

Notes & Group Questions from August 15-21 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

NEHEMIAH 9:22 - JOB 3:26

8/15 - Today in Nehemiah chapter 9 we wrap up the wonderful prayer of the Levites that began in yesterday's readings! This prayer is a fantastic overview of God's grace and discipline to the Israelites. Today in Nehemiah chapter 10 we read the vows of the people, including these in verses 30 & 31: *"We promise not to let our daughters marry the pagan people of the land, nor to let our sons marry their daughters. We further promise that if the people of the land should bring any merchandise or grain to be sold on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will refuse to buy it. And we promise not to do any work every seventh year and to cancel the debts owed to us by other Jews."* Related to the concept of the Sabbath in our modern world today, I recently came across a nice review of Bruce Ray's book titled "[Celebrating the Sabbath: Finding Rest in a Restless World](#)" at [this link](#). **Q: Has anyone read this book? Reviews? Anyone have any other good books about the Sabbath you can recommend? How are you doing on taking a Sabbath day of rest?**

8/16 - Today in Nehemiah chapter 11 we read about the people of Israel occupying Jerusalem - and not necessarily by their own choice! Lots had to be thrown to determine which 1 out of every 10 people in rural areas would move to Jerusalem. Verses 1 & 2 tell us: *"Now the leaders of the people were living in Jerusalem, the holy city, at this time. A tenth of the people from the other towns of Judah and Benjamin were chosen by sacred lots to live there, too, while the rest stayed where they were. And the people commended everyone who volunteered to resettle in Jerusalem."* I read an interesting commentary that speculated that some people did not want to move to Jerusalem from the countryside because it would mean they would have to more stringently follow God with their lives. This would be due to social pressures of living in Jerusalem and proximity to the Temple. **Q: And this made me wonder - are we like this in our lives today too? Maybe we go through periods of time where we don't go to church because it means we might have to actually start living our lives like Christians due to the community that church provides?** I am always worried when I get to points in my life where I don't feel like going to church. It is in those moments that I realize how desperately I need church - and yet how I'm trying to avoid going. I don't want to change some behavior. I don't want people to see me for who I really am. I don't want to be too close to the "Temple"... How about you. **If you're called to "move to Jerusalem" by God, will you move?** In the words of a famous Switchfoot song, "I dare you to move."

8/17 - We finish up the book of Nehemiah today! Esther is up tomorrow! Today in Nehemiah chapter 12 we read about the dedication of Jerusalem's Wall, which is awesome to read about. Verses 27 & 28 tell us - *"During the dedication of the new wall of Jerusalem, the Levites throughout the land were asked to come to Jerusalem to assist in the ceremonies. They were to take part in the joyous occasion with their songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, lyres, and harps. The singers were brought together from Jerusalem and its surrounding villages and from the villages of the Netophathites."* **Q: How does music enhance your worship experience these days?**

8/18 - Today we begin reading about Queen Esther! Hold on tight because Esther is an amazing book – and next week we launch into Job, which is incredible in its spiritual depth. We're entering some amazing spiritual territory of the Old Testament. Don't miss it!

~ Esther ~

Author: Unknown

Date: Fifth century B.C.

Content: The book of Esther deals with a momentous event that took place after the Persians had destroyed Babylon and while many Jews were still living in the land of their captivity. The story concerns a Jewess named Ester who had become the wife of the Persian King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I). An evil advisor to the king, named Haman, sought the destruction of the Jews in order to gain control of their wealth, but Esther tactfully intervened and saved her people from this fate. Haman was executed, and after some civil strife things quieted down once more. The remarkable deliverance of the Jews was celebrated by a feast named Purim and it remains to this day.

Theme: The providence and power of God are the central points of this book. God was protecting his people even in their captivity and was working all things together for their good. God's power is seen in the overthrow of Israel's enemies. It is important to note that God used human beings to accomplish his purpose here, rather than doing it directly himself. We must be ready at all times to do God's will when he so directs. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 9*)

Q: How has the book of Esther stood out to you over time? Has this been a meaningful book to you over the years? How so?

