

Notes & Group Questions from August 22-28 readings (Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below)

JOB 4:1 - 30:31

8/22 - Today in Job chapter 4 we read about Eliphaz the Temanite's first response to Job, including these words in verses 3 through 6: *"In the past you have encouraged many a troubled soul to trust in God; you have supported those who were weak. Your words have strengthened the fallen; you steadied those who wavered. But now when trouble strikes, you faint and are broken. Does your reverence for God give you no confidence? Shouldn't you believe that God will care for those who are upright?"* **Q: How do these words of Eliphaz's speak to you? Are these fair words for him to be saying to Job? Are they fair words for us to consider in our own lives today as well?**

8/22 - Then in chapter 6 Job responds to Eliphaz as follows in verse 2 through 6: *"If my sadness could be weighed and my troubles be put on the scales, they would be heavier than all the sands of the sea. That is why I spoke so rashly. For the Almighty has struck me down with his arrows. He has sent his poisoned arrows deep within my spirit. All God's terrors are arrayed against me. Don't I have a right to complain? Wild donkeys bray when they find no green grass, and oxen low when they have no food. People complain when there is no salt in their food."* **Q: How do these words of Job's speak to you? Are these fair words for him to be saying in reply to Eliphaz? Are they fair words for us to consider in our own lives today as well?**

8/23 - Okay, so I am sure that most of us have heard the old adage "patience of Job." (As in, "she has the patience of Job." etc.) Well, today's chapters 9 & 10 are probably not where this adage came from! :) Job is not showing a lot of patience in these chapters. **Q: Can you blame him? Would you speak differently if you were in Job's situation? Or perhaps would your language be worse?** It is important to note that Job does not curse God directly, as Satan said Job would do in the beginning of the book. Job is certainly complaining about his situation - and, well, not to spoil the book of Job here for you... but Job will repent of what he says to God later in the book. In Job chapter 10 today we read Job's plea to God, including this in verses 18 through 22: *"Why, then, did you bring me out of my mother's womb? Why didn't you let me die at birth? Then I would have been spared this miserable existence. I would have gone directly from the womb to the grave. I have only a little time left, so leave me alone--that I may have a little moment of comfort before I leave for the land of darkness and utter gloom, never to return. It is a land as dark as midnight, a land of utter gloom where confusion reigns and the light is as dark as midnight."*

8/23 - The other adage, in addition to "patience of Job", that I was thinking about in today's readings is "with friends like these, who needs enemies??" :) Zophar in chapter 11 seems to really have compassion-deficiency! I do think that Zophar and Bildad in chapter 8 were trying to say the things they thought Job needed to hear. But they overstated the case I think in a few places. I don't agree w/ Zophar saying in chapter 11 verse 3 that Job mocked God: *"When you mock God, shouldn't someone make you ashamed?"* Here's my question for us today. **Q: Are we sometimes like Zophar and Bildad? Do we jump to conclusions about maybe why bad things are happening to our friends? Do we offer up our big advice and big words and big bluster before really listening to our friends and understanding their situation fully?** I am afraid that sometimes we jump to conclusions far too quickly. I always try to remember the old Stephen Covey adage (wow, 3 adages here in 1 post! :) from the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People": "Seek first to understand, and then to be understood." Let us seek first to really understand our friends or family members issues before we start offering our prescriptions for them. Let us first try walking a mile in their shoes!

8/24 - I forgot how much trash-talking goes on here in the book of Job! It occurred to me that all of this bickering back and forth between Job and his friends keeps transpiring without Satan coming up in their comments at all. Meaning, no one seems to realize that Satan is the one who has afflicted Job! **Q: And I'm wondering if this happens in our lives today as well? Do we sometimes miss it when Satan is literally attacking us? Do we blame others? Blame ourselves? Maybe even blame God? When the blame should be directed at the Deceiver?**

