

- ***Read I Thessalonians 2:13/Prayer*** As I mentioned multiple times over the past few weeks...this year, our Daily Bible Reading (DBR) will consist of the wisdom and poetry books of the Old Testament. These books have been chosen as a means of making the most of our 2017 focus of seeking wisdom from above. This week, we will be reading **Job 1 & 2 and Psalms 1-3**.
- Now, let's take a moment to remember that everything we do is for a reason. We don't want to be a church that does things simply to say or look like we're busy. We are not wanting everyone to read just for the sake of reading. We're not reading just so it can be said that we have read these books as part of a check list or anything like that. Instead, we are reading because we truly want to grow in heavenly wisdom, so, that as we mentioned this morning, we will make good decisions and bear good fruit in our lives. Therefore, as we read we want to be effective in our reading.
- We ought to want for it to be said of us like it was said of the Thessalonians when Paul compliments them for receiving his message as actually being from God and allowing it to transform them and work through them for the betterment of their faith and the kingdom. I would like for us to take a few minutes this evening to help prepare us to take in the reading of God's Word in an effective manner. As with all things, we are most successful when we approach an endeavor with goals and a plan. Let's use our time of study this evening by preparing to read the book of Job so that we will get the most out of our efforts over the next few months.

Plan for growth in our Bible Reading

- A. The following 4 points are not original with myself. In fact, I saw these same four points on multiple websites and have come to see the usefulness and effectiveness in approaching our Bible reading with these 4 Cs in mind.
- B. Communication: Listening to God.
 - 1) Just like the Thessalonians, we need to recognize that we aren't just reading any other book. This isn't simply a book of history, fiction, or non-fiction, but what we are reading is the inspired word of God.
 - 2) Paul reminds us well that Scripture is inspired by God and it is good for our learning and growth in faith and knowledge. **(II Tim. 3:16,17)**
- C. Comprehension: Understanding what God says.
 - 1) Again, we aren't reading just to read, but we are reading in order to learn and grow. This means that we take the time to read and understand, not just speed read to say that we are finished with that day's reading.
 - 2) In order to grow we must take the time to read the text to a point where we can discern what is being taught and how it can apply to us in our daily walk as disciples.
- D. Confidence: Trusting in what God says.
 - 1) There is an internal struggle in all of us to treat those teachings that we read and disagree with or don't understand as being insignificant. However, We have to humble ourselves to trust that God knows best and that His wisdom supersedes our own in all ways.
 - 2) We considered these verses this morning, but the teaching is well worth being reminded of again. **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."** (Prov. 3:5,6)
- E. Change: Being transformed by what God says.
 - 1) We are seeking God's wisdom from above because we are wanting to be more godly in our living and decision making.
 - 2) Therefore, we want to take what we read, comprehend, and trust and have it to change us and transform us into more godly individuals. **(Romans 12:2)**

Focus Points in Job:

I. How Satan Attacks Us

- A. We are well aware that Satan is constantly looking for a soul to drag down and destroy through temptation and sin. **(I Peter 5:8,9)** One of the ways that we can seek to overcome him more readily is by knowing how it is that he will attack us.
- B. The book of Job is a great text that shows us just how Satan will attack us at times. From the physical ailments, to Job losing his family and possessions, to wife treating him poorly, and beyond...Satan will use whatever means necessary to bring us down and destroy our faith. Be looking for these things as we read through Job, and then consider how you've seen Satan do the same thing within our own lives.

II. How To Grieve In A Godly Manner

- A. It's not a matter of whether we will suffer heartache in this world, but it a matter of how we will respond to the times in which our heart is broken.
- B. For the righteous, we know that our times of affliction can be overcome with the help of our righteous God. **"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all." (Psa. 34:19)**
- C. From a practical standpoint, we can learn a great deal from Job as to how it is that we can grieve in a godly manner even when it seems as if our whole world is falling in around us. Especially in the first couple of chapters, pay close attention to Job's reactions to the grief that has filled his heart.

III. How To Help Those Who Hurt

- A. Just as we personally will suffer, time and time again those who are around us will suffer heartache in this life. One of the most difficult situations we can find ourselves in at times is to try and find the right thing to say when those we love are hurting deep in their hearts.
- B. We are confident that the Lord is with those who are grieving. **"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)** Sometimes, the comfort that comes from God is given through those around us who seek to comfort us.
- C. While there were friends that come to comfort Job, we will quickly recognize that his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar weren't exactly a means of comfort in everything that they did. From chapters 4-37, we see Job and his friends engaged in conversations that were supposed to help him, but sadly it doesn't seem as if they had the desired effect.
- D. Sure it was good of them to come and try to give comfort to Job, but we learn that there is wisdom required in comforting those who are hurting. As we read, try and consider the ways in which they were helpful, but also consider the mistakes that they made as they tried to comfort their hurting friend.

IV. How To Respond To Critics

- A. As people who are trying to be wise in our living and decision making, there will often be haters and detractors who will try to criticize us for the way we go about our business. **"A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly." (Prov. 15:1,2)**
- B. While Job's friends were supposed to be helping, they were actually critics and detractors of his godliness and character. Even Job's own wife ended up criticizing him in his mourning. However, Job shows us great wisdom at times as he deals with those who criticize him.
- C. As we read through the book and those conversations in chapters 4-37, pay special attention and take note as to how Job puts in to practice this proverb to turn away the critics.

V. How To Acknowledge & Respond To God's Sovereignty

- A. When a true realization of who and what God is is seen, the way we live this life is greatly changed. Wisdom seeks to teach us exactly who God is so that we will live accordingly.
- B. After, the conversations between Job and his friends, God interjects His words and thoughts in order to correct any misconceptions of who actually is in charge of the situation and who possesses true wisdom and power. **(Job 38:1-3)**
- C. As we're reading through the latter chapters of Job, pay close attention to God's argumentation to prove who He is and the true power that He possesses. One of the greatest factors that ought to push us to abandon our own wisdom in order to embrace God's are His divine qualities that He puts forth in these texts.

There is much wisdom that can be gained from our reading of the book of Job over the coming weeks and months. As we read it over the coming weeks, may we give special attention to the things we have discussed. May we be effective readers of God's Word and not just people who are trying to check a list off our reading schedule. May God be glorified as we read His Word, and may we truly grow in the wisdom that is from above so that we might live this life as godly disciples of Jesus Christ.