

Notes & Group Questions for July 1 - July 31 readings (*Questions (Q:) for groups are bolded below*)

2 CHRONICLES 29:3 - 2 CHRONICLES 34:8 (daily reading schedule at: www.oneyearbibleonline.com)

7/1 - 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 reinstates 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?**

7/1 - We have great readings today in Second Chronicles chapter 30 about King Hezekiah inviting all of Israel and Judah to celebrate the Passover of the Lord! Yeah, sure, they ended up celebrating it a month later than normal because not enough priests had been purified, nor enough folks gathered in Jerusalem at the original time. But, in light of the Passover not being widely celebrated in many years, this was huge. I love Hezekiah's letter that he wrote - and verse 9 in particular: *"For if you return to the LORD, your relatives and your children will be treated mercifully by their captors, and they will be able to return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful. If you return to him, he will not continue to turn his face from you."* **Q: Think these words of Hezekiah's could apply to us in our lives today as well? Do you need to return to the Lord in any area of your life? Is there a sin that you are still indulging in that is hampering your relationship with God? Will you confess and repent of that sin? Will you return to the Lord?** For the Lord your God is indeed gracious and merciful...

7/2 - Proverbs chapter 25 verses 4 & 5 today are interesting: *"Remove the dross from silver, and the sterling will be ready for the silversmith. Remove the wicked from the king's court, and his reign will be made secure by justice."* I believe dross is some sort of impurity that is in silver when it is heated up. Actually, I just looked it up in the dictionary and dross means: "impurity: worthless or dangerous material that should be removed: "there were impurities in the water" or "[n. DRAHSS] Something that is useless or worthless is dross. This noun refers to the less-than-desirable parts of something. Near synonyms include: refuse, rubbish, and impurity. Another more specific use of the word dross describes the scum or slag thrown off from metals in the process of melting them. It traces back to the Old English dros, which corresponds to the Middle Dutch droes and the Germanic dros. All of these are words for dregs (less than desirable parts)." So, this proverb is also saying the wicked in the king's court is an impurity that must be removed for a secure reign with justice. This makes sense in a governmental sense. You don't want crooks on the cabinet. But, I think this also works well in our own personal lives. Sin is a dross - an impurity - in our life that must be removed so that we will be of use to the "silversmith" - Jesus. **Q: Do you have dross / sin in your life? Will you allow God to remove the dross - the impurity - from your life through the work of his expert Silversmith, Jesus?** Please let Jesus heal you of the dross in your life. Jesus is the only one who truly can!

7/2 - In proverbs 25:6-7 today we read - *"Don't demand an audience with the king or push for a place among the great. It is better to wait for an invitation than to be sent to the end of the line, publicly disgraced!"* This reminds me of Jesus' parable of not taking the best seats at the feast, or you may be asked to move down. But take the lowest seats and you may be asked to move on up. This is similar to Jesus' teaching: "those who are first, shall be last. And those who are last, shall be first." Are you comfortable being last? This Proverb today also talks about waiting for an invitation. How are you doing

these days on waiting? Are you comfortable with waiting? Are you even comfortable on waiting for God? I'll share with you when I am in a season of "waiting" in my life, I have been incredibly encouraged by Isaiah 40:31 - *"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."* And I've also been encouraged greatly by the Lincoln Brewster song "Everlasting God" that has the awesome line - "Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord!" Amen! **Q: Do you feel your strength rising as you wait upon the Lord?**

7/2 - Proverbs chapter 25 verses 9 & 10 is a strong teaching - *"So discuss the matter with them privately. Don't tell anyone else, or others may accuse you of gossip. Then you will never regain your good reputation."* This Proverb stands out to me for when we see someone who perhaps sins. Maybe a brother or sister in Christ has a moral failing. **Q: And then the big question is this - will we discuss the matter directly with that person, to correct them. OR - will we discuss the matter with others and be a gossip?** Don't get me wrong - there may be a time and a place to discuss the matter with others, such as a pastor, to get advice on how to discuss the matter with the person who stumbled. But, we absolutely should not resort to simply being a gossip about someone else. That's seeing one sin of someone else's and then creating another sin of your own!

7/2 - Proverbs 25:14 is spot on: *"A person who doesn't give a promised gift is like clouds and wind that don't bring rain."* Don't be that person! Make sure you give promised gifts. **Q: And how about giving unexpected gifts? Gifts for no particular reason? When is the last time you surprised someone with a gift out of the blue?**

7/2 - Proverbs 25 verse 15 is a beautiful meditation in the midst of our hussle-bussle world of today - *"Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can crush strong opposition."* Basically this Proverb tells us that we don't need to be in a hurry or be loud! **Q: Are you a patient person? Do you speak softly / humbly?**

7/2 - Today in Proverbs 25 verse 16 we read - *"If you find honey, eat just enough— too much of it, and you will vomit."* This is a great teaching about not eating junk food! :) Well, a little bit is okay on occasion - but not too much! Seriously, I do think we should be mindful of what we are eating. There are so many studies out there that show that so many of us are not eating well. We are eating way too much "honey." I simply pray that each of us realizes that our body is a temple that is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We should not worship our bodies. But we should not neglect them either. Let us care for our bodies so that we may serve God and serve others for a long time in this life. God has so many great things for you to do in this life - please eat healthy and exercise regularly so that he can work through you fully and for a good length of time! I think the culture sells us junk food - just like it sells us sexual immorality or materialism. These things might seem appealing on the surface initially - but give them too much attention and they can literally kill you. Leave the junk food alone. Eat God's good food that is good for you! **Q: How are your eating habits these days? How is your exercise life? Is God calling you to improve in either your eating habits or your exercise habits? Why might it be a very good idea to improve your eating habits or exercise habits? Will you do so? Today?**

7/2 - Proverbs 25:17 is a great one! *"Don't visit your neighbors too often, or you will wear out your welcome."* This kind of reminds me of the old adage: "fish and friends go bad after 3 days..." :)

7/3 - Proverbs chapter 30 verse 32 teaches us today: *"If you have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil, cover your mouth in shame."* The thing that stood out to me in this Proverb today is that being proud equals being a fool. Plotting evil also equals being a fool - and I'm sure we'd all quickly agree on that. But, being proud also equals being a fool! This is so important for us to realize. I am afraid that all too often we can default to being prideful, thinking that's appropriate, when indeed it is pure foolishness. Being proud = been a fool. Why do you suppose this is? What is it about pride that is so bad? I think it is in large part this: when we are proud we are turning our focus away from God and toward ourselves. We are relying on ourselves instead of God. We are glorifying ourselves instead of God. And when we look at Satan and the Fall, we see that pride can even get to the point of trying to equate ourselves with God!

This was Satan's great sin. Pride. And pride is a sin that we must be vigilant to guard against in our lives today, tomorrow and every day. Let us not be foolish by being proud! And when we find ourselves being prideful, let us cover our mouths in shame as this Proverb teaches and repent. **Q: Do you struggle with pride in your life? Do you agree with this Proverb that being proud = being a fool?**

7/3 - Today Proverbs chapter 30 verse 33 teaches us: *"As the beating of cream yields butter and striking the nose causes bleeding, so stirring up anger causes quarrels."* This is an appropriate Proverb for our Christmas season when we spend so much time with our families, no? :) I shouldn't joke about this I realize - but I think it's appropriate to address this issue. During the holiday season I am afraid that sometimes we bring up old battles or wounds when we spend time with our families - and we risk stirring up anger that causes quarrels. Don't get me wrong - I think it's ultimately better to bring things into the open with our families. That's how healing begins. But let us be careful that we don't just revert to some old "scripts" we have with our families that stirs up anger in ourselves or in them and then causes quarrels. Let us write some new redemptive and loving scripts instead! **Q: Do you ever stir up anger that causes quarrels in your family? Do some folks in your family stir up anger that causes quarrels? Will you pray that Jesus will introduce new redemptive and loving "scripts" in your family this holiday season? And will you make sure you no longer cause any stirring up of unnecessary anger?**

7/3 - Proverbs chapter 31 and the preceding chapter 30 are thought to be essentially an "appendix" to the overall book of Proverbs, as they are non-Israelite in origin. Chapter 29 was the final chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon. Proverbs chapter 31 verses 1 through 9 consist of 3 sayings that King Lemuel's mother taught him. The entirety of Proverbs chapter 31 demonstrates the significance and role of wise women in the ancient Near East, where the queen mother was often an influential figure. **Q: Who have been some wise women in your life?**

7/3 - Proverbs 31:8-9 today teaches us this powerful lesson: *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those who are perishing. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice."* **Q: Do you believe that God calling you to speak up in some way for the poor and helpless? Maybe it's somewhere in your city or neighborhood or home that this call is leading you to speak up... Will you speak up? Will we speak up?**

7/3 - Proverbs 31:10-24 is a great reflection upon a godly wife. I read a commentary that said such a wife is almost a personification of wisdom. I like that thought! And certainly it makes sense that a woman / wife would be a personification of wisdom rather than a man / husband... :) Just kidding! I'm a guy, so I can make this kind of joke right? **Q: In all seriousness, how about that thought for each of our lives - male or female - would it be a godly thing to move toward being a personification of wisdom?** Obviously I'd say that Jesus was the only human this side of heaven that will walk this earth as a pure personification of wisdom. But let us seek wisdom in how we live our lives each and every day. Let us seek God's Wisdom that is worth far more than rubies...

