

Day 151 – May 31st
Proverbs 14-16 — WQ

"Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something." –Plato

There are definitely certain characteristics that make a statement. As Solomon continues to describe the wise there are two words that stand out: "witness" and "work." "Witness" encompasses the qualities of the wise. They are pleasant, gentle, thoughtful, careful, humble individuals who think before they talk. And, as we learned yesterday, they pursue godly things.

Now, "work" describes the things they are involved in on a more physical basis. They build and build up, plan, handle money well, increase in learning, seek advice, and other various pursuits. They are actively involved in good viable things.

From these descriptions we are again reminded that true wisdom is displayed more externally than internally. The true measurement of our life is where the passion of heart takes us. It's concerned with how we act (witness) and what we do (work). Perhaps we should focus less on IQ (intelligence quotient) and more on WQ (wisdom quotient).

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Faithbuilders Devotional Series

Through the Bible in a Year
A Daily Devotional

May

Pastor Mike Fast & Pastor David Curtis

Day 150 – May 30th
Proverbs 11-13 — Life-Giving Fruit

In today's chapters, wisdom is associated with humility; with one who listens to advice; with not making a show of knowledge; accepting parent's discipline; giving good advice; and thinking before acting.

As much as I enjoy the idea of elaborating on each of these, there is one characteristic of wisdom listed in chapter 11 that I enjoy more. Verse 30 tells us that "The godly are like trees that bear life-giving fruit, and those who save lives are wise." I appreciate the balance and perspective of other translations. For instance, this proverb in the NIV reads, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise." A wise, godly man is producing life-giving fruit. His actions are imparting something that leads others to life. And what could be wiser than leading someone to life?

What kind of fruit are you generating? What are the qualities of your life? Are your actions producing something that leads others to life? And, what value have you placed on leading others to life? Choose wisely.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 149 – May 29th
Proverbs 8-10 — It's More Than Brains

Wisdom is described in these chapters as that which: is contrasted by immorality, folly and foolishness; fears the LORD; is excellent and right; speaks truth and hates deception; has good judgment; knows where to discover knowledge and discernment; hates pride, arrogance, corruption, perverted speech and evil; rewards with gifts better than pure gold; was created by the LORD before anything else was created and was yet part of the creation process; and, will add years to your life.

It is obvious that wisdom is more than just intelligence. It has the qualities of godliness. Knowing this helps us understand wisdom's benefits. As Solomon continues to describe the "wise" in the chapters ahead, it will be apparent he is not defining those with a high IQ or multiple doctorates, but those who perceive things through the eyes of God.

My grandpa was a wise man, though not in degrees or academic accolades. The Word of God poured through his veins and thoughts in such a way that everything was measured against the standard of God's instruction. Look to God's Word for any answer.

My Prayer List:

Day 121 – May 1st
2 Samuel 22; Psalm 18 — Divine Descriptors

David was truly gifted with the pen. He had the ability to poetically phrase commanding statements. He had a wonderful vocabulary that expounded his capacity to describe experiences and people.

Another large part of his writing gift was his awareness of God's working in his life. He was constantly aware of God's hand in each of his experiences.

What kind of song would you write about God? What experiences would you record that God has taken you through? What descriptions would you have of God? As I read through this song, I focused on just the descriptions of God's character that David recorded. I would encourage you to read through this list as a prayer and meditate on the phenomenal qualities of our wonderful God. My rock, fortress, savior, protector, shield, strength, salvation, stronghold, high tower, one worthy of praise, one who listens, all-powerful, high above, mighty, controls and commands creation, rescuer, deliverer, expresses emotions of delight over us, rewarder, judge, lawgiver, faithful, possesses integrity, pure, watchful, light, perfect, true, alive, and exalted!

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 122 – May 2nd

2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21-22 — Perspectives

I appreciate the balance we receive by having the opportunity to read the same story from two passages. The two accounts prove the trustworthiness of the incident, and yet it also provides different perspectives.

Today’s reading starts off with an example of varying perspective. One account leads us to believe God tempted David, but the other account clearly says Satan tempted David.

