



MARCH-MAY 2020

WILDERNESS
WANDERING

NUMBERS. DEUTERONOMY. JOSHUA.

A JOURNEY OF FAITH

FROM THE WILDERNESS TO THE PROMISED LAND



Deuteronomy 4:14

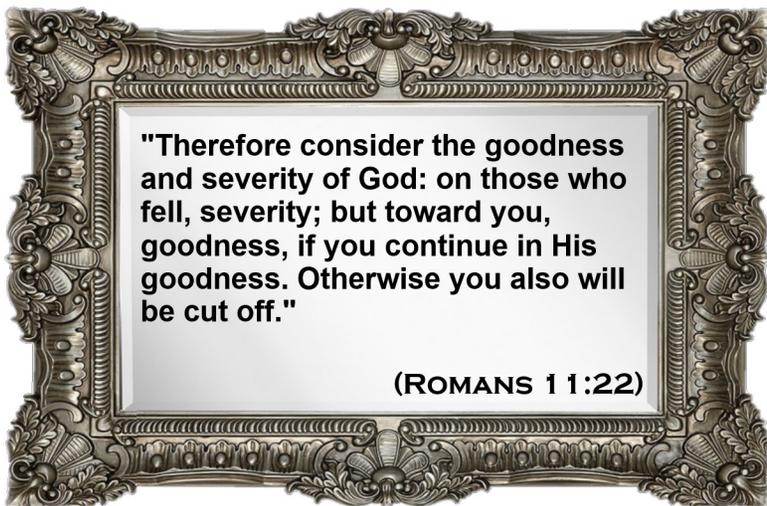
The LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might perform them in the land where you are going over to possess it.



Trust in the
LORD *with all your* **HEART**
and lean not on your own
UNDERSTANDING
in all your ways
ACKNOWLEDGE
HIM
and He shall direct
YOUR PATHS.
— Proverbs 3:5-6 —



MEMORY VERSE



This Quarter's Focus **WILDERNESS WANDERING**

NUMBERS. DEUTERONOMY. JOSHUA.

This quarter we are studying the wilderness journey. We're looking at the books Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua. This was a hard time for God's people. There are many lessons in this text about choices, consequences, trusting in God when facing difficult times, about handing off and receiving the baton of faith, walking by faith and not by sight, claiming the victory promised by God. We find some incredible men of faith to emulate—Joshua and Caleb. This section of Scripture provides great talking points for families about the importance of our daily choices as we journey from earth to home.

Tips to make the most of daily devotionals—

- Set a regular time and place for your family to study together
- **MAKE TIME!** Schedules change. Interruptions happen. Make time every day to spend time in the word—just like exercise
- Tie every lesson back to God. What does this text teach us about God's character/nature/expectations/etc.?
- Read the text together (have your children read if they are able)
- Make it interactive! Discuss the reading. Ask questions. Sing songs. Create scenarios. Investigate tough questions together.
- Draw out application for their daily life. Help them see how to make it real for today's living.
- End each devotion with a moment of prayer (let them lead the prayer)

As you read and study as a family, try to look at this text with fresh eyes. Let's learn and grow together as we journey through the wilderness, into the promised land!

- Jordan

Thursday February 27th

Numbers 16:1-22

This quarter's study begins with fighting and conflict. Korah, a Levite, and his followers were upset with Moses and Aaron. They blamed these two men for their current situation—wandering in the wilderness rather than dwelling in the promised land. They felt that these brothers were unfit for leading God's people, and it seemed that they were ready to take over.

Moses warns them of their arrogance—they've "gone too far." They were already given a position of honor as servants of God and His special tent, the Tabernacle. Now they seek to take over leading all of God's people. God chose Moses as the leader of His people. To rebel against Moses was to rebel against God.

This chapter shows us something ugly—something worth avoiding—the evil of envy. Envy is wanting what someone else has—wanting it SO much you don't want them to have it either. Envy is like a hunger that never becomes satisfied, no matter how much you eat you always want more. It can be things -(phones, clothes, cars) it can be people/relationship (lots of friends, certain cool friends, boyfriends or girlfriends), it could be things about a person (talents, opportunities, awards).

Living with envy is a miserable way to live. You're always comparing yourself to others. Envy forgets the good that I have received, only focused on what I haven't. Don't look with envy at other people and their things—be thankful for what you have from God. Can you make a thankful list today of things you have to thank God for?