8/19 - Today in Esther chapter 4 we read about Mordecai persuading Queen Esther to help save the Jews from Haman's evil plot. In verse 14 we read these amazing words of Mordecai's to Esther: "*And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?*" [For such a time as this](#). Powerful words to consider. You'll recall similar words were used in the narrative of Joseph in Genesis – Joseph was sent ahead to Egypt by God to save his family from famine "for such a time as this." Esther was married to the Persian King for such a time as this. And I believe that you and I have been placed on this earth this very day for such a time as this. **Q: Do you believe it is true that you really have been placed on this earth by God for such a time as this? Do you believe that there is a definite purpose for your life that God has called you to? Do you realize that you have the choice – as Esther had the choice – to move forward with God's vision and plan for your life or to say no to God?** Our time on this life is short. We can live our lives in accordance with God's will and purpose for us or we can waste away our life with useless distractions. Trust me - the devil wants nothing more than to distract you from what God has called you to for such a time as this. **So, what say you? Will you live your life wholly and purposefully for God for such a time as this? Will you leave the distractions behind?**

8/20 - We wrap up the book of Esther today! Job begins tomorrow! Okay, somehow I forgot that the book of Esther ended with the Jewish holiday of Purim being instituted. A good FAQ from a Jewish website about Purim is [at this link](#). In doing a google image search on Purim I quickly realized that folks dress up for this celebratory Jewish holiday! There is also a device called the Purim "gragger", which is a noisemaker. When the Purim story is read aloud from the book of Esther everyone boos and shakes their graggers whenever Haman's name is mentioned! (I'm not kidding - it sounds like fun to me! :) More on Purim graggers, including how you can make your own, is [online here](#). Below is a picture of a gragger, and below that is a picture of a woman shaking a gragger at the sound of Haman's name being read during Purim! **Q: Have you ever celebrated Purim or any other Jewish holidays?**

8/21- Yesterday we wrapped up Esther and today we begin Job! We are jumping back in time from 5th century B.C. (Esther) to 10th century B.C. (Job).

~ Job ~

Author: Unknown

Date: Tenth century B.C.

Content: This long narrative poem deals with one of the deepest problems of man: How do we explain sin and suffering, if there exists a God powerful enough to do something about them? The book begins with the suffering of Job being given three sets of speeches by some friends of his: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, each of whom tries to explain Job's misery in a different way. A fourth man, Elihu, tries to summarize the situation, offering yet another explanation of why Job was suffering. Finally, the Lord himself speaks to Job, and Job recognizes that we do not so much need "answers" to life's problems, as we need God himself. Job is then healed and given material and spiritual blessings far beyond his former state.

Theme: The mystery that surrounds human existence and the need to trust in God runs throughout the book. Mankind simply does not have enough knowledge to explain why things happen the way they do. It is possible to rise above our limitations by faith in God, however, because God does know why everything happens and will work good for those who love him. We may thus learn the profound truth that when we have nothing left but God, God is enough. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" pp. 9-10*)

8/21 - Today Job has a very interesting chapter 1 discussion between God and Satan. **Do you believe in the existence of Satan? Demons? Evil?** In the introduction to the wonderful book, "[The Screwtape Letters](#)," C.S. Lewis writes: "There are two equal and opposite errors into which the human race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight." I'll be honest – in my early Christian walk, I did not really believe in the existence of Satan, demons, evil. I believed in God and Christ and Love, and thought that was enough – evil didn't need to exist in my universe. :) Unfortunately, I've heard another quote that: "Satan's greatest trick is to convince a person that Satan does not exist." I now could not agree more. If you don't believe in Satan or evil's existence then you are left open to subtle attacks, without even realizing it. God is so much more powerful than anything Satan can throw at you. But, keep in mind, Satan is throwing temptations at you. **Q: How do you combat the devil's temptations? Read [Ephesians chapter 6 verses 10-18 at this link](#). Do you believe in the existence of Satan? Demons? Evil?**