It provides us with a clear illustration of the original Hebrew writers’ perspectives. They did not always distinguish between primary and secondary causes. In other words, if God allowed Satan to tempt David, to them it was as if God did it.

Continuing with attention to perspective: David chose to sin even though Joab (of all people) knew it was wrong. And furthermore, from this story, we learn the value which God places on the intentions of the heart. It is obvious that a census was not a sinful event. The problem God had with David’s decision stemmed from David’s pride. Bear in mind, our motives and not the action itself, may contain the sin.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 148 – May 28th

Proverbs 5-7 — Charming Deception

I watched a documentary on the animals living in the arid deserts of Africa. One of the predators was a snake. In the big open desert it’s hard to chase something down to eat, so God provided this snake with a trick. It buries itself, that is all but the tip of its tail. The tail sticking up looks like a blade of grass. A small curious (or hungry) animal will come up to that attractive blade of grass only to be promptly met by the swift bite of a snake. We can think of things that could look appealing to the eye, but are fatal to the body. Like an alluring poisonous drink or attractive blade of grass, the immoral person attracts their prey.

More important than understanding the wiles of the immoral is identifying our best strategy to avoid situations like that. Solomon has several suggestions: 1) Don’t let the attractiveness fool you, 5:3-4; 2) Count the cost, 6:26-35; 3) Commit yourself to your spouse, 5:15,18; 4) Run, stay away, 5:8; 5) Heed the instruction of others, 5:1; 6:20; 7:1-3,24.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Why is gossip such a serious offense? List as many of its dangers as possible.

The May 31st devotional focuses on “witness” and “work.” We know the importance of our witness. How important is work? How important is it that we are found working when the Lord comes for us?

“Apply your heart to instruction.” How could you improve or grow in this area?

Day 123 – May 3rd
1 Chronicles 23-25 — Priests

The duties of the priests were specific. The qualifications and responsibilities were detailed and established by God. It was a temporary fix until the permanent solution came.

The earthly high priest entered the Most Holy Place year after year to offer blood, not his own, but that of an animal. He would offer the sacrifices time after time which never removed the sin. Jesus Christ did not have to die again and again, but came once for all time, to remove the power of sin forever by His perfect sacrificial death for us. Not only is Jesus the perfect sacrifice, but He is also our High Priest. Everything about His priesthood is superior and final (see the book of Hebrews).

Has the idea of Jesus Christ being the only High Priest been well accepted through the years? In the Gospels, the “priests” were instrumental in the crucifixion of Christ (Matt. 27). There are various religions today which still hold high priestly offices, and they will continue to do so until they fully comprehend all Christ accomplished. Although *Revelation* uses the term “priests” for all believers, we have but One High Priest.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

These chapters are describing great organization and preparation. There are people placed in charge of music, finances, priestly duties, gatekeeping, record keeping, administration, judging, baking and so forth.

There are several lessons here for us. One would be the charge that David placed before each person: “Do your job in honor of the LORD” (22:17-19). The second lesson given to us is a reminder, that every person is necessary. God created us with different gifts so that we could all serve in a variety of ways. The third lesson has to do with showing us the value of being prepared.

As William Barclay said, “To be a person of faith does not mean you are not a person who plans.” We need to remember the Revolutionary War saying, “Trust in God, but keep your powder dry.” George Washington wrote, “To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.”

Being prepared in this life is beneficial. In the parable of the ten bridesmaids (Matt. 25), we learn that being prepared for eternity is the most important.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

It is a joy to read the proverbs. Sometimes you find yourself laughing at the candid way a proverb is written and yet other times you find yourself stopping to consider the truth behind what was just shared.

A proverb is a short saying to express a truth. Therefore, it should not be surprising that in this week’s passage you will read the words “wisdom” or “wise” almost 100 times. What is surprising is how wisdom is defined.

Bible Discussion Guide:

After reading this week’s devotionals and passages, how would you define wisdom?

What are the qualities of a truly wise person?

What are some of the things a wise person avoids? How are they avoided?