1. What is envy? How do we overcome the temptation to be envious?
2. What makes envy so dangerous? How was it dangerous for Korah and his followers? What are some main triggers of envy?
3. Envy is based on a fantasy created in our minds. The grass is greener on the other side—is that true? What happens when we buy into the fantasy that envy creates, believing it is true? What can help us see through the lie?

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

JOSHUA 2:1-11:17

CENTRAL CAMPAIGN

- 1 JOSHUA SENDS SPIES TO JERICHO • 2:1-24
- 2 ISRAELITE CAMP IS ESTABLISHED AT GILGAL • 4:19
- 3 JERICHO FALLS OPENING THE WAY INTO CANAAN • 6:1-27
- 4 BATTLE OF AI - INITIAL ATTACK FAILS BUT AMBUSH DEFEATS THE CITY • 8:1-29

SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN

- 5 ISRAELITE ATTACKS AMORITE COALITION AS PART OF THE TREATY WITH GIBEON • 9:1-10:10
- 6 AMORITES FLEE TO VALLEY OF AJAJALON WHERE THE SUN STANDS STILL • 10:11-14
- 7 CAPTURE AND DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY OF MAKKEDEH • 10:16-20
- 8 WAR AGAINST THE CITY OF LIBNAH • 10:29-30
- 9 LACHISH IS BESIEGED AND KING OF GEZER IS DESTROYED • 10:31-33
- 10 CITY OF EGLON IS TAKEN • 10:34-35
- 11 HEBRON IS ATTACKED • 10:36-37
- 12 CONQUER OF DEBIR • 10:38-39
- 13 JOSHUA DEFEATS THE CANANITES FROM KADESH-BARNEA TO GAZA • 10:41

NORTHERN CAMPAIGN

- 14 ISRAEL SURPRISES NORTHERN COALITION BY THE WATER OF MEROM • 11:7
- 15 ISRAEL PURSUES RETREATING ENEMY TO SIDON AND THE VALLEY OF MIZPAH • 11:8
- 16 JOSHUA TURNS BACK AND TAKES HAZOR • 11:10

SUMMARY OF LAND CONQUERED • 11:16-17

- JOSHUA TAKES THE HILL COUNTRY
- JOSHUA TAKES THE WHOLE SOUTHLAND
- JOSHUA TAKES THE WHOLE LAND OF GOSHEN
- JOSHUA TAKES THE LOWLAND
- JOSHUA TAKES THE VALLEY
- JOSHUA TAKES THE HILL COUNTRY OF ISRAEL WITH ITS LOWLAND



Numbers 16:23-50

CENSUS FIGURES Numbers 1, 2, 26				
TRIBE	BEFORE THE WANDERINGS	AFTER THE WANDERINGS	DIFFERENCE	%
REUBEN	46,500	43,730	-2,770	-06%
SIMEON	59,300	22,200	-37,100	-63%
GAD	45,650	40,500	-5,150	-11%
JUDAH	74,600	76,500	+1,900	+2.5%
ISSACHAR	54,400	64,300	+9,900	+18%
ZEBULUN	57,400	60,500	+3,100	+5.5%
EPHRAIM	40,500	32,500	-8,000	-20%
MANASSEH	32,200	52,700	+20,500	+63%
BENJAMIN	35,400	45,600	+10,200	+29%
DAN	62,700	64,400	+1,700	+2.5%
ASHER	41,500	53,400	+11,900	+28%
NAPHTALI	53,400	45,400	-8,000	-15%
TOTALS	603,550	601,730	-1,820	-.3%

Sin is a monster. It only brings death and destruction. When people choose their own way, to rebel against God, it only results in disaster. Lots of people lost their lives in this chapter because they chose their own way over God's.

So much of the punishments found in this chapter revolve around complaining against God's decision—complaining about God's leaders, complaining about God's punishment of the wilderness, complaining about the Korah incident.

This is a good time to remember—God is on the throne. He is King. He is Creator. And what He says, goes. When God speaks, it's my responsibility to obey, period. Even if I don't agree with it. Even if I think there's a better way. Even if others encourage me to do something different. When it comes to worship, to the church, to my daily decisions, God's way is right. God's way is best. ALWAYS.

Korah and his followers found themselves on the wrong side—they were opposing God, and they lost. Whose side are you on? We show that we are on God's side when we honor and obey what He says. In my language, in my friendships, in my habits, in my thoughts, in my worship, in my daily choices, I will choose God's way over my way.