8/25 - "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives!" Whoo-hoo! Awesome words from Job today in chapter 19 verse 25! Job chapter 19 verses 23 through 27 are some of the best known and well loved verses of the book of Job. These verses seem to be where Job hits his high point in his understanding of his relationship with God: *"Oh, that my words could be written. Oh, that they could be inscribed on a monument, carved with an iron chisel and filled with lead, engraved*

forever in the rock. "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!" **Q: How powerful are these verses for you??** Great stuff. Job starts off saying that he hopes his words could be written and engraved forever - and indeed they were as we are reading them in the Bible! Then Job makes the incredible statement that even in the midst of all of his suffering and perceived distance from God, he knows that God lives! The closing two verses are powerful in that they actually indicated a belief in the resurrection by Job. He says that even after his body has decayed - after his death here on this earth - he will see God with his own eyes in his own body! How could this possibly be? Well, only if he believed in a resurrected body after death - as we've been reading about in First Corinthians chapter 15 the past couple of days! I've read some various commentaries on who is the "Redeemer" that Job is referring to in verse 25. Jesus? Could be. But it seems like most commentaries seem to suggest Job is referring to God himself, rather than Jesus. Though, of course Jesus is God so maybe this is a moot point! :) Job does talk about his desire for a mediator in other parts of this book, which could be references to Jesus as well.

8/26 - Today in Job chapter 21 verses 7 through 13 we read these words of Job: *"The truth is that the wicked live to a good old age. They grow old and wealthy. They live to see their children grow to maturity, and they enjoy their grandchildren. Their homes are safe from every fear, and God does not punish them. Their bulls never fail to breed. Their cows bear calves without miscarriage. Their children skip about like lambs in a flock of sheep. They sing with tambourine and harp. They make merry to the sound of the flute. They spend their days in prosperity; then they go down to the grave in peace."* **Q: How do these words of Job speak to you? Is there truth in these words? If the wicked go to the grave in peace, what happens to them after the grave?** Honestly, I'm not so sure about the wicked living to a good old age and going to the grave in peace... I personally would not take this chance. I think living a wicked life leads to inner conflict and an unhealthy life and potentially an early grave. I understand why Job said these words in his circumstances (he was experiencing suffering without committing the great sins his friends accused him of), but I personally would not bet on a wicked life delivering a long lifetime of wealth or peace...

8/27 - In chapter 23 verse 12 today Job makes such a powerful statement about his relationship with God! *"I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread."* (NIV) The first statement is of course powerful - Job has not departed from the commands of God's. But the second statement is the one that really stood out to me today - Job has treasured God's words more than food! This may sound like nice high holy talk from the Old Testament... but I think each of us should stop and meditate on this one in our lives today. Do we treasure God's Word, The Bible, more or do we treasure the food we eat each day more? I'm sure most of us would say the Bible... But let me put this another way for us to really think about this. **Q: How many minutes a day do you spend eating? And how many minutes a day do you spend reading the Bible? What might make this whole equation even a little bit more interesting to consider is how many minutes a day do you think about food? Prepare food? Talk about food? And then how many minutes a day do you think about the Bible? Prepare for reading the Bible? Talk about the Bible?** I am afraid that we may be a people today who (when the rubber meets the road and we look at actual time spent in each activity) treasure our food more than we treasure God's Word. However, the first step in realizing we have a problem is admitting we have a problem! :) **When it comes to amount of time you spend with food when compared to the amount of time you spend with God's Word, do you have a problem?** Can you learn something from Job's word's today in verse 12: *"I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food."* (ESV)

8/28 - Job chapter 28 is incredible! It could be my favorite chapter of Job so far this year. I kind of forgot about this chapter from my previous readings of this book. It seems to me to a large degree this chapter builds up and gets at one of the most important points in the Old Testament Wisdom / Poetry Books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon) in the closing verse 28 of this chapter: *"And this is what God says to all humanity: 'The fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding.'" Beautiful! We do hear this theme over and over again in the other Wisdom / Poetry books of the Old Testament. It is a powerful and true point. I love the way Job builds up to this point early on in this chapter 28. Verses 12 through 14 I found to be particularly great: *"But do people know where to find wisdom? Where can they find understanding? No one knows where to find it, for it is not found among the living. 'It is not here,' says the ocean. 'Nor is it here,' says the sea."* **Q: So, how about for you? Where do you find wisdom? Where do you find understanding? What does it mean to you that the fear of the Lord is true wisdom? Do you believe this is true? Do you believe that forsaking evil is real understanding?***