Proverbs offers several tools to parenting (i.e. discipline, example, love, etc.). Consistency in parenting is another tool demonstrated between parents, sticking with decisions, and other examples you could take time to think of right now. What makes consistency in parenting so vital?

Day 147 – May 27th

Proverbs 1:1-4:27 — Acquiring Wisdom

As a Father of two (soon to be three) children, I think often about the legacy that I am building within my own family. Proverbs 4 provides us with some good lessons on how to build and leave a meaningful legacy. This proverb demonstrates that wisdom is so interconnected with legacy building that, without it, we are in danger of leaving a negative or destructive legacy that will cause pain in the generations to come.

So if wisdom is so important, where does it come from? Scripture reveals a number of sources of wisdom and today I want to encourage you to consider five of them:

- 1) Wisdom comes from the Lord (Pro. 2:6; James 1:5).
- 2) Wisdom comes from seeking other’s counsel (Pro. 13:10).
- 3) Wisdom comes from receiving the Lord’s discipline (Pro. 19:20).
- 4) Wisdom comes from obeying the Lord (Pro. 4:4-5).
- 5) Wisdom comes from observing God’s creation (Pro. 6:6).

If you want to leave a legacy that is a blessing to your family, then acquire wisdom.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 125 – May 5th

1 Kings 1; 1 Chronicles 29:1-22 — Inactive

It is almost possible to read this passage and assume that King David, now rich in years, was unaware of what was taking place. Bathsheba inquires of him whom he intended to make the next king. Nathan inquired similarly. However, Bathsheba and Nathan do acknowledge that David is aware of the fact that his son, Adonijah, was crowning himself king. Furthermore, we learn that David “had never disciplined Adonijah at any time, even by asking him, ‘What are you doing?’” (1:6).

There were many who remained loyal to David. God’s intended future king was not Adonijah.

David knew these facts, but did not act upon them. Zadok, Benaiah, Nathan, Bathsheba and many others also knew these facts. David needed to be confronted and challenged to act.

For whatever reason (perhaps age, laziness, complacency, or being overwhelmed), David took no action until confronted. If we are the inactive one, prayerfully someone will come encourage us to get up and get to the Lord’s work. Or, perhaps we may be the one to encourage the stationary to rise up (1 Thes. 5:14).

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 145 – May 25th

1 Kings 9:15-10:29; 2 Chronicles 1:14-17; 8:1-9:28 — Legacy of Obedience

“The king must not build up a large stable of horses for himself, and he must never send his people to Egypt to buy horses there, for the Lord has told you, ‘You must never return to Egypt.’ The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will lead him away from the Lord. And he must not accumulate vast amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself.” – Deuteronomy 17:14-17

Solomon, Solomon, Solomon. In spite of all the good that Solomon did, he neglected to follow the Lord’s instructions for a king. So instead of leaving a legacy of obedience to the Lord, he left a legacy of following his own path and fulfilling his own desires. It is a legacy that will result in disaster for his son, Rehoboam.

What kind of legacy are you leaving for those who follow after you? Is it one of obedience or one of defiance? Think about it – you just can’t leave a legacy of loving God without obeying His commandments for, “loving God means keeping His commandments” (1 John 5:3).

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Week 19 – May 7th-13th

Psalms 12-17, 19-32, 35-41, 53, 55, 58, 61-62, 64-70, 86, 101

When I was in seminary, one of my professors challenged us with this question: how can the ancient prayers written in the psalms to God, be God’s Word to us today? The answer, I propose to you, is that the psalms are prophetically the prayers of Jesus, the Messiah Himself. I know this may be a different way of understanding the psalms for you, but I believe that there is sufficient biblical evidence to support this.

So, as you read through the psalms this week, I hope you enjoy some insights into the life of the Messiah by reading through the prayers of the Messiah.

Bible Discussion Guide

Read Acts 2:25-36. Peter said that David was a prophet and wasn’t necessarily writing about himself. How does this impact our reading of the Psalms?

Have you ever considered yourself a hero to Jesus?

How do you think Jesus feels when we make godly choices? What about when we make ungodly choices?