-
1. What happened to Korah and his followers? Why? What does this tell us about sin?
 2. What were the sins of Korah and his followers? What was the sin of those killed on the next day? What can we learn from their example?
 3. Come up with some scenarios—"I know what God says but..." (maybe worship, daily/moral decisions). How does one come to make these decisions? How would you answer them?

Saturday February 29th

Numbers 17:1-13

“So... who’s right? Who’s going to lead us?” It must have been on the mind of the people. In the last chapter there was a large dispute over who was to lead the people. The people complained against Moses and Aaron, claiming that they made themselves leaders over God’s people. In this chapter God makes it clear that Moses and Aaron were in the positions they were because God chose them.

So how did God show the people that He chose Moses and Aaron? He didn’t just tell them. He didn’t just have it written down. He got each of the leaders involved, and did something miraculous—Aaron’s bud—a broken off stick—bloomed and produced almonds! Who ever heard of a branch, broken off from its root, being able to bloom? There would be no question, God chose these men.

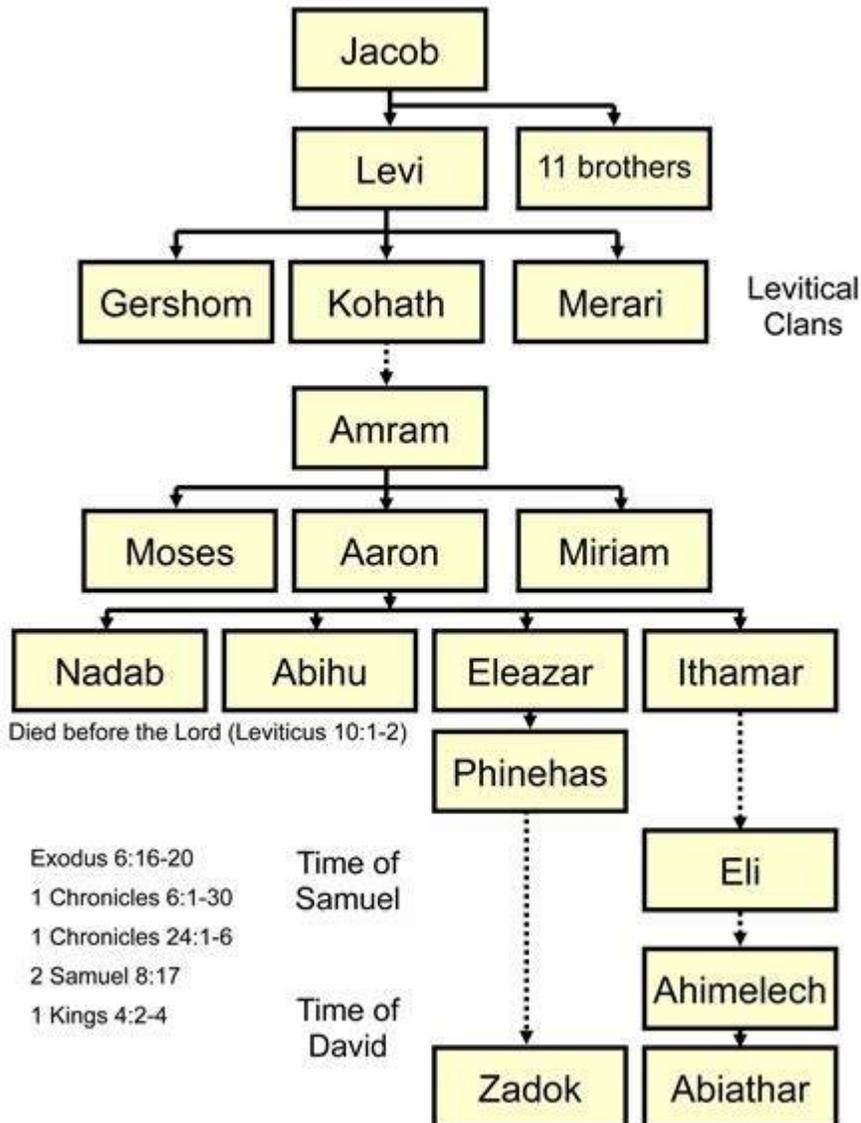
Here’s a thought to think about today from v. 12—the people recognized they were wrong and what that meant for them. When we’ve done wrong, the first step is admitting our faults. We call that confessing. I need to be open and honest about my mistakes. It’s not blaming someone else. It’s not trying to make excuses why I did what I did. It’s admitting what I did was wrong, that I truly am sorry, and that I need to seek forgiveness from God and others. This is the right step out of a wrong decision.

