse over and over again – and what a beautiful prayer it is for each of us to repeat over and over again as well: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." **Q: Are the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart pleasing in God's sight? Is God your Rock? Is God your Redeemer?**

7/26 - Psalm 20 is a prayer for a king as he goes out into battle - check out verses 1 through 5 again and you can imagine a group of people saying these words to the king. Maybe another way to read this Psalm, personally, is as a prayer for yourself as you go out into battle against a sin or a struggle in your life. And this verse 5 then is for you as you go into this battle: "May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory, flying banners to honor our God. May the LORD answer all your prayers." Amen! Let the banners fly soon in your life! **Q: What banners for the LORD are you flying in your life today?**

7/27 - Psalm 21 today follows up Psalm 20 from yesterday - yesterday's being a prayer for victory for the king as he goes out to battle - and today's being a psalm of praise for victories granted to the king. I like the credit given to God in verse 1: "How the king rejoices in your strength, O LORD! He shouts with joy because of your victory." **Q: The king is not rejoicing in his own strength. He is not claiming victory as his. He is giving credit to God! How about you in your life today? Do you give credit to God for the blessings and gifts he has given you? Do you shout for joy and rejoice simply because God is in your life?**

7/28 - Psalm 22 is an amazing Psalm. This Psalm is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. **Q: Re-read this Psalm again and see if you see parallels to Jesus' crucifixion?** There are a lot in this Psalm. I'll list a few - Psalm 22:1a was quoted by Jesus on the cross - "My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?" As we see in Matthew 27:46 - "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Psalm 22 Verse 8: ""Is this the one who relies on the LORD? Then let the LORD save him! If the LORD loves him so much, let the LORD rescue him!"" We see in similar fashion in Matthew 27:42-43: ""He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" Psalm 22

verses 16 & 17 make me want to cry... *"They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count every bone in my body." The piercing of the hands and feet of Jesus are apparent with how the crucifixion took place. And these Psalm 22 verses are similar to John 19:33-37: "But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced.""* And verse 18: *"They divide my clothes among themselves and throw dice for my garments."* Compare to John 19:23-24 - *"When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it.""* **Q: How does Psalm 22 stand out to you?**

7/29 - What's one good reason to go to church at all? Check out Psalm 22 verse 22: *"Then I will declare the wonder of your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among all your people."* Praising God with other brothers and sisters through worship, tithing, learning, serving and being in community in church is a great reason to go to church! To declare the wonder of God's name! To praise God among all his people. Wow... yes... this is church! **Q: Why do you go to church?**

7/30 - Psalm 23! What a Psalm!! This is the first Psalm for sure that I ever really read and was comforted by without a doubt. Psalm 23 is a profession of joyful trust in God as the good Shepherd-King by David. I like The Message's take on Psalm 23 [at this link](#). Bible.org has a wonderful commentary on Psalm 23 titled **"A Psalm that calms the soul"** [at this link](#). **Q: What has Psalm 23 meant to you throughout your life? What does it mean to you today? And for your future?**

7/31 - Psalm 24 is a beautiful Psalm! Check out this brief snippet of commentary on this Psalm from bible.org: *"The Israelites have returned from a battle with the Canaanites. They are proceeding up to the sanctuary on the holy mount to give praise to Yahweh for the great and mighty victory in battle, carrying with them the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of Yahweh's presence with them. As they approach the gate, they are met by the Levites who function as gatekeepers. It is their part to ask who may enter the sanctuary of the Lord; and it is the priests' part to answer with the stipulations from the Law. Whoever meets these qualifications may enter and fellowship with Yahweh... The psalm then concludes with the worshipers calling to the gates to make way for Yahweh to come in to His sanctuary, for why should the King of Glory stoop to go under a doorway?"* This quote is from, and there is much more commentary on Psalm 24, at bible.org [at this link](#). **Q: How has reading Psalms like this stood out to you this year? Do the Psalms lift your spirit toward the LORD?**

## **PROVERBS 20:1-12**

7/25 - Proverbs 20 verse 1 today reminds me of the need for and success of modern day [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) - *"Wine produces mockers; liquor leads to brawls. Whoever is led astray by drink cannot be wise."* I don't have personal experience with AA, but have heard very good things about it from several friends. I do love the AA Serenity Prayer - I think this prayer is a great prayer for all of us - *"God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference."* Amen. **Q: What is your relationship to alcohol? Do you think Christians should drink alcohol?**