How do you respond to God when you are at your lowest point?

What can we learn from the psalms about persevering in hard situations?

Is it ok for us to pray for God’s judgment on sin to occur? Why or why not?

How is God’s judgment on sin different than judgments that we pass against people?

How do you typically respond to mistreatment?

What can the psalms teach us about dealing with mistreatments and injustices?

How can you know God’s will for your life?

How can you grow with respect to carrying out God’s will in your life?

Day 144 – May 24th

1 Kings 8:54-9:14; 2 Chronicles 7 — Legacy of a Father

Solomon received a great legacy from his father David and he had an opportunity to pass it on to his son Rehoboam but failed. Here is a story about a Father who chose to pass on a legacy:

“I need you,” was all his wife had to say for the successful traveling evangelist to come home. Their sixteen-year-old son was pushing his limits and his father knew what he had to do. Canceling the rest of his speaking engagements, he accepted a call to pastor a small church in another state.

For two years he served that church and mentored his son until he went off to college. After his son left, the father attempted to return to his evangelistic ministry, but quickly learned that he was no longer in demand as a speaker. Indeed the decision to go home had come at a great price.

But because he had made the tough decision and went home to focus on his family, years later his son would begin a ministry known as Focus on the Family. James Dobson is the product of his father, James Dobson Sr.

(This story excerpted from the book *King Me* by Steve Farrar)

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 127 – May 7th

Psalms 12-17; 19-21 — Joy of the Messiah

Psalm 16 is a fitting start to our study in the Psalms this week. If you read Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost, you will discover that Peter quotes verse 8-11 of this psalm in Acts 2:25-28. Peter then goes on to declare that David was not writing of himself, but rather of the coming Messiah. However, we recognize that the whole psalm is in the first person, so logically we conclude all of it to prophetically be the words of the Messiah Himself.

As I read through the rest of this psalm, I am encouraged by verse three, “The godly people in the land are my true heroes! I take pleasure in them!” Have you ever

considered that living a godly life is a source of joy for Jesus?

Not that living a godly life is possible on our own, but rather because of Jesus’ death and resurrection we are then able to live godly lives. No wonder it brings Him joy to see us living a godly life. It is one of the reasons He died. His joy is in seeing our lives reflect the benefit of His sacrifice. May you bring joy to God by living a godly life through the power of Christ who is in you.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 142 – May 22nd

1 Kings 7; 2 Chronicles 3:15-4:22 — Temple vs. Palace

Solomon did many great things and was a good king for a while, but as you will discover from your reading this week, not everything he did was right. In chapter 7 of 1 Kings we read the details of the palace compound that Solomon built for himself. Now certainly the temple of the Lord was impressive, but the palace of the Forest of Lebanon described in 7:2-5 was over 4 times the size of the temple alone.

At this point in his reign as king, Solomon is still following the Lord closely, but the amount of effort and material that went into building his own palace compared to the temple indicate to me the direction that

Solomon’s heart is really going. Whose legacy is he more concerned with, his own or the Lord he serves?

Or maybe I should ask you that same question. Are you more concerned with the legacy of your temple (your life: body, soul, mind and spirit); or are you more concerned with the legacy of your palace (your earthly treasures: house, cars, toys, etc.).

Remember the words of Jesus, “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 141 – May 21st

1 Kings 3:16-28; 5:1-6:38; 2 Chronicles 2:1-3:14 — Temple Building

If ever anyone had everything going for them it was Solomon. He was the King of Israel during the peak of the nation’s prosperity. He was wealthy and possessed wisdom beyond compare and, on top of all that, he was chosen by God to build the temple in Jerusalem. Other than his role as one of the authors of Scripture, Solomon’s building of the temple was the biggest part of the legacy he left. I say this because of the significance that the temple played in the worship of God.

For us, as New Testament believers, the concept of temple is different. We no longer worship a God who dwells in a temple (Acts 7:48, 17:24); rather, He dwells inside the individual believer (1 Cor. 3:16). So, even though it is different, the importance of the temple is still very real. Paul emphasizes the need for holiness and care for the body (1 Cor. 6:20).