1 CORINTHIANS 14:18 - 2 CORINTHIANS 2:17

8/22 - The One Year Bible Companion book dives into the question "Does 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 mean that women should not speak in church services today?" I encourage you to pick up this book, as it is invaluable in going through the One Year Bible and covers great questions like this. I will share with you a little bit of their answer on this today - "Women have much to contribute and can participate in worship services. In the Corinthian culture, women were not allowed to confront men in public. Apparently some of the women who had become Christians thought that their Christian freedom gave them the right to question men in public worship. This was causing division in the church. Paul was asking the women not to flaunt their Christian freedom during worship. The purpose of Paul's words was to promote unity, not to teach about women's role in the church." Thank you Tyndale for this Q & A. **Q: What are your thoughts/experiences with women's roles in church services today?**

8/23 - We read beautifully true words from Paul today in First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 3 & 4: "*I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me--that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said.*" And then there are some interesting words from Paul in verses 17 through 19: "*And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished! And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world.*" He immediately follows up these verses with this statement in verse 20: "*But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again.*" This is quite a chapter from Paul about the Resurrection of Jesus and the Resurrection of the dead! **Q: I think the key question we each need to ask ourselves is: do you believe that Jesus was born on this earth 2,000 years ago, is the Son of God, lived a sinless life, died on the cross for your sins, and on the third day rose from the dead? This is the question on which all of Christianity - and your personal faith in Jesus - hinges. So, what say you?**

8/23 - In verses 5 through 8 today six resurrection appearances of Jesus' are mentioned. Below is a full list of Jesus' resurrection appearances from Zondervan's NIV Study Bible:

1. The empty tomb (not an appearance per se - but no body was in the tomb - the first indication of the resurrection)
2. To Mary Magdalene in the garden
3. To the other women
4. To two people going to Emmaus
5. To Peter
6. To the ten disciples in the upper room
7. To the 11 disciples in the upper room (including Thomas this time - see painting below)
8. To seven disciples fishing on the Sea of Galilee
9. To the 11 disciples on a mountain
10. To more than 500
11. To James
12. To the disciples at His ascension
13. To Paul on the road to Damascus

Q: What does the Resurrection mean to you personally?

8/24 - Today in First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 42 through 44 and 49 we read: "*So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. . . And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*" **Q: Have you thought much about heaven? Have you considered life after death? Do you believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead? Do you believe that your body will be raised imperishable? That your body will be raised in glory? In power? Do you believe that there is a spiritual body, just like we now know our earthly body? Are you looking forward to bearing the likeness of Jesus in heaven?**

8/25 - We wrap up Paul's first letter to the Corinthians today! What an amazing book! I have been blessed immensely by it this year. I hope you have too? I like Paul's instructions to the church in Corinth in chapter 16 verses 1 through 3 today: "*Now about the money being collected for the Christians in Jerusalem: You should follow the same procedures I gave to the churches in Galatia. On every Lord's Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.*" I love this last sentence! It made me smile. Paul knows how us humans are - back then and now - we like to procrastinate! We like to do things at the last minute if we can. Well, I concur with Paul that our giving to our churches should be a regular thing.

With each pay check we should "put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned." Really, as I think about it, giving of money to our churches with each paycheck is an act of worship. We are worshiping God with our finances. Let us not wait to give to our churches. Let us give faithfully and regularly with each paycheck God blesses us with! **Q: How is your giving going these days? Do you joyfully give?**

8/26 - Today we begin Paul's Second Letter to the church in Corinth! Corinth was a city known in the 1st century for its wealth and lust. It was a trade center with thousands of sailors who disembarked there. Its pagan temples encouraged the practice of sexual immorality along with idol worship. Thus, this was not an easy place for the early church! But clearly a place where the church was so needed! Below is a map of where Corinth is in Greece - it is about 48 miles west of Athens.