7/3 - Proverbs 31:25-31 are a continued great look at what a godly woman does. I really like verse 30 which seems so opposite of what our culture is often selling us today: *"Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised."* I think this holds so true for women and men - our beauty or good looks or outer appearances do not last. They are not eternal. What matters is what's inside - our relationship with and love of God and other people. So, I think this is a great reminder for us to focus on what's inside - which is what's eternal. And yes, our culture will continue to try to sell us on the latest fads to look better on the outside. **Q: Will you refuse to buy into that which will not last? Do you realize that holiness is beautiful?**

7/4 - 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?**

7/4 - I think Psalm 43 verse 5 starts off with a couple of questions that then answer themselves by the end of the verse - "*Why am I discouraged? Why so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again--my Savior and my God!*" I would agree with what this verse is getting at. If I find myself to be discouraged or sad, it comes as no great surprise to me that I have been putting my hope in things other than God. I have been perhaps even praising false idols. And the sure fire way to be freed from the discouragement or sadness? To put my hope once again in God and God only. And to praise him again! I think this Psalm verse is a great reminder to make sure we are not placing our hope in anything other than God. For anything other than God will only leave us empty in the end. **Q: How have you overcome discouragement or sadness? Has praising God ever lifted your spirits when you were feeling down?**

7/4 Psalm 44 verse 3 is a wise statement about where the Israelites and our true strength and victory in life comes from - "*They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strength that gave them victory. It was by your mighty power that they succeeded; it was because you favored them and smiled on them.*" **Q: As you look back on your life and at the good things that have happened to you, do you think that these things occurred because of your own power or work alone? Or, do you think it is possible that God's hand was blessing your life through all of those good things - even if maybe you did not notice God was there at the time?**

7/4 - Every time I read Psalm 44 verse 23 it reminds me of one of the amazing aspects of the Psalms - that the Psalms are people like us speaking to God - and in all sorts of emotional ways: "*Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Get up! Do not reject us forever.*" This type of verse reminds me that it's okay for us to not always talk to God in our "church voice." It's okay to get a little bit passionate in our prayers to God. I think God would prefer us to be real with him - where we are right now or at any given moment - rather than try to put on any special facades for God. If ever you feel like you are at a loss for words for what you might want to say to God - how you might be needing to pray to God - surf through the Psalms... you'll very likely find voice for what you are trying to say. **Q: How are the Psalms standing out to you this year as you read them? Are they giving voice to some of your prayers? Do you ever pray the Psalms?**

7/4 - Psalm 45 is very likely a song of praise to King David on his wedding day. Interestingly, after the Babylonian exile, this Psalm was applied to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the promised Son of David. I can see how some verses in this Psalm could apply to both the current king of the day and the true king yet to come. Verse 7 is a good example: "*You love what is right and hate what is wrong. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.*" **Q: Is Jesus your King?**

7/4 - Today we read Psalm 46, which is an incredible Psalm! This Psalm represents a song of hope celebrating the certain triumph of God's kingdom - even in the midst of times of severe trouble. This Psalm served as the inspiration for Martin Luther's famous Hymn, "[A Mighty Fortress is Our God](#)." Just after 9/11 I saw emails on the internet floating around with the entirety of Psalm 46. I would encourage you to keep this Psalm in your "back-pocket" as a Psalm to meditate upon whenever you personally might be going through times of severe trouble - or whenever our world might be going through times of severe trouble. Near the end of this Psalm in verse 10 we will read a tiny little verse that I think is the key to this Psalm - "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" **Q: If you are going through a time of trouble in your life right now, will you take some time to meditate upon Psalm 46 and in particular verse 10? What does it mean to you to "Be still, and know that I am God?" Do you believe that being still during times of trouble can draw you closer to God? Will you be still today before God? In this stillness will you seek to know that He is indeed God? Even in the midst of whatever might be troubling**

you, will you seek to know that I AM is your God?

7/5 - Psalm 47 is an awesome Psalm! I can almost hear and feel music and a drum beat as I read this Psalm today! This Psalm was used in later Jewish synagogue liturgies for Rosh Hashanah, the New Year Festival. This Psalm has also been used by the Christian church in the Celebration of Jesus' ascension, in particular with emphases on verse 5 - *"God has ascended with a mighty shout. The LORD has ascended with trumpets blaring."* **Do you hear and feel the music as you read this Psalm? Do you think God is a fan of music?**

7/5 - Psalm 48 is a celebratory Psalm of Mount Zion in Jerusalem, as verse 8 reads: *"We had heard of the city's glory, but now we have seen it ourselves- the city of the LORD Almighty. It is the city of our God; he will make it safe forever."* I like verse 10 a lot in this Psalm: *"As your name deserves, O God, you will be praised to the ends of the earth."* I have had the good fortune to travel many places on this planet, and I will admit that it always encourages me to no end when I see God being praised and worshiped in other cultures. I always try to visit churches wherever I travel on Sundays, and I love seeing how different cultures worship God. One of the most memorable experiences was in the Dominican Republic in a very impoverished community. I honestly don't know that I have ever seen a congregation worship God so wholeheartedly than I did that day in the DR. It was beautiful. The other thing I am reminded of when traveling is that when we are in relationship with Jesus, God is always with us no matter where we go. When we're 35,000 feet above the ground in an airplane, God is with us. When we're in the middle of nowhere that has no church - God is with us. So, no matter where we go, if God is with us, we have the opportunity to praise God's name to the ends of the earth! **Q: Even if you're traveling to some far off locale where no one else around you would praise God, will you? Have you ever experienced this when traveling?**

7/5 - Psalm 49 verses 1-3 are a fantastic teaching that the Word of God, the Bible, is for everyone, no matter what our lots in life may be - *"Listen to this, all you people! Pay attention, everyone in the world! High and low, rich and poor--listen! For my words are wise, and my thoughts are filled with insight."* **Q: Are you listening today? Are you paying attention to the wise words and insights of the Bible? Are you truly studying the Bible and then applying the Bible's teachings to your life?** Then, verse 15 in this Psalm is beautiful: *"But as for me, God will redeem my life. He will snatch me from the power of death."* **How about for you? Will God redeem your life? Like the parable of the lost sheep that we read about in [Luke 15:3-7](#), has Jesus saved you from being snatched from the power of death?**

7/5 - Today in Psalm 84:5 we read: *"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage."* **Q: Where does your strength come from? God? Or your own will-power? Why might it be a good idea to rely on God for your strength rather than yourself? Have you set your heart on a pilgrimage? Is the pilgrimage toward God? Do you think this will be a life-long pilgrimage?** Later in this Psalm, verse 10, we read: *"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere."* This is a song many of us have probably sung before at church. **What does this verse mean to you? What does one day in God's courts look like for you? Why would one day in God's courts be better than one thousand days elsewhere? Do you look forward to spending an eternity in God's courts? Is your heart on a pilgrimage to God's courts?**

7/5 - Psalm 85 is awesome today! So many great verses... I love verse 8 - *"I listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying, for he speaks peace to his people, his faithful ones. But let them not return to their foolish ways."* I like that thought - God speaks peace to his people. **Q: Are we listening carefully to what God is saying? Are we receiving his peace into our hearts? And so importantly - are we not returning to our foolish ways?** Verse 6 reminds me of the Jeremy Camp tune "Revive Me", which is an amazing tune - *"Won't you revive us again, so your people can rejoice in you?"* **Do you need God to revive you? Will you pray for revival?**

7/5 - Psalm 87 is a celebration of Jerusalem as the City of God, as we read in verse 3 - *"O city of God, what glorious things are said of you!"* As we continue to read through the Bible this year it is amazing to reflect upon how much focus there is on Jerusalem as the city of God. Truly, so many of the Psalms glorify Jerusalem, often as a foreshadowing of the Heavenly City of God. Indeed, as this verse suggests, many glorious things are said of Jerusalem in the Bible! **Q: Have you visited Jerusalem? Is it glorious?**

7/6 - Today we read this reflection on the godly in Psalm 1 verse 2: *"But they delight in doing everything the LORD wants; day and night they think about his law."* **Q: How well does this verse ring true with your life today? Do you delight in being obedient to God? Do you think about God's Word, the Bible, day and night? Should you? This year, will you?**

7/6 - Psalm 2 is a prophetic and Messianic Psalm. This Psalm is frequently quoted in the New Testament in reference to Jesus as God's Anointed and the great son of King David. The word "Messiah" comes from the Hebrew word for "anointed one." And the word "Christ" comes from the Greek word for "anointed one." (as we read Anointed One in verse 2) Verses 11 & 12 in this Psalm are encouraging and also a strong warning for us at the same time: *"Serve the LORD with reverent fear, and rejoice with trembling. Submit to God's royal son, or he will become angry, and you will be destroyed in the midst of your pursuits--for his anger can flare up in an instant. But what joy for all who find protection in him!"* I think the closing sentence should be a huge encouragement to us. If we are seeking to love God and Jesus and other people with all of our hearts, mind, strength and souls - God knows it. And he will provide eternal protection for us. Yes, there will be suffering in this life - but joy can be found in knowing that we will have an eternity to spend with God and his royal son!