Solomon built a majestic temple leaving quite the legacy. What kind of legacy will your temple leave? What will people say about your life when you’re gone?

My Prayer List:

Day 128 – May 8th

Psalms 22-26 — At the End of your Rope

Psalm 22 is another psalm of David or the beloved one and, once again, it is prophetically speaking of the Messiah. This psalm is so interconnected in the life of the Messiah that the first line was spoken by Jesus as He hung on the cross.

The four gospel accounts give us information on the details of Jesus’ crucifixion, but Psalm 22 allows us to enter into His emotions as He hung on the cross. And as we look, we see an overwhelming trust in the Father’s will and a dependence upon Him for deliverance.

You may be wondering, how does this relate to me? Remember that Jesus possessed full humanity, including emotions and free will. The crucifixion was when Jesus was at His lowest point. He was physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually drained. He was dying a criminal’s death having done nothing wrong, and yet we see Him continuing to praise the Father and trust in Him. How do you respond when you are at your lowest? Will you still trust and praise God when all hope seems lost?

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 129 – May 9th
Psalms 27-32 — Imprecatory Psalms

Psalm 28 is what Bible scholars call an imprecatory psalm. This is because the psalmist asks God to judge the wicked and the enemies of the righteous. Some have been troubled by the presence of such psalms. They wonder how a God of love and grace could receive such a request. Will God really act in response to this request?

Today I am challenging you to think differently about this psalm and others like it. If these psalms are prophetically the words or prayers of the Messiah, then it changes their message, the reason being that Jesus came for the purpose of taking the punishment for the sins of mankind.

Thus Jesus, in praying these imprecatory psalms, actually prayed for God’s judgment and wrath to come and then willingly became the object of that judgment and wrath on our behalf.

Because of Jesus, these imprecatory psalms are no longer messages of condemnation and judgment, but rather of grace and love, for “He personally carried away our sins in His own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by his wounds.” – 1 Peter 2:24

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

What are some other sources of wisdom that your group can come up with? Provide scripture references if possible.

How many of these sources are you actively using in order to gain wisdom in your life?

As a disciple of Christ, you have an opportunity to build upon the “temple” that Christ founded. What are you doing to build upon that temple?

What does it mean that some build with gold, silver and jewels while some build with wood, hay and straw?

What are you building with?

Consider the legacy passed from David to Solomon to Rehoboam. What do you notice? What do you think could have been done differently?

Why is obedience to the Lord so important to building a lasting, godly legacy?

What is the proudest moment of your life?

What must we be willing to do to in order to build a legacy that has an eternal impact?

Day 130 – May 10th
Psalms 35-38 — Mistreatment

Have you ever considered the treatment that Jesus received from those he came to save? I think Psalm 35:11-14 provides insight into how He felt and increases our understanding of the mistreatment He received. The ones He has prayed for, fasted for, and grieved over are now rejoicing because of the trouble He is now in.

A striking example of this is in Luke 19:41 when Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. He wept, not just because He knew the city would be destroyed, but also because of their sin and rebelliousness. Later the same crowd that Jesus wept for was yelling, “Crucify Him” (Luke 23:21).

His mistreatment was obvious, but He did not retaliate. Rather, we see in this psalm and the gospels that He trusted His fate and the fate of those mistreating Him to a holy and righteous God.

How do you respond to mistreatment? Remember what Paul wrote, “Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, ‘I will take vengeance, I will repay those who deserve it,’ says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 131 – May 11th

Psalms 39-41, 53, 55, 58 — Doing God’s Will

Have you ever struggled to do God’s will? You know what I am talking about, those situations where what you should do is very apparent and yet you still rebel and choose to sin.

Jesus never had that kind of experience, for He always followed God’s will.

Psalm 40:6-8 declares that Jesus delights to do the Father’s will. These verses are also quoted in Hebrews in reference to Jesus coming to do the will of the Father. Also in Jesus’ own declaration of His purpose in John 6:38 he said, “I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do what I want.”