~ **Second Corinthians** ~

Author: Paul the apostle

Place: Ephesus

Date: A.D. 57

Content: Paul's earlier letter to the Corinthians had not settled all of the problems. It had some good effect upon them but much more remained to be done. In particular, Paul had to settle the problem concerning his own authority. Deep suspicions had been aroused concerning him, for what reasons we do not fully understand. But in great anguish Paul writes to reestablish his own apostolic authority. He also attempts to deal with some more practical matters, like supporting the poor believers elsewhere.

Theme: Triumph over adversity is seen throughout this letter. It is a very personal one, written by one who loved his people but had been deeply wronged by them. As Paul catalogs the experiences of his life and the nature of the Christian ministry, it is possible to see the grace of God at work bringing good from evil. Satan is active, seeking to destroy God's work, but God is greater still, establishing those who trust in him. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 25*)

8/27 - I love that Paul calls Jesus the "Divine Yes" in today's readings in Second Corinthians chapter 1 verse 19 in the NLT! Here are verses 18 through 20 in the NIV - *"But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.*" Amen! **Q: Do you realize that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises in the Old Testament? The Law pointed to Jesus in the OT and the Law is fulfilled in Jesus. The sacrificial system pointed to Jesus in the OT and the sacrificial is fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is indeed the Divine Yes! In your life each and every day, is Jesus your Divine Yes?**

8/28 - I absolutely love and appreciate Paul's words today in Second Corinthians chapter 2 verses 14 through 16: *"But thanks be to God, who made us his captives and leads us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now wherever we go he uses us to tell others about the Lord and to spread the Good News like a sweet perfume. Our lives are a fragrance presented by Christ to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those being saved and by those perishing. To those who are perishing we are a fearful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved we are a life-giving perfume."* What great imagery! Our lives are a fragrance presented by Christ to God! I love it. It does get sad - but true - in verse 16 when Paul says that to those who are perishing we are a fearful smell of death and doom. **Why do you suppose this is?** I think it because when someone is living their life completely enslaved to sin and they encounter the light - the fragrance - of the Gospel, they either will embrace it or push it away. Unfortunately I am afraid some folks - perhaps even us in our past - are so enslaved to sin that the sin literally makes us fear / flee from the light and fragrance of the Gospel. Unfortunately sin can ensnare someone such that the Gospel is the fragrance of death and gloom because that is where the sin is leading someone who is enslaved to it - to death and gloom. Sad... and this reminds us of how urgent it is for us to pray for others who are enslaved to sin. Let us pray the fragrance of the Gospel and the grace of God will turn them back toward the Savior of the World who can free them forever - Jesus Christ. **Q: Jesus - is there a name more fragrant to you?**

PSALM 37:30 - 42:11

8/22 - Psalm 37 verses 30 & 31 read like amazing Proverbs: *"The godly offer good counsel; they know what is right from wrong. They fill their hearts with God's law, so they will never slip from his path."* **Q: Are you filling your heart with God's teachings? Are you doing this so that you will never slip from His path? Are you offering good counsel to those around you? When others around you see you, do they see someone that clearly knows what is right from wrong?**

8/23 - Psalm 38 is powerful! Verses 4 & 5 speak so much to our human condition - *"My guilt overwhelms me--it is a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and stink because of my foolish sins."* Does this verse speak to you in any way, shape or form? If so, please consider then verse 18 - *"But I confess my sins; I am deeply sorry for what I have done."* **Q: Will you confess your sins to God today? Will you admit that you are truly sorry for your sins? Will you pray for healing from your sins? Will you make confession of your sins to God a regular practice?**