7/6 - Psalm 10 is a prayer for rescue from attacks from the proud and wicked. Wisely, you'll note that this Psalmist is not taking punishment into his own hands - but asking God for punishment. We would do well to remember that punishment is the Lord's... For some reason much of this Psalm reminded me way too much of our world today - and I realized that not much has changed over 3,000 years! Verse 4 in particular rang true to me about much of our world today: *"These wicked people are too proud to seek God. They seem to think that God is dead."* Only about 100 years ago the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche uttered those exact words - "God is dead." And I know that this viewpoint of many expressed in this Psalm 3,000 years ago, and 100 years ago by Nietzsche, is still a viewpoint of many in our world today. What a sad thing. **Q: What can we do in our lives today to show the world that God is not dead? How can we live our lives to demonstrate that God is alive? Let us share with this hurting and dying world with all that we are that God is not dead. What are you doing with your life today to show others that He Lives?**

7/6 - Psalm 33 verse 11 is strong today - *"But the LORD's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken."* I think the thing that grabs me about this verse is that it is God's plans - not our plans - that stand firm forever. Therefore, it's only logical in my mind that we should align our lives such that they are part of God's plan - God's kingdom. I think reading the Bible each day is one excellent way to discern what God's plans are. And then - once we know what God's plans are, will we then align our lives with his plans? Knowing that his intentions can never be shaken? **Q: How do you align your life with God's plans? Do you consciously try to do this?**

7/6 - Psalm 33 verse 12 today is awesome: *"In him our hearts rejoice, for we are trusting in his holy name."* **Q: How Does your heart literally rejoice when you think about God? How do you trust in God's holy name?**

7/6 - Today in Psalm 71 verses 6 through 8 we read - *"Yes, you have been with me from birth; from my mother's womb you have cared for me. No wonder I am always praising you! My life is an example to many, because you have been my strength and protection. That is why I can never stop praising you; I declare your glory all day long."* So true that God has cared for each of us since we were in our mother's womb! This a beautiful thing to realize. There is an interesting thought in these verses - if our life is an example to many - and well, yes, it really is no matter what we actually do. Hopefully our life is a good

example - but there could be seasons of bad example too. . . If our lives are good examples to many, why is this so? I agree w/ the Psalmist - it is simply because of God in our lives. **Q: Is God literally your strength and protection? Do you praise God unceasingly? Do you declare God's glory all day long? How do you do so? Also, what verses or insights stand out to you in today's readings?**

7/6 - Today in Psalm 91:11-12 we read the words quoted by Satan to Jesus during the temptation in the desert: *"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."* As you read this Psalm, do these words apply to Jesus only? Or to those who trust in the Lord as well? Do you believe that the Lord is guarding you in all your ways? Do you believe this is possible? (I hope your answer is yes) Do you recall Jesus' response to Satan in Matthew 4:7: *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Q: What do Jesus' words to Satan tell you about these words in the Psalm? Can we believe these words of the Psalmist, and also not put God to the test at the same time? As an example, maybe to just myself :), is driving over the speed limit putting God to the test? Is deciding to skip church one week (or for many weeks) because we have some chores to catch up on / or fun stuff to do / or because we're just tired, putting God to the test?*

7/7 - Today in Psalm 92 verse 4 we read a joyful verse! *"For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands."* **Q: When was the last time you reflected upon God's deeds? When was the last time you reflected upon God's work of his hands? Do you think this might be a good daily habit? Do God's deeds make you glad? Do you sing for joy regularly for the work of God's hands?**

7/7 - Psalm 94 verse 14 is fantastic today - *"The LORD will not reject his people; he will not abandon his own special possession."* I love this thought - that God will not reject us. He will not abandon us. We are his own special possession. **Q: Do you believe that you are God's own special possession? How does this make you feel? Act?**

7/7 - Wow.. Psalm 96 today is amazing! I love verse 1: *"Sing a new song to the LORD! Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!"* And I love the imagery in verse 12: *"Let the fields and their crops burst forth with joy! Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise."* **Q: is there a new song God is asking you to sing to him these days? Will you sing this new song to God?**

7/7 - Psalm 97 verses 10 & 11 are so spiritually powerful & true: *"You who love the LORD, hate evil! He protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. Light shines on the godly, and joy on those who do right."* I do believe that God protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. Honestly, I believe that God does this in our lives much more often than we even consciously realize. I am sure there are a few moments in our life when we fully realize we were being protected by God. But, I also have a strong belief that God protects us from unforeseen things that never entered our consciousness. Do bad things still happen to godly people? Yes, of course they do. Why? I can't answer this - I've heard C.S. Lewis' book ["The Problem of Pain"](#) gets at this a bit. I need to read it. We are in a fallen world. There is evil and an enemy in this world. Bad things do happen. But, overall, I believe these verses above are so true. I do believe that light shines on the godly and joy on those who do right. **Q: Do you believe these verses above to be true? Have you experienced the truth of these verses in your life? How have you experienced protection, light and joy in the Lord?**

7/8 - Psalm 99 is a great psalm of praise! This Psalm mentions the word Lord 7 times. I like verse 6 - *"Moses and Aaron were among his priests; Samuel also called on his name. They cried to the LORD for help, and he answered them."* These were obviously some major characters in the Bible. I love Psalm 99 verse 3 - *"Let them praise your great and awesome name. Your name is holy!"* I think sometimes in our modern world we can forget that God's name is holy. Jesus' name is holy. These holy names change things. They change everything. If ever you are ever feeling like you are being confronted by evil - maybe even in your sleep in a dream - call upon Jesus' name and watch the evil flee from you immediately. It is true... Jesus' name is holy! God's name is holy! **Q: Do you believe God's very name is holy? How do you cry out to the LORD using His holy name? Do you believe if you cry out to**

the Lord for help, He will answer you too?

7/8 - Today we read Psalm 100! I will copy this short Psalm below. Does this Psalm speak to you? Do you feel joy while reading this song? I have read much of ["The Life You've Always Wanted" by John Ortberg](#) (a great book!) and he has a great chapter on JOY being a spiritual discipline. It is amazing to realize that Joy is a gift from God we should be experiencing every day. **Q: How are you experiencing joy as a spiritual discipline? Think this Psalmist in Psalm 100 was?**

Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving thanks.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness;

come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving

and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Q: When is the last time you shouted for joy to God? Do you regularly worship God with gladness? Do you come before our Heavenly Father with joyful songs? Do you know that you are God's? Is this fact alone worth being joyful about each and every day?

7/8 - Psalm 102 is a great reminder to us on the importance to pray. To bring our troubles to the Lord. Psalm 102 can also definitely be a comfort for us during a time of sorrow. I love the reminder about God in verse 27 (which Hebrews also reminded us of today in the verses above...) - *"But you are always the same; your years never end."* God does not change. He is perfectly consistent. We are oftentimes inconsistent. But, our inconsistencies do not change God's consistency. He is always the same - yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever. God is the one sure thing in life that you can count on - forever. **Q: Do you believe God is the same yesterday, today and forever? Do you believe God is the same God in the Old Testament and the New Testament?**

7/8- Psalm 104 is a beautiful hymn to the Creator! I like all of the verses - verse 19 stands out to me because I can find some cool images related to this verse on the web! :) *"You made the moon to mark the seasons and the sun that knows when to set."* **Q: How does nature remind you of our Creator God? Do you ever praise God when you are outdoors?** This Psalm overall goes through Genesis 1 and the story of creation. Not quite in the same order of creation, or the same details. But, essentially this Psalm is a retelling of Genesis 1. I love Psalm 104 verse 33 today - *"I will sing to the LORD as long as I live. I will praise my God to my last breath!"* I so pray that this verse will be true for both you and me. I pray we will sing to God as long as we live. I pray we will praise God to our very last breath. And in particular at our very last breath I pray we are praising God! **Q: How are you singing to God in your life today? What are some new ways you are praising God these days?**

7/9 - Psalm 105 verse 4 stood out to me today - *"Search for the LORD and for his strength, and keep on searching."* I like that - search! If you search for God, he will indeed be found. **Q: Have you ever searched for God? And for his strength? Are you maybe searching now? Do you believe he will be found? Will you keep on searching?**

7/9- Psalm 106 is a repentive Psalm, likely written by a Levitical priest after returning to Jerusalem after its destruction. Verse 2 stood out to me today - *"Who can list the glorious miracles of the LORD? Who can ever praise him half enough?"* **Q: Can you list all of the glorious miracles of God? Can anyone? Are you praising God today? Every day?**

7/9 - Verse 3 is powerful- *"Happy are those who deal justly with others and always do what is right."* I

think this is such an important thing to know - we will be happy when we deal justly with others and when we do what is right. This is happiness. Not money or fame or power or luxuries. Dealing justly with others and doing what is right is happiness. **Q: So, Biblically, are you happy?**

7/9 - Today in Psalm 106:19-21 we read: *"At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped an idol cast from metal. They exchanged their Glory for an image of a bull, which eats grass. They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt."* This of course sounds very familiar to Romans chapter 1 verses 22 and 23: *"Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles."* **Q: Was this wise that the Israelites exchanged their Glory for an image of a bull? Why did they do this? What should have been their Glory? What is your Glory today? Do you, at times, exchange your true Glory for something else? Is this wise? Are you forgetting the God who saved you? The God who has done great things for you?**

7/9 - Verse 13 in this Psalm also stands out: *"Yet how quickly they forgot what he had done! They wouldn't wait for his counsel!"* **Q: Is this true of us? Do we forget or take for granted all of the blessings God has poured out into our lives? In doing so, do we decide to take matters into our own hands - not waiting on God's counsel for our direction? Will we remember? Will we wait? Patiently...?**