1. What does the word “confess” mean? Why is confession important?
2. Why is confession hard? Some like Adam and Eve hide from their faults, or blame others. Why are these the wrong reactions to our mistakes?
3. Try these tough scenarios—you forgot to do an assignment that is worth a lot of points; you didn’t do your chores like you were asked in the morning; you were rude to your younger sibling who kept asking you to play—what is the right thing to do vs. the wrong thing to do

Jesus' priesthood	The Levitical priesthood
Only one priest (Heb 7:23-24)	Many priests
An eternal priest (Heb 7:23-24; 9:12)	Temporary priests
He sacrificed once for all (Heb 7:27; 9:12)	They sacrificed daily
He is holy (Heb 7:26-27)	They were sinners
He offered sacrifices only for others (Heb 7:26-27)	They offered sacrifices also for themselves
He offered up himself (Heb 7:27; 9:11-14)	They offered sacrificial animals
He entered a greater and more perfect tent (Heb 9:11-12)	They entered a man-made tent
He entered by means of his own blood (Heb 9:11-12)	They entered by means of blood of goats and calves

Numbers 18:1-32

Genealogy of the Priesthood



In today's reading we look at the Levites. This tribe was chosen by God for a special responsibility. Out of the entire nation of Israel, they were the ones to serve and lead in worship. They set up the Tabernacle. From this nation came the priests. They were the ones who would lead the nation in worship to God.. It was an honor to serve the Lord and the people in these special ways!

We read in this chapter that the Levites were not to be given a plot of land in the Promised Land (v. 20). But this doesn't mean they were going to be in need. This chapter describes the gifts that the Levites were to receive from the people. They could eat of the food that was offered. They received money from the people. They received portions of what the people gave as an offering to God. It was a way the people could express their thanks to these Levites for their work in the service of God.

We don't have this type of role today. We don't have a specific family or nation that leads us in worship. Today everyone who is in Jesus is a priest (1 Pet. 2:9-10). However, we have some who help us in our walk with the Lord. We have Shepherds in our church who lead us and watch out for our souls. We have preachers who teach the Word of God to us each week. We have over 20 deacons who serve our congregation in many, many ways. Like the Levites of old, one thing we can remember to do is to express our thanks to those who work hard for the Lord and for us (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

1. What is the work of a preacher? What is the work of an elders? What is the work of deacons?
2. Why are these roles important? What are some ways we can express our gratitude to them?
3. This week take a moment and express your thanks to an elder, deacon, or preacher for their work.