Everything that Jesus did in His earthly ministry was to carry out the will of the Father in His life. Jesus spent time with His Father in prayer and solitude, He submitted to his Father, He exercised compassion on people, He knew the Scriptures and taught them to others, and He resisted temptation. Much of what Jesus did is also God’s will for us, so if you desire to know God’s will for your life, you need not look farther than how Jesus lived His life.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Week 21 – May 21st-27th

1 Kings 3:16-10:29; 2 Chronicles 1:14-9:28; Psalms 72, 127; Proverbs 1-4

This week’s reading covers the early part of Solomon’s reign over Israel. During this time Solomon accomplished many great things, leaving a tremendous legacy. He built the temple and a massive palace compound in Jerusalem. He also built storage cities and outposts for the defending Israel.

Because of the legacy that Solomon left we are going to look at what it means to build a legacy. A legacy is far more than what we accomplish in our careers. It involves choices that we make and things that we value. I hope that, through this week, you are encouraged to evaluate your life and the legacy that you are currently building and the legacy that you desire to leave.

Bible Discussion Guide

How does the fact that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit impact the way we live our life?

What do you think people will say about the legacy you are leaving with your temple?

In what ways are you valuing your palace (stuff, money, etc.) over your temple (body, mind, soul, spirit)?

What is one thing that you can do (change, add, or omit) in your life that will help you value your temple more than your palace?

Day 140 – May 20th

1 Kings 2:13-3:15; 1 Chronicles 29:23-25; 2 Chronicles 1:1-13;
Psalm 83 — Wheels of Justice

Justice is one of the topics addressed today. The passages in Kings and Chronicles describe the justice Solomon laid forth. His justice was fair and took into consideration the counsel of his father, David. It was also necessary in order to prevent chaos from coming. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.”

Psalm 83 focuses on how God brings justice to the enemies of His people. God’s justice is fair, pure and certain. “Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small. Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness He grinds all” (Friedrich Von Logau, 1650).

The wheels of justice don’t always turn at the speed we would like. In fact, sometimes we may wonder if God’s wheels went flat. It is a wonderful thing that God’s wheels turn as they do and not at our speed. His wheels are turning, but what a blessing that He is so patient (see 2 Peter 3:9).

My Prayer List:

Day 132 – May 12th

Psalms 61-62, 64-67 — Overwhelmed

Have you ever felt overwhelmed with life? Have you ever felt distant from God and troubled? If so, don’t be alarmed. We have all been there, every person, including Jesus. The first four verses of Psalm 61 seem to indicate that Jesus experienced these emotions as well.

The very fact that Jesus experienced these emotions tells me that our experience of them is not always because of our sin. While sometimes it is our sin that leads us to a sense of despair, it never was for His personal sin that Jesus felt this way since He was without sin. Rather, it was because He was dwelling in a broken world and living among broken people that Jesus experienced these low moments.

So what are we to do when we, who live in this same broken world among broken people, are overwhelmed? I see three things from this psalm that we can do:

- 1) Cry out to God for help
- 2) Trust in Him for shelter and protection
- 3) Respond with praise and thanksgiving

Is this your practice when you are overwhelmed by this world?

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 133 – May 13th

Psalms 68-70; 86, 101 — Dealing with Guilt and Shame

In reading Psalm 69 today you probably made many direct connections to the life of Jesus. Verse 9 was quoted by the apostle John (John 2:17) and verse 21 was fulfilled with Jesus on the cross (John 19:29).

How can we, though, connect verse 5 to Jesus since it indicates that the Messiah was guilty of sin; and yet Scripture is clear that Jesus never sinned. Paul explains this mystery in 2 Cor. 5:21; “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us.” Jesus became sin for the entire world, experiencing the guilt and shame of all those sins. This psalm reveals what it was like for Jesus to take on these sins?

He cries out for salvation (vs. 1-4)

He feels shame and humiliation (5-8)

He is scoffed at, mocked and gossiped about (9-12)

He expresses faith in God’s ability to deliver (13-18)

He recognizes that comfort is not available from men (19-21)

He calls for judgment on the unrighteous (22-28)

He pleads for salvation (29)

He expresses faith in God and praises His name (30-36)

How do you respond to the guilt and shame of sin?