7/9 - Psalm 106 verse 39 stood out to me today, speaking about the Israelites: *"They defiled themselves by their evil deeds, and their love of idols was adultery in the LORD's sight."* I think this Psalm verse stands the test of time with our modern world today. **Q: Do you believe that we still defile ourselves with our evil deeds today? Do you believe that our love of idols is adultery in God's sight? How can we stop defiling ourselves with evil deeds and stop loving idols in our modern world today? Who can save us from ourselves?**

7/10 - Psalm 107 repeats a verse four times - starting with verse 6 here - *"LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he rescued them from their distress.*" (then see verse 13, verse 19, and verse 28 - same verse) This is a great reminder to pray - and yes, it's great to pray during times of distress of course. **Q: But, how about praying during times of happiness & joy? Or even times of just regular blahs?** I recently read much of the book "The Life You've Always Wanted" by John Ortberg (great book!), and it has a great chapter on prayer. It is so true that one of the best ways to truly know and love God is through prayer. Simple prayer. 5 minutes a day. **Do you pray to God 5 minutes a day? When the storms of life come, do you cry out for help to Jesus? Do you know that he will always be there for you in the midst of the storm?**

7/10 - Psalm 111 is a wonderful Psalm of praise! I love the way it ends in verse 10: *"Reverence for the LORD is the foundation of true wisdom. The rewards of wisdom come to all who obey him. Praise his name forever!"* **Q: Do you believe that reverence for God is the foundation of true wisdom? Do you believe that there are rewards of wisdom if you obey God? Will you praise his name forever?**

7/10 - Psalm 112 is a great look at a godly person's life. Today in verse 1 we read: *"Blessed is the person who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands."* **Q: Is fear of the Lord healthy? Why or why not? Is fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? Are you blessed if you fear the Lord? Do you find great delight in God's commands? What are God's commands?**

7/10 - Psalm 112 verse 4 stands out - *"When darkness overtakes the godly, light will come bursting in."* This is encouraging. When darkness overtakes us, if we stay true to God and Christ and faith, light will come "bursting in"! I like that... Know that the light is coming... And verse 9 is a great reminder - *"They give generously to those in need."* **Q: Are you doing something in your life to serve the poorest of the poor? There are 1.2 billion people living in our world today on less than \$1 per day. Is there something you can do to give generously to those in need?**

7/10 - Psalm 113 & 114 today are very interesting and important Psalms! These are 2 of 6 Psalms, 113 to 118, that form the "Egyptian Hallel." These Psalms were used in Jewish liturgy at the great religious

festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication, Weeks, New Moon. At Passover Psalm 113 & 114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115 - 118 were sung after the meal. **Q: As you read these two Psalms today, do you sense joy in the Lord's work? Justice? Glory? Power? Does reading these two Psalms make you want to celebrate and give thanks for the Lord and all he has done throughout history and in your life?**

7/11 - Today in Psalm 115 verse 1 we will read – *“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory.”* (Chris Tomlin fans out there will recognize this as one of his many awesome worship tunes. . .) I don't know how this verse strikes you, but it strikes me hard. Which is good. I think sometimes I do things for my own glory. And this verse, and really the entire Bible, is clear that the glory is God's and not ours. Yeah, sure, we will live our lives full of “glorious” moments when we are loving God and loving people. But, we should not be living our lives to build up our own fame or our own glory. As Rick Warren states so well in the 1st sentence of the 1st chapter of his book “Purpose Driven Life”- “It is not about you.” And this is true. It is about God. And this is good news! Really. I have tried to live my life in the past where it was all about me. And this was a miserable way to live life. I pray that you see the incredible wisdom in this verse - *“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory.”* **Q: How are you living your life? Are you living your life to advance the fame and glory of God? Are you doing this by loving God and loving other people with all that you are? Or, are you by chance living your life to advance the fame and glory of yourself? And if so. . . how's this going for you?**

7/11 - Psalm 116 verses 1 & 2 are amazing- *“I love the LORD because he hears and answers my prayers. Because he bends down and listens, I will pray as long as I have breath!”* **Q: How is your prayer life these days? Do you believe God bends down and listens to your prayers? And answers them? Will you pray as long as you have breath?**

7/11 - Psalm 117 is the shortest of all the Psalms - and the shortest chapter in the entire Bible. This Psalm is said to basically be one long Alleluia. :) Actually verse 1 has a very important message - *“Praise the LORD, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth.”* This demonstrates that God was very interested in the salvation of the Gentiles and all the nations in the Old Testament. And not just in the New Testament as we get to the book of Acts. This was part of the plan all along... **Q: When was the last time you said "Alleluia" to God, outside of church?**

7/11 - I came across a wonderful speculation on Psalm 118! Zondervan's commentary suggested that Jesus and the disciples sang this psalm/hymn at the end of the Last Supper. Matthew chapter 26 verse 30 tells us - *“When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”* Adds a bit of a new dimension to this Psalm, no? The reason for this speculation is because this is the final Psalm in the Egyptian Hallel of Psalms 113 through 118. These Psalms were used in Jewish liturgy at the great religious festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication, Weeks, New Moon. At Passover Psalm 113 & 114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115 - 118 were sung after the meal. Perhaps, even after the Last Supper by Jesus and the disciples? Verse 8 in this Psalm stands out to me big time: *“It is better to trust the LORD than to put confidence in people.”* Kind of strong words I know... but what do you think? Might people, on occasion, let you down? Obviously, we know the answer to this one. People will let us down. Even our closest friends and family at some point will let us down. However - I don't think this means we give up on investing and loving friends and family! It just means we should not be surprised when someone let's us down. That's human nature. None of us is perfect this side of heaven - you will obviously let people down too. Realizing this, I think all of us should be prepared to forgive others and to ask for forgiveness of others. However, what do you think on this question: **Q: Will God ever let you down? Will Jesus ever let you down?** Please know He won't! In fact, I believe that He's holding you up right this very moment...

7/11 - Psalm 118 is the last half of the psalm possibly sung by Jesus and the disciples after the Last Supper - see yesterday's posting below for details. What an amazing Psalm... Verse 22 was quoted by Jesus in Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17 and he used this verse to refer to himself - *“The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone.”* **Q: Do you believe this verse applies to Jesus? Is Jesus the cornerstone in your life?**

7/12 - Whoo-hoo! Today we begin Psalm 119, the longest Psalm and chapter in the Bible! This Psalm is a beautiful meditation on God's Word and how it helps us stay pure and grow in faith. Almost every verse in this Psalm mentions God's Word. I pray that this Psalm is encouraging to you as you read through the One Year Bible! Today in Psalm 119 verse 11 we read: *"I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* **Q: Have you hidden God's word in your heart? So that you might not sin against God? Do you realize that all sin is indeed a sin against God? Are you memorizing Scripture on a regular basis? And, more importantly, reflecting on Scripture?** Check out this link for some great free online resources to help you memorize Scripture - <http://www.memoryverses.org/>

7/12 - Wow. Psalm 119 verse 29 is powerful: *"Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your law."* Do you ever lie to yourself? If you answered no, are you lying to yourself now? :) I think that lying to ourselves is part of our fallen human condition. I think we're probably pretty good at it. And I think that maybe the cure for this is even found in this same verse - the prayer of *"give me the privilege of knowing your law."* It is a privilege to know God's Word. It is a free privilege, but a privilege that I think we can often take for granted or simply ignore. Through our study of God's Word let us pray that we allow God to show us any area of our life where we might be lying to ourselves. And let us allow God to redeem that area and give us the clarity of Truth. **Q: Like this Psalmist, will you pray to God and ask Him to keep you from lying to yourself? Will you pray this prayer often?**

7/12 - Today in Psalm 119 verses 47 & 48 we read – *"I delight in your commands because I love them. I lift up my hands to your commands which I love, and I meditate on your decrees."* **Q: Do you believe it is possible to delight in God's commands? Why might this be a good thing? Do you believe it is possible to actually love God's commands? What are God's commands? Where can we find them? (okay, I'll give you a hint – the answer is all over Psalm 119 :) - God's Word, the Bible is where we can find God's commands) Do you meditate upon God's decrees as found in the Bible? Do you love the Bible? This seems like a strange question to ask in some regards. . . but, maybe ask yourself this – do you love books in general? I think many of us would say we love books. (Maybe using the term loosely. . .) So, if we were to consider just one book that it would really make sense to invest our time in; to meditate upon; to read for all of our lives; to love – what would that book be? Why would it be that book? Are you a bookworm when it comes to the Bible?**

7/12 - Today in Psalm 119 verse 37 we read: *"Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word."* **Q: Are there currently things in your life that you are spending time on – focusing your eyes on – that are worthless? What are these things? Do you want to turn your eyes away from these things? Will you? Do you believe that your life can be preserved by the Word of God – the Bible? How will you continue to preserve your life according to God's Word on a daily basis? Do you consider the Bible literally to be a "life preserver" for you in the midst of the raging rivers of life? Will you hold onto this life preserver each and every day?**

7/12 - Wow. I love Psalm 119 verse 54 today - *"Your principles have been the music of my life throughout the years of my pilgrimage."* What a beautiful metaphor - God's principles being the music of our lives through all our years as we are on our pilgrimage. Great stuff! **Q: How might God's principles actually become the music of your life? Do you think you'd need to be reading God's Word frequently to tune into his frequency? (did you catch that - frequently & frequency? :) I commend you for reading the Bible each day this year as we go through the Bible. I pray you'll continue to read the Bible daily in all of your years to come. I pray God's principles are and will be the music of your life.**

7/12 - Verse 59 today is a great verse for each of us to consider - *"I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your statutes."* **Q: Have you ever reached a mid-life or maybe even a quarter-life crisis where you pondered the direction of your life? Do you like the direction your life is heading now? Do you want to change that direction? Will you turn to follow God's way? God's Truth? God's life for you? Do you believe that God's plans for you are so much bigger than any plans of your own that you could dream up on your own?**

7/12 - Psalm 119 verse 71 has an interesting take on suffering - *"The suffering you sent was good for*

me, for it taught me to pay attention to your principles." **Q: Do you believe suffering can be good for you? Can it teach you to pay attention to God?** Christianity Today magazine had a great article on Suffering a while back, which you can read [at this link](#). (Note that the article starts out with this provocative statement - "*God loves you and has a difficult plan for your life.*") Also, I did find some reflections on Suffering & Grief on ChristianityToday.com that are worth reading [at this link](#).