Tuesday March 3rd

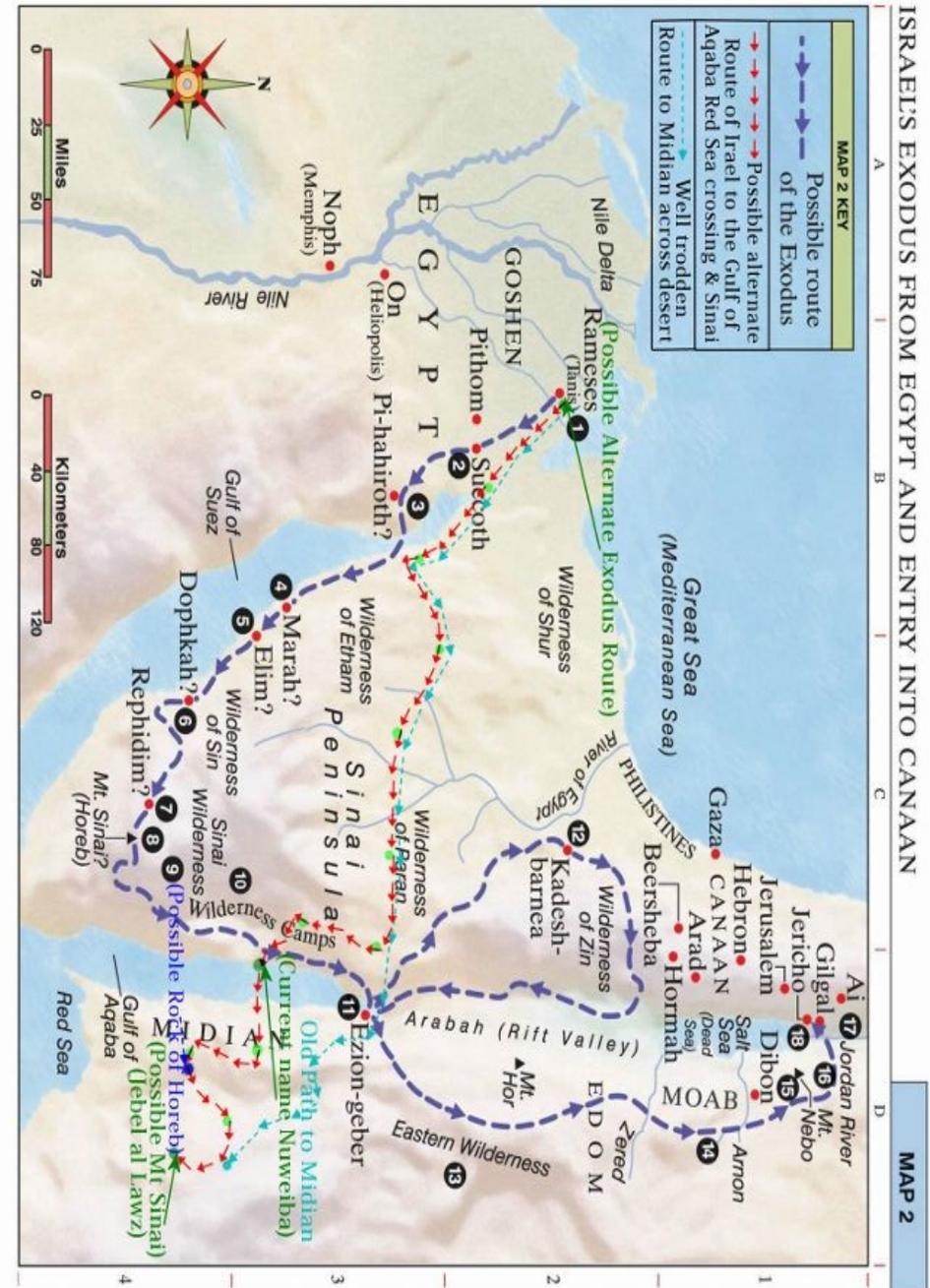
Hebrews 4:14-5:6; 1 Peter 2:9-10

We conclude our first week's readings by looking at the priests. In the Old Testament God established the priesthood. They came from a specific family (Levi). Only the priests could serve in the worship. Only the priests could enter the Tabernacle. They represented God to the people (teaching the law), and represented the people to God (offering sacrifices for the people's sins).