1 CORINTHIANS 9:19 - 14:17

8/15 - These are some of my favorite teachings of Paul's today in First Corinthians chapter 9 verses 24 through 27! *"Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. All athletes practice strict self-control. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I am not like a boxer who misses his punches. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified."* The amazing thing about these words is that they are timeless. Paul wrote these words nearly 2,000 years ago and they still ring so true today. We still run races today. We still have athletes. We still win prizes. We still have boxers. I think so often in our world today we hear people in business or other fields use sports analogies. Well, here is Paul using a sports analogy for faith! :) I love it. Please take a moment to re-read these verses above again. Meditate for a few moments on the words. **Q: What do they say to you? Do you believe you are in a race for an eternal prize? Do you want the eternal prize? Are you disciplining your very life with purpose in your every step? How are you running the race today? Are you running to win?**

8/15 - First Corinthians 10 today ends in verses 12 and 13 with some powerful words of warning and encouragement that each of us should always remember - particularly in our darkest hours - *"If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin. But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it."* **Q: Do you believe that you should always be careful to not fall into sin? Particularly if you feel you are "standing strong?" Do you realize that temptations will come into your life? But, most importantly, do you realize that God will show you a way out of the temptations, so you will not give into them? Will you pray fervently to God and Jesus to show you the way out when temptation comes your way?**

8/16 - Great great unselfish words from Paul today in First Corinthians 10 verses 31 through 33! *"Whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, you must do all for the glory of God. Don't give offense to Jews or Gentiles or the church of God. That is the plan I follow, too. I try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what I like or what is best for me, but what is best for them so they may be saved."* How powerful is that? Paul states that he doesn't just do what is best for him - what is most comfortable for him - but he does what is best for others so that they may be saved! Beautiful. I am afraid that all too often we get "comfortably numb" in our lives and basically end up looking out for our own needs and desires and wants - even if we love Jesus. We become a bit lazy in our Christianity. We need to remember that there is a world out there that is dying. Literally. Dying. They need the love, healing, grace, peace, and salvation of Jesus in their lives! We must accept some level of discomfort in our own lives so that others may be saved. **Q: How about you today? Are you allowing there to be some discomfort in your life so that others may be saved? Are you being discomfited by sacrificially giving to your church and to ministries that serve the poor? Are you being discomfited by volunteering on a very regular basis? Are you being discomfited by supporting a missionary? Are you comfortable with being discomfited so that others may be saved? Will you bend over backwards for others so that they may be saved?**

8/17 - Okay, so I suppose today's readings might get some folks a bit upset with Paul... I think it is important to keep in mind that these writings in First Corinthians 11 were directed to the church in Corinth. And Paul is basically saying in this chapter that we need to be sensitive to the culture we are in. Meaning, in 1st century Corinth men with long hair typically were prostitutes in pagan temples, so Paul says in this chapter it's a disgrace for a man to have long hair. Which it was in the culture and time of Corinth when this was written. Same thing with women with short hair at this culture and time in Corinth - it was a sign of prostitution. So, Paul says keep it long. I know it can seem a bit tricky to figure out when the Bible should be taken literally word for word and when we need to consider context. I would say that generally speaking, we need to consider context - context of one verse to the verse before and after. Context to the chapter. Context to the book. Context to the Bible. And context to the time and place that a particular book was written. However, don't let context mislead you into thinking that the Bible is not God's Holy Word - that the Bible is not Truth. For it is both. The Bible is the Word of God. The Bible is Truth. And Paul's words in today's chapter essentially get at the Truth that believers should look and behave in ways that are honorable within their own culture - so that they (and we) will be believable witnesses for Jesus Christ. I love verses 11 & 12 in today's readings - *"But in relationships among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. For although the first woman came from man, all men have been born from women ever since, and everything comes from God."* It's pretty hard to argue with this. We are all dependent upon each other. The Body of Christ is a community of believers. Men and women are not independent. We are dependent and interdependent on each other. And things do not come from men or women -

everything comes from God. Great stuff. **Q: How does First Corinthians 11 stand out to you? What can we learn from this chapter?**