7/12 - I am continuing to love our readings of Psalm 119! This is an incredible Psalm... I somehow am re-reminded of how amazing this Psalm is every time I read it in the Bible. I could write something on each verse. For example, I love the imagery in verse 81 today - "*I faint with longing for your salvation; but I have put my hope in your word.*" I faint! I long! I hope! And Verse 83 - "*I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, exhausted with waiting. But I cling to your principles and obey them.*" I am shriveled! I am exhausted! I wait! I cling! I obey! I love this Psalm... Verse 95 is powerful: "*Though the wicked hide along the way to kill me, I will quietly keep my mind on your decrees.*" **Q: How can you quietly keep your mind on God's decrees? Will you make this a habit to quietly keep your mind on God's decrees? Would this be a good habit?**

7/12 - Psalm 119 verse 105 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible! "*Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.*" **Q: Do you believe God's Word, the Bible, is a lamp for your feet? A light for your path? To help put this in perspective - without God's Word, the Bible, is it possible that we would have no lamp for our feet? No light for our paths? That we'd essentially be groping in the darkness without God's Word, the Bible?**

7/12 - Verse 111 wow... "*Your decrees are my treasure; they are truly my heart's delight.*" **Q: What is your treasure? Where is your treasure? Is God's Word, the Bible, truly your heart's delight?**

7/12 - Psalm 119 verse 114 is beautiful a beautiful reflection on our relationship with God and his Word, the Bible - "*You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my only source of hope.*" This ties in so well with the reflections on false teachers above. The Bible is clearly a refuge and shield from false teaching! **Q: Is God's Word your only source of hope?** And remember, Jesus is the very Word made flesh, so Jesus would clearly be your only source of hope too, if the Word truly is. Let us take refuge in God's Word each day of our lives!

7/12 - Verse 127 today is powerful - "*Truly, I love your commands more than gold, even the finest gold.*" I think this is something each of us needs to ask ourselves. **Q: Do we love God's commands - his Word - the Bible - more than we love any and all material possessions? Do we value the Bible above all the money this world could ever offer us?** This is an important decision to make... I pray we realize the eternal worth of God's commands compared to the passing and transitory nature of "even the finest gold." Let us always remember the great peril of ignoring God's Word and instead chasing after the world's "fool's gold..."

7/12 - Psalm 119 is continuing with its amazing verses about God's holy Word, the Bible, and how it can transform our lives. Verse 138 is just one more small example from this incredible Psalm - "*Your decrees are perfect; they are entirely worthy of our trust.*" **Q: Do you believe that God's Word, the Bible, is perfect? Is it entirely worthy of our trust? Would you consider the Bible to be a perfect book of counsel for your life?**

7/12 - I love verse 130, which I used to have at the top of this blog in the NIV translation: "*The unfolding of your words gives light...*" **Q: Do you believe this is true? Does reading God's Word, the Bible, bring light into your life? If you did not read God's Word would you be in darkness?**

7/13 - Psalm 120 is the beginning of 15 Psalms known as "songs of ascent!" This could mean the ascent of the stairs to the Temple in Jerusalem - or more likely the annual religious pilgrimages and the ascent to Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Are you ready for the next 15 Psalms of Ascent? Verse 1 in this Psalm should be encouraging to each of us: "*I took my troubles to the LORD; I cried out to him, and he answered my prayer.*" **Q: Do you have troubles in your life? Have you brought them to God in prayer? Will**

you? Will you allow him to answer your prayer?

7/13 - Psalm 121 is the second in this series of 15 Psalms of ascent that were likely written for religious festivals when people were making their pilgrimages to Israel. I love verses 3 & 4 today - *"He will not let you stumble and fall; the one who watches over you will not sleep. Indeed, he who watches over Israel never tires and never sleeps."* How about that! God does not sleep! This reminds me of other parts of the Bible where it talks about God being pure light and having no shadows. God is also so perfect that he does not sleep! I like that... Allows me to sleep better at night. I'll no longer need to count sheep now! :) And the closing verse 8... wow... *"The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever."* **Q: Do you believe this is true? Do you believe that God watches over you - always?**

7/13 - Psalm 123 continues the songs of Ascent. Psalm 123 is a short one, but a great one. I love these portions of verses 2 and 3 - *"We look to the LORD our God for his mercy....Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy..."* **Q: Do you look to the Lord for his mercy? What does God's mercy to you look like? Why would you need God's mercy? Do you pray to the Lord this simple prayer - "Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy"?**

7/13 - Psalm 125 has great verses in 4 & 5: *"O LORD, do good to those who are good, whose hearts are in tune with you. But banish those who turn to crooked ways, O LORD. Take them away with those who do evil. And let Israel have quietness and peace."* I love that closing line - let us have quietness and peace! What a great prayer. Don't we all wish for quietness and peace in our lives? One thing I'll recommend - which I am trying so hard to learn myself - is to take a Sabbath day of rest each week. Just rest. Just be peaceful. Just be with God. One day a week. It will dramatically change the other 6 days of your week without a doubt. Will you join me on this quest for quietness and peace in our lives by taking a Sabbath day of rest once each week?

7/13 - Psalm 126 has a great verse today. I always love the verses in Psalms that speak about water! I don't know what it is about these verses, but here's verse 4: *"Restore our fortunes, LORD, as streams renew the desert."* **Q: Do you believe that God can restore your life like water restores the desert? Will you allow God's water into all the nooks & crannies in your life that are in need of renewal? Do you believe that God is living water? Are you thirsty for that living water in your life? Will you drink the Water?**

7/14 - Psalm 128 verse 1 stands out today: *"How happy are those who fear the LORD-- all who follow his ways!"* **Q: Do you think it is possible to be happy and to fear God at the same time? Do you believe a healthy fear of God is, well, healthy? Why would we fear God - God who loves us immensely? What is this Psalmist saying to us today in our lives? What are some ways that you are literally "fearing the Lord" in your life today? Do you agree with the Psalmist that those who fear the Lord are happy? Why or why not? Have you gone through periods of your life where you did not fear the Lord? Were you happy then?**

7/14 - Psalm 129 is a prayer for the continuing withering of Israel's enemies and verse 4 likely represents a celebration from Babylonian captivity - *"But the LORD is good; he has cut the cords used by the ungodly to bind me."* **Q: How about in our lives today? Has Jesus cut any cords used by the ungodly to bind you? Are there still some cords being used by the ungodly to bind you? Will you let Jesus cut those cords? Will you let Jesus free you from that captivity? Do you believe that Jesus is good and that he wants to cut the cords that bind you? Do you believe that Jesus cares for you?**

7/14- Psalm 130 is amazing today! Each verse is jam packed with good stuff to think about.... Actually - if you get a chance - please read through each of these verses again, and meditate for a moment on each one and what each verse might be speaking into your life and your heart. I think you will find tons of relevant meditations in this Psalm for your life. Today in Psalm 130 verse 5 we read - *"I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word."* **Q: Are you counting on God in your life? Really counting on him? Have you put your hope in his Word, the Bible? Do you believe that reading and meditating and reflecting on the Bible can transform your life and your**

relationship with God? What is your plan to stay in God's Word each and every day for the rest of your life? (I hope it is the One Year Bible! :) Should you have a plan to be in God's Word each and every day?