8/24 - Today in Psalm 39 verse 5 we read – *"My life is no longer than the width of my hand. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you; human existence is but a breath."* This is a powerful verse for each of us to meditate upon. **Q: How does this verse speak to you? Do you feel like life moves fast sometimes? If so, how are you spending your time? Are you being intentional about how you invest your time? Are you being intentional about your work? Your friends? Your finances? Volunteering? Serving others? Loving others? Watching TV – or better yet, not watching TV? :) If life really is "but a breath" – are you spending your breath wisely? With your breath are you constantly loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself?**

8/26 - Today Psalm 40 verse 16 stood out to me for it's pure joy and praise: *"But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, "The LORD is great!""* **Q: Does this verse resonate with you today? Have you searched for God in your life? Are you filled with joy and gladness because of that search? Do you love God's salvation? Do you shout praises to God for all he has done for you? Maybe if verse 16 does not resonate for you today, hopefully verse 17 can encourage you: "As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord is thinking about me right now. You are my helper and my savior. Do not delay, O my God."** **Do you believe that Jesus is thinking about you right now? Do you believe that Jesus is your helper and your savior?**

8/27 - Today we read in Psalm 41 verse 1 – *"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble."* For some reason this verse really opens up my heart. Something about the word "weak." Maybe this verse really speaks to me because I myself feel weak at times. And yet, I am so blessed in so many ways. And I realize that there are so many others out there in this world who may not have the blessings that I have, and who are struggling through an extremely tough cycle of weakness. And I wonder – **Q: what am I doing to help those who are weak? Do I really have regard for the weak? Do you? What in our life really demonstrates that we have regard for the weak? Are we investing time or finances into the weak? Are we praying for the weak? Are we loving the weak?**

8/27 - Proverbs 22 verse 6 today teaches us: *"Teach your children to choose the right path, and when they are older, they will remain upon it."* You know, this verse actually reminds me of quite a bit of recent work I've had the good fortune to participate in or observe when it comes to early childhood education. 85% of a child's brain develops in the first 3 years of their life. **Think this is a critical period of time to teach children?** Certainly after the age of 3 we still have so much opportunity to teach children to choose the right path. I am becoming more and more convinced that education for children is so critical here in our own backyards and throughout the world. And unfortunately, as we all know, quality education is not happening in many sectors of our society and our world. Let me encourage you to please invest in childhood education in your own backyard and around the world. Find a child to mentor. Teach a Sunday school class. Invest in nonprofits working on childhood education. Sponsor a child through World Vision where they will get a fantastic Christian education. **Q: Will you join me in personally getting involved with and investing in organizations that teach our children to choose the right path?**

8/28 - Today we read Psalm 42 verse 1, which is one of my favorite verses in the Bible! *"As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God."* That is so right on. Lately these days I have been longing for God more than ever - and I love that. I am thankful for that. There have been seasons in my life - which can certainly be called "dry" seasons - where I have not longed for God. Where I have not longed for the true Living Water. I just love the picture this Psalm verse paints in my mind - a deer in the wilderness is fleeing from hunters. It is literally dying of thirst as it runs. It is tired. It is weary. It is running from death. And it needs water. It pants for streams of water. Like this deer, I pray that I long for God in the same way. As I flee from sin. As I am tired. As I am weary. As I run from death. I need God. I long for God. **Q: How about you? Do you long for God these days as a deer longs for water? Are you consistently drinking from the true Living Water?**

PROVERBS 21:27 - 22:7

8/22 - Proverbs 21 verse 27 is one of those that makes you go "ouch" - *"God loathes the sacrifice of an evil person, especially when it is brought with ulterior motives."* Well, not the evil person part making me go ouch, so much as the

"ulterior motives" part. I do think there is so much wisdom in Jesus' admonition to give without letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing. I am afraid that sometimes I have not only let the right hand know when I'm giving - but many other people as well! That's ulterior motives. And it's not right obviously, as we see in this Proverb today and as we hear from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. **Q: How about you and your giving or acts of kindness - Do you give with pure motives? With no ulterior motives? With no strings attached?**

8/23 - Proverbs chapter 21 verse 29 today is subtle but so true: *"The wicked put up a bold front, but the upright proceed with care."* **Q: Have you ever seen folks that put up a bold front, but don't have much behind it all? And then seen those that are so humble and maybe even seem quiet, but then deliver incredible fruits?** As Jesus said - you'll know a tree by its fruit. A bad tree cannot produce good fruit and a good tree cannot produce bad fruit. This Proverb is a great reminder that the front / the sales pitch / the first impression is not the fruit! It's what comes next and what is delivered with quality and consistency that comes next. **Do you put up a bold front at times? Or do you make it a habit to instead proceed with care?** Let us be an upright people!