8/18 - Wow.. great verses from Paul today! I think most of us will recognize these words, or slight variations, as to how the Lord's Supper happens at many churches today. It is beautiful to come across these words in verses 23 through 26 in the context of Paul's overall letter to the Corinthians. It reminds me of how the Lord's Supper comes upon us at church in the midst of our often busy / distracted lives. We so need to hear these words and so need to receive the Lord's Supper: *"For this is what the Lord himself said, and I pass it on to you just as I received it. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and you, sealed by the shedding of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again."* **Q: How is the Lord's Supper experience for you these days? Do you consciously take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Jesus? Do you consciously realize when you participate in the Lord's Supper you are announcing Jesus' death until he comes again?**

8/18 - Paul's teachings in verses in 27 through 29 are something for us to take note of: *"So if anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, that person is guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking from the cup. For if you eat the bread or drink the cup unworthily, not honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself."* **Q: How do these verses speak to you? Do you examine yourself before participating in the Lord's Supper?**

8/19 - First Corinthians 12 is once again another amazing chapter in this book! Spiritual Gifts and the Body of Christ... it gets no better! I love verses 4 through 7: *"Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service in the church, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church."* **Q: If you are a believer in Jesus as your Lord, do you believe that a spiritual gift has been given to you? Do you know what your spiritual gift is? Are you using your spiritual gift as a means of helping the entire church?** (I think my spiritual gift is a gift that Paul did not write about in this chapter - the gift of blogging! :)

8/19 - I love Paul's discourse on the Body of Christ. Verse 26 stands out: *"If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad."* This makes me wonder about the Body of Christ in our world today. **Q: Do you think that there are Christians in our world today who are suffering? Who are starving? Who are being persecuted? Who are dying of AIDS? And... if there are Christians - part of the Body of Christ just as we are part of the Body of Christ - who are suffering, are we sharing in the suffering with them in any way, shape, or form? If we are not, are we ignoring part of our Body? As Casting Crowns put it in their big hit Christian song - "If we are the Body, why aren't His hands healing? Why is His love not showing them there is a Way?" Why?**

8/20 - Today in First Corinthians chapter 13 we will read verses that you have likely heard many times at many weddings. It is the "Love" chapter of the Bible. This chapter goes way beyond just romantic or marital love – it gets at how we live our very lives each and every moment in relationship to all of creation. In verses 1 through 3 we read: *"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."* **Q: How do these verses speak to you? Do you notice the juxtaposition of the concept of love and the concept of nothingness? Do you see that without love there is nothing? Do you believe that if we live our lives without love, we are nothing? Even if we have amazing spiritual gifts. Even if we have faith that can move mountains. Even if we give away all of our possessions to the poor. If we do not have love, we are nothing. We gain nothing. We give nothing. Do you see how important love is in our lives? Do you see that we must live each and every day from a starting point of love? Why do you suppose Paul spends this entire chapter telling us about the importance of love? Do you think that God is love and wants us to be love as well? I love (pun intended :) how this chapter ends: *"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."* Amen and amen.**

8/21 - First Corinthians chapter 14 is an interesting chapter. I personally have not spoken in tongues - nor heard it as far as I know. But, I do know many people that have both spoken in tongues and heard it and have heard interpretations. I

do think Paul makes it clear in this chapter that both speaking in tongues and prophecy are gifts. I do think we do well to pay attention to Paul's conclusion to today's readings in verses 15 through 17: *"Well then, what shall I do? I will do both. I will pray in the spirit, and I will pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit, and I will sing in words I understand. For if you praise God only in the spirit, how can those who don't understand you praise God along with you? How can they join you in giving thanks when they don't understand what you are saying? You will be giving thanks very nicely, no doubt, but it doesn't help the other people present."* Bible.org's commentary on speaking in tongues is [at this link](#). **Q: What are your thoughts on speaking in tongues and prophecy in the church these days?**