7/14 - Psalm 132 is a fantastic psalm of the King David era! It is thought that this Psalm may have been written for the dedication of the temple or it may have been used in a coronation ceremony. Verses 4 & 5 stood out to me today as demonstrating David's dedication to God - *"I will not let my eyes sleep nor close my eyelids in slumber until I find a place to build a house for the LORD, a sanctuary for the Mighty One of Israel."* **Q: What in your life is keeping you awake at night? Is it something of God's will? Or perhaps something worldly (not of God's will)? Will you pursue God's will in your life, and leave worldly things behind you? Will you pursue building "a sanctuary for God" in your life above all else?**

7/14 - Psalm 134 is a great little Psalm! This Psalm is basically taking place as worshippers are leaving the Temple in Jerusalem for the night - and in the first two verses the worshippers are speaking to the Levites (priests) in the temple - giving blessings to the Levites and asking them to bless God overnight. Then, in the third verse the Levites give a departing blessing to the worshippers as they leave the temple: *"May the LORD, who made heaven and earth, bless you from Jerusalem."* And that is certainly my prayer for each of you reading this - May God bless you! **Q: Does your church have closing benedictions or blessings, at the end of services? How does this impact you?**

7/14 - Today in Psalm 135 verse 3 we will read this very simple, yet profound verse - *"Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant."* The words I want to focus in on here are "the Lord is good." **Q: Do you believe this to be true? Do you really - in your heart - believe that God is good?** I think this is important for us to really meditate upon. I'm afraid sometimes we get into our minds that maybe God is not always good. Maybe we start to think that God is out to get us. Or out to trick us. Really isn't looking out for us. Doesn't really like us. Doesn't really love us. These are all of course lies that come into our mind from the Enemy, the Destroyer. God is obviously good. So good. All of the time. And maybe sometimes we really need to remind ourselves of this. Even in the midst of challenges and struggles and addictions and hardships - God is good. God is there with us. God is leading us - and maybe even taking us through a hardship to bring us to the Promised Land on the other side. Our human minds will often not understand God's ways. But, I think for us to always remember that God is good is so important for our continuing growth in our relationship with God. **So, again, do you believe the words of this Psalmist? Do you believe that God is good?**

7/15 - Psalm 136 is a liturgy of Praise to God as Creator and Redeemer. A Levitical priest singer likely led the recital, while either worshippers or a Levitical choir responded with the refrain. Fun Bible factoid here - the response "His love endures forever" is repeated 26 times in this Psalm, which is the numerical value of God's name "Yahweh" - back when Hebrew letters were also used as numbers. A lot of intricacies went into the Psalms... some of which do get lost in translation from Hebrew to English. Below is an image of the Hebrew letters yud, hey, vav, hey -- often depicted in English as YHWH or Yahweh -- spelling the name of God.

7/15 - I love Psalm 146 verse 9 today: *"The LORD protects the foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows."* **Q: If God protects foreigners, orphans and widows, should we protect these folks in our communities as well? How in your life today are you caring for orphans and widows and foreigners?**

7/15 - Psalm 147 was thought to have been written for Levitical singers on the happy occasion of the dedication of the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem - see [Nehemiah 12:27-43](#). Psalm 147 was divided into two Psalms - verses 1 through 11 and 12 through 20 - in the Septuagint, the pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament. However, the Hebrew text has the Psalm as one whole Psalm. Verses 10 and 11 are an incredible middle point of this Psalm that stood out to me today: *"The strength of a horse does not impress him; how puny in his sight is the strength of a man. Rather, the LORD's delight is in those who*

honor him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love." These verses remind me that God really is not impressed with our shows of "strength" or "independence." God is much more impressed when we are dependent on Him. **Q: How are you honoring the Lord with your life today? Do you put his hope in his unfailing love? Or do you rely on your own strength?**

7/15 - Psalm 148 is a call for all creation to praise God! I love it. As I was reading this Psalm I was reminded of the Matt Redman song that we sometimes sing in church that goes something like - "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!" I love how the Psalms can stir up worship songs in our minds! We read this in verse 5 - *"Let every created thing give praise to the LORD, for he issued his command, and they came into being."* **Q: Do you agree with this verse? That you came into being because the Lord commanded it? Do you give thanks to God frequently? And joyfully? Even in the midst of maybe some challenging times in your life, can you still give praise to your Creator?**

7/15 - Psalm 149 is a beautiful song of praise today! Verse 3 I love: *"Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp."* **Q: Do you praise God's name with dancing and music?** Yes, I confess, I am a huge fan of the praise and worship thing going on in churches and with CCM artists and their concerts these days. I know this is not the only way to praise or worship God by any means. **Are you praising God's name each day with the very "dance" of your life??**

7/15 - Psalm 150 is a wonderful end to the Psalter filled with a call to Praise God with all that we are! Give it up for God and God only! **Q: How have you praised God today? Do you praise God daily? How?**

7/16 - Today in Isaiah chapter 19 we read the message concerning Egypt! You can gain further context on this chapter today by reading [Jeremiah chapter 46](#) and [Ezekiel chapters 29-32](#). Both of these books we will be reading later this year, just after Isaiah. There are some really interesting verses at the end of chapter 19, beginning in verse 18 and going through the end of the chapter. Verses 19 & 20 are awesome: *"In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and there will be a monument to the LORD at its border. It will be a sign and a witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When the people cry to the LORD for help against those who oppress them, he will send them a savior who will rescue them."* This reminds me of Joseph & Mary's flight to Egypt with Jesus as an infant to be safe from Herod's decree to kill all boys under the age of 2! (see [Matthew 2:13-21](#)) Our Savior was sent into Egypt for a brief period of His life! **Q: What is your reaction to reading prophecies about Jesus' life here in Isaiah? Is it beautiful to you?**

7/16 - Today in Isaiah chapter 23 we read a message about Tyre. Ancient Tyre was a city on the seacoast of Phoenicia and is still a city today in modern day southern Lebanon. In the days of the prophet Isaiah, it was a major trading center, wealthy and full of corruption. Tyre was also rebuked by the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, and Zechariah - books that we'll read later this year in the One Year Bible. A good history & overview of ancient and modern day Tyre is [at this website link](#). Below is a map of modern day Lebanon that shows the location of Tyre. And below that is a modern day picture of Tyre's ancient ruins. Some more great images of ancient Tyre's ruins are [at this link](#). Isaiah chapter 24 today begins 4 chapters of judgment and blessing in the final days! The time of God's final victory over evil. There is some pretty "heavy" stuff to consider about the last days when reading this chapter, to say the least. But, I absolutely love the way the chapter ends - as God's story truly will end as we'll read about more in the book of Revelation later this year - with verses 21 through 24: *"In that day the LORD will punish the fallen angels in the heavens and the proud rulers of the nations on earth. They will be rounded up and put in prison until they are tried and condemned. Then the LORD Almighty will mount his throne on Mount Zion. He will rule gloriously in Jerusalem, in the sight of all the leaders of his people. There will be such glory that the brightness of the sun and moon will seem to fade away."* **Q: Are you looking forward to this moment of the Lord's final victory?**

7/17 - We have great readings in Isaiah today about the judgment and restoration of Israel! I think Isaiah chapter 27 verses 11 through 13 capture the essence of today's readings: *"The people are like the dead branches of a tree, broken off and used for kindling beneath the cooking pots. Israel is a foolish and stupid nation, for its people have turned away from God. Therefore, the one who made them will show them no pity or mercy. Yet the time will come when the LORD will gather them together one by one like handpicked grain. He will bring them to his great threshing floor--from the Euphrates River in the east to the brook of Egypt in the west. In that day the great trumpet will sound. Many who were dying in exile in Assyria and Egypt will return to Jerusalem to worship the LORD on his holy mountain."* **Q: How do Isaiah's readings about judgment and restoration stand out to you?**

7/17 - Today the Lord continues his messages of woe against Jerusalem and Judah through the prophet Isaiah! Isaiah chapter 29 verses 15 and 16 I found to be so powerful to consider... *"Destruction is certain for those who try to hide their plans from the LORD, who try to keep him in the dark concerning what they do! "The LORD can't see us," you say to yourselves. "He doesn't know what is going on!" How stupid can you be? He is the Potter, and he is certainly greater than you. You are only the jars he makes! Should the thing that was created say to the one who made it, "He didn't make us"? Does a jar ever say, "The potter who made me is stupid"?"* **Q: How true are these words? Have you ever tried to hide your plans from God? Did it work out? How apropos the point in verse 16 is where some people said: "God didn't make us!" Ever hear words like this today from others? How sad is this? Will you pray for others in your life today who may feel that God didn't make them? Will you pray for those in your life today that do not believe in God? Will you pray for them to learn that indeed the potter who made them is not stupid? Will you pray that they learn that the Potter who made them is God who loves them so very dearly!**

7/18 - Today in Isaiah chapter 30 we read about blessings for God's people! You'll notice in verses 12 and 15 the term "Holy One of Israel" is used for God. An interesting thing to note about this term "Holy One of Israel" is that it occurs a total of 26 times in the book of the prophet Isaiah - and only 6 times elsewhere in the rest of the Old Testament! (I think it is such a beautiful term - maybe in part because my church sings a wonderful song occasionally w/ these lyrics: "For I am the Lord your God. The Holy One of Israel. Your Savior. I am the Lord - do not fear - I am the Lord". Anyone else's church sing this song?) Some scholars over history have challenged whether the entire 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah were really all written by the same person, Isaiah. Well, the continuity of the use of the term "Holy One of Israel" throughout the book has been the strongest argument for the unity of the book of Isaiah. **Q: Who do you believe is the Holy One of Israel? Who is the Holy One in your life? What does Holiness mean to you?**

7/19 - Today we read Isaiah chapter 35, which is a wonderful glimpse of God's Kingdom Come! The preceding Chapter 34 is a message of judgment to the nations during the end times. And then Chapter 35 is a message of hope for those who love, believe in and are obedient to the Lord. I love verse 8 in chapter 35: *"And a main road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil-hearted people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God's ways; fools will never walk there."* I like that concept! The Highway of Holiness! **Q: If you could take the Highway of Holiness right now, would you? Do you look forward to walking on the Highway of Holiness in the future? In the midst of our often chaotic and un-holy world, will you seek only the Highway of Holiness for your life today and forevermore?**

7/19 - Today in Micah chapter 2 verse 11 we read this powerful verse to consider: *"Suppose a prophet full of lies were to say to you, "I'll preach to you the joys of wine and drink!" That's just the kind of prophet you would like!"* **Q: At times in our lives, do we pick and choose the "prophets" we will listen to? Do we pick and choose the pastors or teachers we will listen to? Do we look for people that will tell us basically what we want to hear? Instead, is it maybe okay for a pastor or teacher to "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted"? Is it maybe okay if we get uncomfortable with some things we read in the Bible - at first read. But, then, do we start to reflect on and study what the challenging passages of the Bible really are saying and mean? Are we seeking Truth more than seeking being "comfortable" in our religion and our lives? Or are we just seeking comfort above**

all else...