My Prayer List:

Day 139 – May 19th

Psalm 79-82 — Recorded Variety

Although all four psalms come from the same individual, there is yet great variety in their contents. The first two psalms are reflections of the nation. The third psalm is a spiritual reminder on a holiday. The last psalm refers to God, the righteous Judge.

What are some of the characteristics of journals? Providing you have journaled, if you were to look through your journal entries, you may find great variety. But, then again, perhaps you tend to only journal when you are discouraged, or conversely, when you are excited about something that took place. What keeps the Psalms distinct from our personal journals lies in their purpose. The authorship of the Psalms is of individuals inspired by God to record what they did for the glory of God and the benefit of others. The Psalms maintain historical accuracy, biblical consistency, theological purity, transparent confession, poetic beauty and authentic worship.

What we are learning to appreciate about the depth of the Psalms I would pray we would do so with their variety. God has given us Psalms that touch our life no matter where we are.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 138 – May 18th

Psalms 75-78 — Expressions of the Psalms

Years ago Dr. Ron Allen visited the church I was at to speak on the Old Testament. Dr. Allen is the senior professor of Bible exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary. One of his favorite topics is the Psalms.

In a book he wrote on the Psalms he noted, “Only a Philistine could fail to love the Psalms. Of all the books in the Old Testament, the Book of Psalms is the one most loved by the family of God. Within the Psalms we find expression to our deepest thoughts of reverence for God, our most excited joy in knowing Him, and our darkest terror in those moments we feel cut off from Him. In the Psalms we have it all: music, wisdom, beauty, truth, theology, experience, emotion and expression.”

Once again, we are reminded of the depth of the psalms. Some people only turn to the Psalms in moments of distress or devotion. Some people turn to them for a quick expression of worship. Only a few explore them deeply, even as you are now. Appreciate the depth of the Psalms.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Week 20 – May 14th-20th

1 Kings 2:13-3:15; 1 Chronicles 29:23-25; 2 Chronicles 1:1-13; Psalm 50, 73-83, 88-89, 103, 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138-141, 143-145

This week I read an article by a woman who had been keeping a journal for 20 years. She said it seemed natural for her to continue when her father suffered a major stroke. She described the benefits of her journaling during the five years she cared for her father until his death. She said her daily entries provided her with perspective and a unique sustenance.

I must admit I am not the most faithful, but I see many benefits to journaling. Within this week’s passages, we will see how it benefited Solomon as he kept records of people and situations (and later wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs). We will read of men whose responsibility was to record the blessings and actions of God for the people of Israel. We will read David’s journaling as he uses words to worship God meditatively.

Bible Discussion Guide:

Journals can be a great tool for recording thoughts, prayers and emotions (whether fears or wonderful things). Journaling can be a form of worship. It’s an expression of our heart. It is a great compliment to our daily devotions with Him. It is not just a place of expressing, but also a place to listen, to hear God’s whispers.

How would you describe the “depth” of the Psalms?

What specific ways could a person be encouraged by the Psalms?

Other than the obvious part music plays in the Psalms, what other uses of music in Scripture can you think of?

Genesis 4:21 tells us about Jubal, the first musician. The Ark of the Covenant was accompanied by musicians. Jesus and His disciples sang after the Last Supper. Paul and Silas sang in jail. So, what about the importance of music? What about the importance of music in worship?

The Psalms are so full of worship. How could journaling be considered meditative worship? What other benefits are there to journaling?

The following are a few initial thoughts for your journal:

Reflect...

- Who are you?
- What is your background?
- What experiences brought you to this time and place in your life?

Release...

- What life-changing mistakes have you made?
- Are there any buried mistakes in your life that still hold you back?
- Have you released your mistakes to God, so you can experience His true blessings for your life?

Day 137 – May 17th
Psalm 50, 73-74 — Leading Worship

Today—and for the next three—we will be reading “Psalms of Asaph.” Asaph and his sons, who worked under his direction, were given orders by King David to “proclaim God’s messages to the accompaniment of harps, lyres, and cymbals” (see 1 Chronicles 6:31-39; 15:16-17; 25:1-2).