PSALM 34:1 - 37:29

8/15 - Psalm 34 verse 9 in the NIV reads: *"Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing."* **Q: What does fearing God mean to you? Do you think that fearing God is a good or bad thing? Why? Do you think it is possible to both love God and fear God at the same time? What do you think of when you hear the word "saints"? Do you believe that you are a saint? Do you want to be a saint? Are you acting like a saint? Do you believe that those who fear God lack nothing? Why would this be?**

8/16 - I love Psalm 34 verses 17 & 18 today: *"The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit."* I am sure all of us have moments of needing help. Moments of trouble. Moments of being brokenhearted. Moments of being crushed in spirit. **Q: The big question is what do we do in those moments? Or, who do we turn to? Do you call to God in those moments? Do you know that he will help you? Do you know that he will rescue you? Do you know that he is close to you? Do you know that He is near?**

8/17 - Per Zondervan's NIV Study Bible, Psalm 35 today is an appeal to the heavenly King, as divine Warrior and Judge, to come to the defense of his servant David who is being maliciously slandered by those toward whom he had shown only the most tender friendship. I like verse 10 a lot: *"I will praise him from the bottom of my heart: "LORD, who can compare with you? Who else rescues the weak and helpless from the strong? Who else protects the poor and needy from those who want to rob them?""* **Q: Have you recently praised God from the bottom of your heart? Do you think that anyone/anything compares with God? Do you believe that God has rescued you and protected you? Perhaps many times when you have not even realized it?** I think about this on occasion. It is my hunch that God literally rescues us and protects us dozens if not hundreds if not thousands of times each and every day. And I think we typically miss it.... If we knew it, I am sure we would be praising Him from the bottom of our heart very frequently!

8/18 - Psalm 35 verses 22 & 23 are two very impassioned verses that I think we should take note of: *"O LORD, you know all about this. Do not stay silent. Don't abandon me now, O Lord. Wake up! Rise to my defense! Take up my case, my God and my Lord."* I think what these verses do is remind me that we don't have to always speak to God in "hushed" tones or in our "church voices". We can interact with God at any moment as we really are. I don't think we should try to hide our emotions from God. We should come before God at any time - as we are - and let Him take us from there... and heal us from there... **Q: When is the last time you literally cried out to God?**

8/19 - Verses 5 & 6 reminded me immediately of the Third Day song "Your Love Oh Lord", which borrows nicely from these verses (and is our YouTube for the day, below): *"Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths."* 8/19 - I love Psalm 36 today! There are some powerful verses in this Psalm... Starting off with verse 1 being a scary & true verse... *"Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them."* Wow. I'll admit - I've been there. I know what it is like to have sin whispering deep within my heart. Thank God for the gift of Jesus - the savior of my world... Thank God for the gift of the fear of God. And thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit who directs us along the narrow path - the path of life and light. I pray that verse 1 does not ring too true for you today - but if it does, please pray to Jesus to instead fill your heart with Jesus' Spirit, which is the only power that can truly dispel the whisper of sin within. Verses 5 & 6 reminded me immediately of the Third Day song "Your Love Oh Lord", which borrows nicely from these verses (and is our YouTube for the day, below): *"Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths."* Verse 9 just has so much simplicity in it's truth... I love it... I hope you believe this too - *"For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see."* **Q: Are there really any other lights by which we may see? Are there really any other fountains of life?**

8/20 - Today we read Psalm 37, which is most definitely a Wisdom Psalm! It's like we are reading Proverbs! I love verse 5: *"Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you."* **Q: Do you commit everything you do to God? EVERYTHING? Your waking life? Your sleeping life? Your job? Your relationships? Your family? Your finances? Your time? If so, do you trust that God will help you in everything you do in your life? Do you believe what verse 4 teaches? "Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires." I love that thought - take delight in God. **Do you take delight in God each and every day? Do you believe that he will give you your heart's desires?****