7/19 - Chapter 4 verse 1 stood out to me: *"In the last days, the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem will become the most important place on earth. People from all over the world will go there to worship."* What are the most important places on earth today for most people? Could it be the movies, sporting events, work, vacations, etc. **Q: What are the most important places in your life? Should church (be it a cathedral or a house church) and coming together with others to worship God perhaps be the most important place on earth? Is it?**

7/19 - Okay, we get an amazing few verses in Micah today, which are perfect for the Christmas Advent season we are in! Keep in mind that these verses were written 700 years before the birth of Jesus. Micah was the Old Testament prophet who prophesied that the Messiah, Jesus, would be born in Bethlehem. Reading these verses in Micah chapter 5 verses 2 through 5 gives me the chills... *"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past. The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the time when the woman in labor gives birth to her son. Then at last his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land. And he will stand to lead his flock with the LORD's strength, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored all around the world. And he will be the source of our peace."* Wow... I love it! Please read these verses again. Perfect for the Christmas season!

7/20 - In Micah chapter 6 verse 8 I read a commentary that the following verse is the "most memorable statement in the OT defining a proper relationship to God". Here it is: *"No, O people, the LORD has already told you what is good, and this is what he requires: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."* Not a very big and complicated list, eh? Do what is right. Love mercy. And walk humbly with God. **Q: How are you doing on these things?**

7/20 - Micah chapter 7 verse 7 definitely stood out to me in today's readings: *"As for me, I look to the LORD for his help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me."* I love the confidence and surety of this verse from Micah. **Q: Where do you look for your help? Will you wait confidently for God to save you? Do you believe that God will certainly hear you?**

7/21 - Great readings in Isaiah featuring King Hezekiah today! You'll recall from yesterday's readings that King Sennacherib of Assyria's representative threw down some serious trash-talking at the walls of Jerusalem. (see yesterday's blog entry below). Well today in chapter 37 we read about Hezekiah seeking the Lord's help. Hezekiah takes all of this to God in prayer. Good move! **Q: How often in our lives today, when challenges come our way, do we take the challenges everywhere else BUT to God? Wouldn't it be easier to take them directly to God? Why do we turn to alcohol or drugs or food or worrying or _____ (fill in your blank here) when we can simply take our challenges to the one true living God who can actually do something with them?** Will you model what Hezekiah did when he received distressing news from the King of Assyria, in verses 14 through 17: *"After Hezekiah received the letter and read it, he went up to the LORD's Temple and spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed this prayer before the LORD: "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you are enthroned between the mighty cherubim! You alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You alone created the heavens and the earth. Listen to me, O LORD, and hear! Open your eyes, O LORD, and see! Listen to Sennacherib's words of defiance against the living God."*

7/22 - I love Hezekiah's poem of praise in Isaiah chapter 38. Verse 16 stood out to me: *"Lord, your discipline is good, for it leads to life and health."* **Q: Would you agree with Hezekiah on this point? Is God's discipline good? Does God's discipline lead to life and health? Are you accepting God's discipline in your life today?**

7/22 - Today in Isaiah chapter 39 we read about Hezekiah receiving envoys from Babylon. Unfortunately, he is a bit too hospitable with these envoys! He believes showing off his wealth will prove that he has worldly power and that the Babylonians will respect him and Judah. Isaiah sees that Hezekiah is relying

on worldly wealth and not God, and Isaiah delivers a word from God that Judah will be exiled to Babylon. Indeed, this comes true in 115 years in the future from when Isaiah delivers this word in this chapter. We will read more about the Babylonian exile later in this year's One Year Bible readings. **Q: How about us, in our lives today – do we try to impress people with our worldly wealth or toys or stuff, like Hezekiah was trying to impress the Babylonians? And further, do we actually try to rely on this worldly stuff rather than rely on God?**

7/23 - Today in Isaiah chapter 42 we read some amazing prophecies about Jesus! Verses 1 through 4 in Isaiah 42 are known as the "Servant Song," in which the servant is the coming Messiah, Jesus. There are 3 other servant songs in Isaiah we'll read in the coming days. The nation of Israel, as well as the Messiah, are both often called "servant". The nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priests and the Messiah is the high priest who atones for the sins of the world. In Isaiah chapter 42 verse 1 today we read: *"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations."* Verses 1 through 4 are quoted in part in [Matthew 12:18-21](#). **Q: Do you see the prophecies about Jesus as you read today's chapter 42? Is this chapter and its prophecies encouraging to you?**

7/24 - Isaiah's words in chapter 44 verses 18 & 19 today are classic Old Testament very direct words! *"Such stupidity and ignorance! Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see. Their minds are shut, and they cannot think. The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, 'Why, it's just a block of wood! I burned half of it for heat and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat. How can the rest of it be a god? Should I bow down to worship a chunk of wood?'"* **Q: I wonder about us in our lives today - do we create idols of our own today? Maybe our idols are not made out of chunks of wood these days. But do we create idols perhaps out of other people? Do we create idols out of material goods? Do we create idols out of our careers? Do we create idols out of how we spend our time? Are you bowing down and worshipping any "chunks of wood" in your life today?** Please turn any idols you might have over to Jesus and allow him to heal you from worshipping those idols in your life!

7/24 - In yesterday and today's Isaiah chapter 45 readings we read about King Cyrus of Persia! Verse 13 says this about Cyrus in today's readings: *"I will raise up Cyrus to fulfill my righteous purpose, and I will guide all his actions. He will restore my city and free my captive people--and not for a reward! I, the LORD Almighty, have spoken!"* The interesting thing to note here is that Cyrus was not Jewish - he was a Gentile ruler who was raised up for the purpose of freeing the Israelite captives from exile in Babylon and allowing them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. In yesterday's readings in chapter 45 verse 1 Cyrus was even referred to as "God's anointed." This is the only place in the Bible where a Gentile ruler is said to be anointed. It's also very interesting to note that Isaiah is calling Cyrus by name some 150 years before Cyrus ruled! Isaiah prophesied from 740 to 681 B.C. and Cyrus ruled from 559 to 530 B.C. Some Bible commentaries suggest that Cyrus read these prophecies of Isaiah during his reign and was so moved by them that he decided to indeed fulfill them. In any case, Cyrus played a pivotal role in our spiritual history - allowing the promise of Abraham's many descendants to continue to the fulfillment of the coming Messiah in Jesus! Isaiah chapter 45 verses 22 & 23 are powerful and foreshadow Jesus' ministry here on earth: *"Let all the world look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other. I have sworn by my own name, and I will never go back on my word: Every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will confess allegiance to my name."* These verses are also foreshadowing of the book of Revelation that we will read later this year. We read Paul quoting these verses to describe Jesus in [Romans 14:11](#) and [Philippians 2:10-11](#). **Q: Do you believe that all the world should look to God for salvation? Is there another god? Is Jesus God? Do you believe that one day every tongue will confess allegiance to the name of Jesus and every knee will bow to Jesus?**

7/25 - Isaiah chapter 49 verse 6 is sometimes referred to as "the great commission of the Old Testament"! Here it is: *"You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."* Paul and Barnabas quote this verse in part in [Acts 13:47](#). The preceding 5 verses (1-5) in chapter 49 are considered the second servant song in Isaiah and are thought to refer to Jesus, the coming Messiah. Isaiah chapter 50 verses 4 through 9 in today's readings are considered the third servant song (out of a total of four) in Isaiah. It's interesting, when I initially read these verses in chapter 50 I really thought they were solely about

the prophet Isaiah. But, as we all know by now from our readings in Isaiah - and we'll see this again in big ways in our coming day's readings - Isaiah often had the coming Savior of the world, Jesus, on his mind when he was writing this incredible book of the Old Testament in the eighth century B.C.! **Q: What's your reaction to reading about all of the prophecies of Jesus in the book of Isaiah? Do they encourage you? Do they strengthen your faith in any way?**

7/26 - Isaiah chapter 53 is one of the most powerful chapters of the Bible - and one of the saddest to really meditate upon. Isaiah chapter 53 is all about Jesus! This is a powerful chapter to read... I'm sure you likely caught that this chapter was about Jesus when you first read it, but if not, please re-read the chapter again and do you see how Isaiah is prophesying Jesus' passion and death? It is astounding to realize these words of Isaiah's were written in 8th century B.C. Verse 5 tells us: *"But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!"* **Q: Do you believe that the words of Isaiah's in chapter 53 today are about Jesus? Do you believe that Jesus was wounded and crushed for your sins? Was he beaten that you might have peace? Are you healed because Jesus was whipped and then murdered on a cross?**