Numerous Levites were given various responsibilities as it pertained to worship. Asaph’s responsibility was to proclaim God’s messages. That does not necessarily mean he wrote each of the psalms with his name attached to them, although he may have. He may have collected various songs or documents he adapted for proclaiming God’s word. Regardless, the words were expressions from his heart which he believed were appropriate words for the people.

All of that sounds very similar to the responsibilities certain individuals have in our churches today who lead us in worship. It is important, and has been for thousands of years, that we have those who direct us sing words proclaiming God’s messages. Furthermore, it is important we have those who contribute with offering thanks and praise, and those who play instruments with that purpose.

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 136 – May 16th

Psalm 88-89, 144-145 — Musical Tunes

The psalms today reflect the journals of three men. The first, Psalm 88, reminds us of several things. One would be the variety of emotions each man is experiencing. Heman describes a despairing heart.

As well, his purpose is unique in that it is purely a cry to the Lord in desperation. Whereas, Ethan’s psalm describes more the historical events of David’s reign. And David’s two psalms are expressions of complete praise.

Another item to note about Psalm 88 is that it is “to be sung to the tune of...” There are several psalms which acknowledge a musical quality. The English word “psalms” itself is a transliteration of the Greek title of the book which is “sacred songs sung to musical accompaniment.” It came from the Greek word meaning “striking a string,” or “playing a stringed instrument.”

You can’t escape from music in the Psalms. They are music, the lyrics for the hymns of ancient Israel. It can’t be emphasized strongly enough the importance of music in worship and in the life of the church.

My Prayer List: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Surrender...

What event or series of events in your life brought you to your knees?

Where did you focus your thoughts and efforts during crisis?

When did you turn it all over to God?

Praise...

What victories have you experienced in your life?

What blessings has God brought your way?

Think about God’s role in your life, and give Him thanks for all you have?

Deepen Your Relationship With God! (from www.allaboutgod.com)

Day 134 – May 14th

Psalms 103, 108-110, 122, 124 — Like Painting a Sunset

While painting a sunset, I use various colors to bring out an accurate illustration of the real thing. In a similar fashion, David uses various descriptions to illustrate the real thing. David wrote of God’s love, strength, compassion and more. Yet, he added still more dimension to the illustration by adding examples of His love, strength, compassion, or whatever the focus.

The quality of an artistic piece is determined by its “depth.” Whether it’s sculpture, paint or song, a greater piece has greater depth. That is the element that David continued to add to the word pictures of God.

For instance, as he describes the love of God in Psalm 103 he tells us what God does for us and how that illustrates His love: “He forgives, He fills my life with good things, He will not constantly accuse us, He does not deal with us as we deserve, He understands our weaknesses,” etc.

David did the same thing for illustrating God’s strength in Psalm 108. From your personal experiences, what elements of depth could you add to one of God’s characteristics?

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____

Day 135 – May 15th

Psalms 131, 133, 138-141, 143 — Encouragement in the Psalms

The collection of psalms today provides tremendous encouragement for each of us. After reading through these psalms, I found myself feeling a bit guilty for the times I have questioned God’s involvement in my life. These psalms remind us of God’s presence, protection and provision.

And again David expounds on God’s qualities: Psalm 131 – because of God’s perfect nature we can trust Him and therefore find contentment; 133 – because of God’s plan for unity harmony can be found in it; 138 – because God hears and answers our prayers we find encouragement and strength; 139 – because God sees all, knows all, is present everywhere and is all-powerful we can find confidence in knowing God’s plan for our life is perfect, 140 – because God provides deliverance and protection we can find assurance for the future; 141 – because God cares and wants to help us we can trust Him to be our refuge; 143 – because of God’s unfailing love we have hope.

If you’re ever feeling a bit discouraged I would highly recommend reading thoughtfully through these psalms (I especially love 139).

My Prayer List:

Taking every thought captive to Christ: _____