7/26 - Proverbs chapter 20 verse 3 is such great wisdom: *"Avoiding a fight is a mark of honor; only fools insist on quarreling."* I once was a fool who insisted on quarreling with Tony back in about 3rd grade :) after either I beat him or he beat me in the 50 yard dash at Field Day. Tony kept trying to avoid the fight with me. But I kept on pressing it. And I got whapped! It was really a great learning experience for me. I have avoided fights ever since! Don't get me wrong. I don't think we are called to be submissive and let people walk all over us. I think we can confidently and strongly hold our ground on important issues - without fighting or quarrelling. **Q: How about you? Do you avoid fights? Do you realize this is a mark of honor? Or do you insist on quarrelling? Think this is a good idea...?**

7/27 - Proverbs 20 verse 6 definitely gives me something to think about: *"Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is really faithful?"* This is a challenging Proverb for me because I feel like I have many good friends. Many who are loyal. And some who even seem faithful. But... yet.... there are still times on occasion when these friends do let me down. Or I know for a fact I let them down on occasion. It's our human nature. Fortunately for us, long after this Proverb was written, we were given the most faithful friend we could ever dream up or imagine in Jesus. Jesus really

should be our best friend. I had a friend kind of shock me with this thought by continually referring to Jesus as his best friend at a lunch we had a few years ago. For some reason I was very comfortable with Jesus being my savior. But my friend? My best friend? Well, it was a new concept to me. And maybe this is a new concept to you. I do honestly believe Jesus wants to be our best friend. And he will undoubtedly be the one true and loyal and faithful friend we all can have - now and forever. **Q: So, is Jesus your best friend?**

7/28 - Proverbs 20 verse 7 today is a wonderful reminder that the way we live our lives today sets an example for children: *"The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children after them."* **Q: What type of example are you setting for children in your life? Are you walking with integrity? Do you believe children will be blessed after you because you walked with integrity?**

7/29 - Proverbs 20 verse 10 is convicting - *"The LORD despises double standards of every kind."* I am afraid that I often do have double standards in the way I live my own life. I am afraid perhaps we all do to a degree. We hold ourselves to one standard when we are at church and among our friends and maybe even typing on this blog... :) But, then, late at night or early in the morning or during the day perhaps we let this standard - this Christian standard - simply go. We become judgmental. We gossip. We complain. We lust. We give in to our old addictions. We fall prey to a double standard. Please don't ever forget that God calls us to the highest standard! And he sent us his Son Jesus to set us free from the bondage of sin from the bondage of double standards. Through faith in Jesus we are gifted with the Holy Spirit living within our very bodies, which is an amazing blessing to consider! God gives us everything that we need to live a life of high moral standards. **Q: Will we pray unceasingly to let our double standards go? Will we leave the double standards behind once and for all? Will we stop living our lives with two faces?**

7/30 - Today in Proverbs 20 verse 11 we read – *"Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right."* This is an interesting Proverb for me to meditate upon. I focus in on the word "actions" here. Basically this Proverb to me is saying that actions matter. Our actions don't save us or make us right with God, but they matter. Even children are known by their actions. **Do you think that you and I are known by our actions? If so, what are our actions saying to others? Is our conduct pure and right?** I have some friends who seem to think that actions do not matter – particularly once we are in relationship with Jesus. I get very nervous with this line of thinking. I think particularly once we are in a relationship with Jesus, we are called to follow Jesus and we are called to holiness. We are called to be saints. Yes, saints. Now, don't get me wrong – we will stumble. We will fall. We will not be perfect this side of heaven. Even after being in relationship with Jesus we will make mistakes. But, I believe we are called to live our lives such that we incrementally start to look more and more like God's own son, Jesus. I believe we are called to love like Jesus. Forgive like Jesus. Give like Jesus. And this list goes on – check out the Beatitudes in [Matthew 5](#) for a nice list of actions for us to emulate. So – even a child is known by his actions. **Q: What would people say about you based on your actions these days? Would they see that you are becoming more and more like Jesus with each passing day, week, month, and year? Do you think your actions matter?**

7/31 - Proverbs 20:12 today teaches us: *"Ears to hear and eyes to see--both are gifts from the LORD."* Amen! It is interesting that this Proverb doesn't mention our mouths to talk... Seems like this Proverb is really a good reminder that listening and seeing are amazing gifts. Gifts that allow us to listen to others and enjoy God's beautifully created world. And yes, I do believe our mouths are gifts too for communication to others. But it is interesting that we have 2 ears and 2 eyes, and just 1 mouth. **Q: Think there is a message in this math equation for us? :)**

#### **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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