8/21 - Psalm 37 verse 16 is powerful today - *"It is better to be godly and have little than to be evil and possess much."* I don't know what I can add to this.... I think you probably get it. :) **Q: Do you live it?** Verse 23 is so amazing... *"The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives."* I don't mean to infer that I am godly here... but, I will admit that there are times in my life where I really sense that God is directing my steps - and taking care of every detail. And basically, it feels like I am sort of just going with God's flow. Things are just happening beautifully. And I do sense the Spirit often during these times. My sadness in this area is that I don't realize that God is directing my steps all of the time. And that he is delighting in every detail of my life - most of the time... :) I pray you and I will come to a greater awareness of this in our lives each and every moment: *"The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD. He delights in every detail of their lives."*

PROVERBS 21:13 - 21:26

8/15 - Today in Proverbs chapter 21 verse 13 we read – *"If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered."* **Q: Do you believe this Proverb is true? Do you truly understand and realize that there are poor in the world today? Do you know in your heart and mind that there are over 1.2 billion people in our world today living in abject poverty (living on less than \$1 / day). Do you believe they are crying out? Are you listening to their cry? And how are you responding? Are you responding to the poor today like you would want God to respond to you if you were crying out? I'll leave you with this powerful quote from Mother Teresa – "Do we share with the poor, just like Jesus shared with us?" Do we? Do you?**

8/16 - Well... it doesn't get much more straightforward than Proverb 21 verse 16 today: *"The person who strays from common sense will end up in the company of the dead."* **Q: Do you believe this Proverb is true? If we stray from common sense, will we end up in the company of the dead? How do you define what is common sense in your life? Do you believe that the Bible is common sense? Can you learn common sense from the Bible? Is there any better source of common sense out there? Will you not stray from this True source of common sense?**

8/17 - Proverbs 21 verse 17 is quite fitting for our modern day - *"Those who love pleasure become poor; wine and luxury are not the way to riches."* **Q: How often does our culture preach to us that pleasure should be sought out at all costs? "If it feels good, go for it!" seems all too often to be the beck & call of our modern day. Why do you suppose this Proverb says those who love pleasure become poor? Why would wine and luxury not be the way to riches? What type of poverty is this Proverb referring to - spiritual poverty? Material poverty? Both? Do you love pleasure? Do you love wisdom? Which of these 2 do we read about more in Proverbs as being something we should love?**

8/18 - Proverbs 21 verse 19 I'll let someone else pick up in the Comments... :) Verse 20 is intriguing - *"The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get."* Why do you suppose this is? Do the wise spend money? Do they save money? Do they give money away to their church and charities? And fools spend whatever they get... on what? Maybe there is a difference in how the wise and fools interact with money. I guess some foolish pursuits that come to mind on how one might spend money would be potential addictive behaviors such as gambling, pornography, or drugs. It's probably safe to say that the wise aren't too into these types of things. **Q: How are you doing with money these days? Are you spending it wisely? Are you saving it? Are you giving it away to your church and charity? Do you think it matters how we spend our money? If a \$100 bill appeared in your hands right this very moment, what would you do with it?**

8/19 - Proverbs 21:21 is a great one to live by! *"Whoever pursues godliness and unfailing love will find life, godliness, and honor."* **Q: What is godliness? What is unfailing love? Are you pursuing both of these? Do you believe that in this pursuit you will find life? Godliness? Honor? Are these worth pursuing? If so... pursue!**

8/20 - Proverbs 21 verse 23 today teaches us: *"If you keep your mouth shut, you will stay out of trouble."* This Proverb is so wise that I will say no more! :) **Q: How have you learned the truth of this Proverb in your life?**

8/21 - Proverbs 21 verses 25 & 26 are fantastic - *"The desires of lazy people will be their ruin, for their hands refuse to work. They are always greedy for more, while the godly love to give!"* What an interesting juxtaposition of how the lazy are greedy and they have strong desires, while the godly love to give! Beautiful. **Q: Do you love to give? What was the last intentional (not random) act of kindness you performed? Do you perform intentional acts of kindness regularly?**

Group discussions:

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

Each group is encouraged to close in prayer.

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

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

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

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