8/24 - Today in Proverbs 21 verse 31 we read: *"The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD."* How does this Proverb speak to you? For me it is a reminder that anything we do in our life is dependent on the Lord. If we want to be successful in life - in our jobs, ministries, marriages, friendships, anything - we will only be successful if the Lord is with us. So, how do we know if the Lord is with us? My first suggestion is prayer. I believe we should commit every thing we do to prayer. I will admit that lately my prayer life has not been very good. And I've noticed the effects of it. I want victory in so many areas of my life - but it seems like I am too often "saddling up" the horse without seeking the Lord's guidance and wisdom and blessing. **Q: How is your prayer life these days? Are you committing everything you do to prayer? Are you earnestly seeking through prayer the Lord's guidance, wisdom and blessing, knowing that victory rests only with the Lord?**

8/25 - We have a beautiful Proverb verse 1 to start off the 22nd Chapter of Proverbs! *"Choose a good reputation over great riches, for being held in high esteem is better than having silver or gold."* **Q: Do you believe this Proverb to be true? Which do you seek after more - a good reputation or money?** You know though, the more I think about this Proverb I have some concerns about it. Only in that if we seek after having a good reputation, then we may really be focusing on ourselves and how other people look at us, rather than focusing on Kingdom things. We may decide to do something because it's "popular", rather than it being "right." We may give to the poor with blazing trumpets because this will help our reputation - but Jesus clearly said we should not do this. Does this make sense? I mean given the choice of a good reputation or being rich, this Proverb is clearly true. But it's not enough. That's why we need to read the entire Bible to get the full context of everything else that surrounds any 1 particular verse in the Bible, like this one. One verse is not enough. It's Truth. But not enough. We need the entire Bible. Good for you for going through the One Year Bible this year! Please do keep up your study of the entire Bible beyond just this year. We need the entire Bible for our entire life...

8/26 - Proverbs 22 verse 2 is a great reminder that our wealth or status does not affect who we are in God's eyes or in God's very hands: *"The rich and the poor have this in common: The LORD made them both."* As we are all created by God, we should not ever consider ourselves better than anyone - nor lesser than anyone - because someone else has a different set of finances than we do. If you think about it, every single person you meet has a different set of finances than you do. Some are richer, some are poorer. And yet we all have this in common - God made us. **Q: How might this affect how you view others in this world? Do you literally and consciously realize that God made each and every one of us?**

8/28 - We read great wisdom in Proverbs 22 verse 7 today: *"Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender."* This Proverb reminds me of some of the "Get Out of Debt" seminars and books that are out there. I haven't read any of the books, but I did attend a half day seminar a while back, and I found it to be really good. It is true that we are so caught up in a cycle of debt here in the U.S. - and I imagine in other countries too. The thing I remember from the half day seminar is that we will never get out of debt if we cannot control our "appetites." If we cannot stop buying and spending and consuming beyond what we really need, we'll continue to be in debt. And once we are in debt, we are indeed slaves to the lender. Slaves to our credit card companies. Pretty scary when you think about it. I pray that if you are struggling with debt, you do check out a seminar or book - don't buy the book if you can help it! :) Get it from the library. We need to stop our impulses to "BUY NOW" or "DON'T MISS OUT" on x, y or z. Let's get out of debt and get out of slavery to our lenders. Literally cut up that credit card if that's what you need to do to control your out-of-control spending... **Q: How are you doing on debt in your life today? Any debt books or seminars you can recommend?**

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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