7/26 - Today we read Isaiah chapter 55, which is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible! I went to a wedding several years ago in Napa, California and God led me to a church in that town on a Sunday morning where the pastor preached an incredible sermon from Isaiah 55. It is a beautiful chapter for all of us who are Thirsty. Let us drink deeply of God's Word today! Verse 1 tells us - *"Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink--even if you have no money!"* **Q: Are you drinking freely of the Bible this year? Even if you have no money, do you believe that God is inviting you to drink deeply of his True and Holy Water, His Word? Are you thirsty?**

7/26 - In verses 10-12 we read: *"10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. 12 You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands."* **Q: How do these above verses resonate with you, based on our One Year Bible readings? Particularly verse 11 above - is God's Word accomplishing something in you this year through reading the Bible each day? Is the Bible "watering" you? Are you Thirsty? Do you feel that you are going out in joy and being led forth in peace? Have the mountains and hills burst into song before you? Are the trees of the field clapping their hands in your life today?**

7/26 - Today in Isaiah chapter 57 verses 20 & 21 we have a chance to think about that sometimes elusive word "peace": *"But those who still reject me are like the restless sea. It is never still but continually churns up mire and dirt. There is no peace for the wicked," says my God.*" I don't know about you, but I know I have gone through many days of my life without true peace - and many days with true peace. And I do honestly believe that there is no peace in our lives apart from God. When we live our lives solely for our own selfish motives, we live a very chaotic un-restful un-peaceful life I believe. But, when we turn our lives over to God, when we embrace God, when we love God, and when we are obedient to God's will for our lives, we come to know true peace! And it is indeed a peace that surpasses all understanding. I pray that each of us is walking in the light of God's peace this very day. And tomorrow. And the next day. Please, don't ever step out of the peace of God and back into the chaos of living for yourself. **Q: Do you agree with this verse saying "There is no peace for the wicked."? Where have you found peace in your life? Have you found peace through righteousness?**

7/27 - Today in Isaiah chapter 59 we read about warnings against sin - which were written for Israel in 8th century B.C. **Q: Do you think we should heed these warnings today as well? Any of these warnings in chapter 59 sound like they could have been written for our modern day?** In verses 9 & 10 today we read - *"It is because of all this evil that deliverance is far from us. That is why God doesn't punish those who injure us. No wonder we are in darkness when we expected light. No wonder we are walking in the gloom. No wonder we grope like blind people and stumble along. Even at brightest noontime, we fall down as though it were dark. No wonder we are like corpses when compared to vigorous young men!"* When I read these verses above, I for some reason think of people in our world

today who are addicted to pornography. Pornography is a horrific sin that indeed turns vigorous young men into "corpses" of themselves. Pornography sells you "vigor", but it delivers just the opposite - death. I pray that if anyone reading this is addicted to pornography that you'll run for your very life to counseling. Seriously. Your life is too short and precious to walk around like a corpse any more! Go for God! You likely can't pull out of the addiction on your own. You'll need help - immediately. Find an addiction counselor in your town ASAP. Please don't walk in the darkness of this deadly addiction anymore...

7/28 - Isaiah chapter 64 verses 5 through 7 stood out to me as a stark reminder of why Jesus came into our world as our Savior eight centuries after this was written by Isaiah - and why we still need Jesus today as our Savior... - *"But we are not godly. We are constant sinners, so your anger is heavy on us. How can people like us be saved? We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away. Yet no one calls on your name or pleads with you for mercy. Therefore, you have turned away from us and turned us over to our sins."* **Do these verses remind you of your need for Jesus? Has Jesus saved you from your constant sinning? Have you been saved from the "infection" of sin?** This is great wording in these verses by Isaiah - we are all "infected" with sin... praise God that Jesus saves us from this infection!

7/28 - Today we finish up the book of the prophet Isaiah! What a great read this book has been for me this year! I hope it has been a blessing for you as well. Tomorrow we begin the book of the prophet Jeremiah! We read powerful words from God in Isaiah chapter 66 verses 2 & 3 today: *"I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word. But those who choose their own ways, delighting in their sins, are cursed. Their offerings will not be accepted."* **Q: Have you ever literally trembled at God's Word, the Bible?** I am not 100% sure if I have. I hope so. I have certainly read portions of God's Word where I have felt very convicted. Where I have realized I must change my ways. So, I suppose in this regard I have trembled at God's Word. **Do you have a humble and contrite heart?** Again, I hope I do. I know I do sometimes... **But do we have a humble and contrite heart all of the time?** I pray that we learn to. Let us not choose our own ways. Let us not delight in our sins. Let us instead tremble at God's Word.

7/29 - Today we begin the book of the prophet Jeremiah!

~ Jeremiah ~

Author: Jeremiah

Date: Sixth century B.C.

Content: Jeremiah's life covered the last forty years of Judah's existence. The burden of his message was for God's people to accept the judgment of God so that a new beginning could be made. He lived through the invasions by the Babylonian armies, the deportations of his people by the enemy, the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the Temple of God. He warned the people concerning these events, pleading with them to turn from their sins, but to no avail. He received only scorn and persecution. Jeremiah's life is described in some detail, thus making him the best known of the Old Testament prophets.

Theme: In the crisis days during which Jeremiah lived, he had but one message for the people: Repent and turn to God. All false hopes must be abandoned and God must be given his rightful place in the nation. Nothing can save the people – neither their wealth, their armies, their diplomats, nor even their religion – only God can save. The destruction of Jerusalem stands as a memorial for all time that when a nation rejects God, the inevitable result will be ruin. Jeremiah also has a message of hope. Although Judah had abandoned God, God had not abandoned them and would once again show himself mightily on their behalf. (*Above commentary is from Tyndale Publishers "The One Year Bible Companion" p. 13*)

7/30 - Today in Jeremiah chapter 2 verse 26 we read this sad statement - *"Like a thief, Israel feels shame only when she gets caught. Kings, officials, priests, and prophets--all are alike in this."* **Q: How about us in our lives today? Do we only feel shame when we get caught? Do we realize that God knows exactly what we are doing even if we think we might be doing something in "secret"? Do you realize there are absolutely no secrets with God?**

7/30 - We read some harsh words today from God to Israel in Jeremiah chapters 2 & 3 - calling the

nation a prostitute and an adulteress. These are not words a person wants to hear from God - much less an entire nation hearing these words! Jeremiah wrote this book during the last 40 years of Judah's existence, which is not surprising to consider when we read this in chapter 3 verses 8 through 10 - *"But now Judah, too, has left me and given herself to prostitution. Israel treated it all so lightly--she thought nothing of committing adultery by worshiping idols made of wood and stone. So now the land has been greatly defiled. But in spite of all this, her faithless sister Judah has never sincerely returned to me. She has only pretended to be sorry," says the LORD.*" Again, not words you want to hear from God. **Q: Can you imagine a much worse insult from God? A prostitute? An adulteress? As harsh as these words are - I almost hesitate to ask this - But I think I should - Today, are we ourselves ever a "prostitute" or an "adulteress" to God? Do we give ourselves over to sins and lusts and false loves that break God's heart because of his love for us?** Well, when we act in such a bad way, we are fortunate that God says things like he did in verse 1 of chapter 3 of Jeremiah today - *"But you have prostituted yourself with many lovers, says the LORD. Yet I am still calling you to come back to me."* Even though we may sin gravely against God, he still calls us to come back to Him! Through Jesus today we can come back to Him! **Q: Do you need to come back to Him in any way in your life? Will you? Will you leave behind any and all "adulteress" or "prostitute" behaviors, and return to Him simply as the child of God that you were always made to be?**

7/30 - Today in Jeremiah chapter 5 verses 14 through 17 we read God's words to Israel about the coming of the armies of Babylon! Per Tyndale's One Year Bible Companion today - "Babylon was indeed an ancient nation. The old Babylonian empire had lasted from about 1900 B.C. to 1550 B.C., and earlier kingdoms had been on her soil as early as 3000 B.C. Babylon in Jeremiah's day would shortly rebel against Assyrian domination, form its own army, conquer Assyria, and become the next dominant world power." It is very interesting to see the rise of Babylon in history and how God foretold Israel that Babylon was coming. God gave Israel so many chances to repent, but Israel wouldn't. Jeremiah in chapter 6 verses 10 & 11 today tells us - *"To whom can I give warning? Who will listen when I speak? Their ears are closed, and they cannot hear. They scorn the word of the LORD. They don't want to listen at all. So now I am filled with the LORD's fury. Yes, I am weary of holding it in!"* **Q: What about us today - do we listen when God speaks?**

7/31 - Today in Jeremiah chapter 6 verse 16 we read - *"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."* I love these verses! It reminds me that on a daily basis each of us is standing at a crossroads. A crossroads of where the world would have us go and where God would have us go. Too often I am afraid we take the worldly path and not the ancient path. *"Ask where the good way is"* - **Q: Do you do this in your life? How often? I think we can best do this through prayer. "Ask, and you shall receive" we have learned from Jesus. Do we ask Jesus in prayer where the good way is? Then, do we walk in it? And the reward for walking in it is - "you will find rest for your souls."** I like this a lot! **Who doesn't want rest for our souls? Is your soul at rest today? Why or why not? If your soul is not at rest, is it possible that you are walking along the wrong path? The worldly path? Will you seek instead the ancient paths? The good Way? Will you find rest for your soul?**

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.ChronologicalBibleBlog.com this next week for daily commentary and questions for reflection.

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