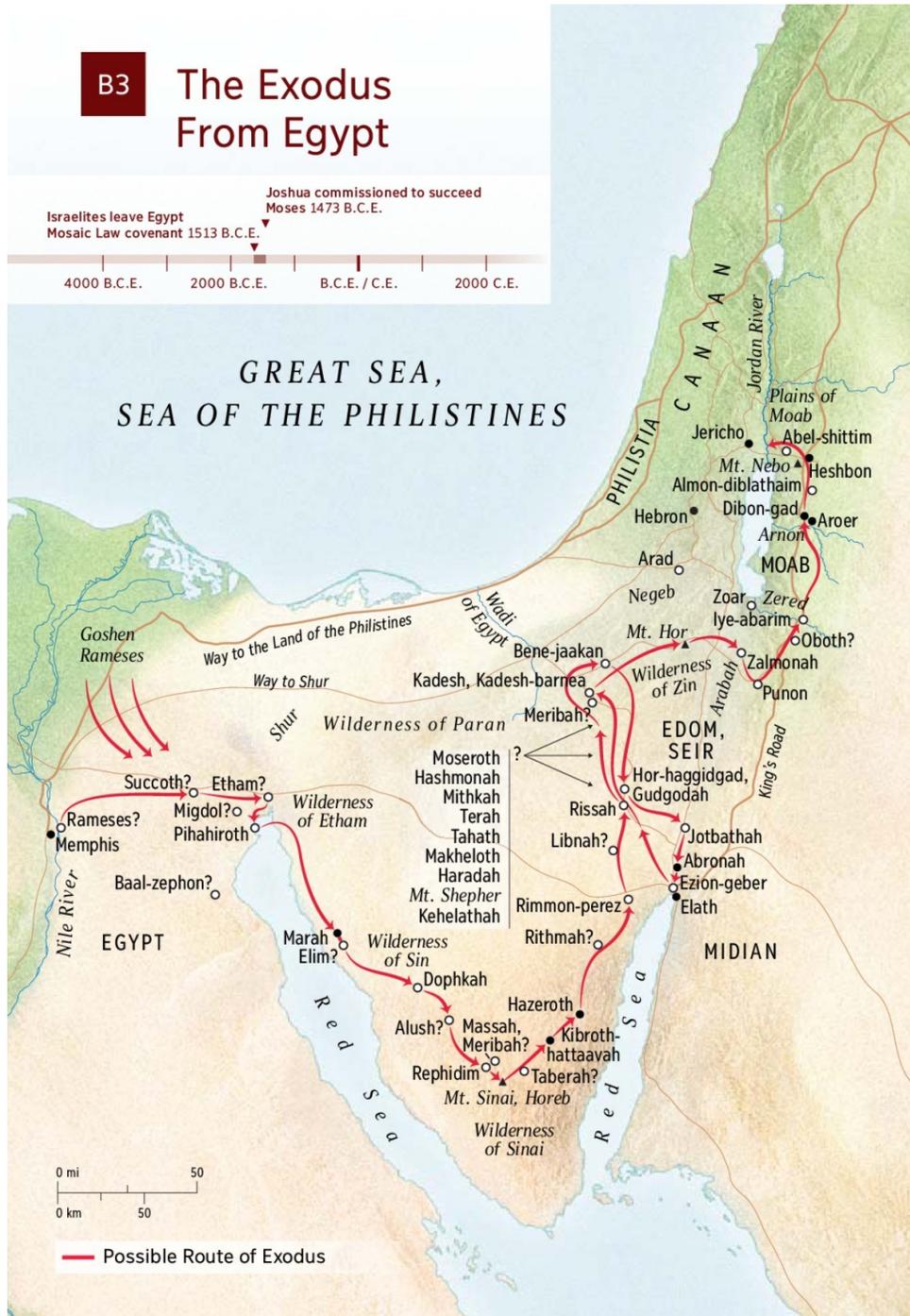
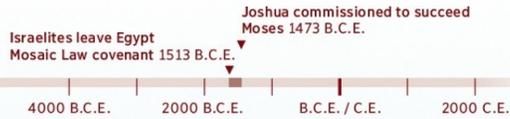
But things have changed in the New Testament. We are no longer under the law of Moses—now we are under the law of Christ! And under this law, everyone who is in Christ is called a priest. Which means, all can participate in worship—all can draw near to the presence of God. It's no longer restricted to a specific family—everyone who is in Christ (from all nations, races, tongues, etc.) are priests.

The Hebrew writer adds another detail—the High Priest who enters the very presence of God for the sake of the people—today our High Priest is not a human, it is Jesus. Jesus can represent us well before God because He lived here, put on flesh and became a man (John 1:14). And Jesus could perfectly represent God to us because He is God. Because Jesus is our High Priest, and we who are in Jesus are called priests, whenever we are in need, draw near to God in prayer. Jesus knows. Jesus understands. Jesus is always there for us in our times of need.

1. What is a priest? What is the job description of a priest?
2. How is Jesus able to sympathize with our weaknesses? What all does that mean? Why is that a comforting thought?
3. Look again at 1 Peter 2:9-10. Look at each of those descriptive terms. What do they tell us about our relationship with God? Should these terms change the way we think/our daily living? In what ways?



The Exodus From Egypt



Thursday March 5th

Numbers 20:1-13

Choices have consequences. There can be good consequences—like working hard at home and school may come with rewards like good grades or gifts from parents. But there can also be bad consequences—when we break the rules, when we make bad choices with our words, our actions—punishment and pain are sure to follow.

Moses learned this the hard way. He had it rough, having to lead God’s people to the promised land. It seemed like they complained the whole way! They were hungry, they were thirsty, they wanted to go back to Egypt, they didn’t like Moses or Aaron—and on and on and on... Well God, in His mercy, decided to give them water from a rock, and tells Moses how to go about getting that water. Very specific directions: speak to the rock. God wanted to show the people His holiness. Moses decided to hit the rock. He didn’t listen to God. He chose to do things his own way. He was wrong, and Moses received a punishment from God—he would not bring God’s people into the promised land.

Our choices matter. Every choice. And sinful choices come with bad consequences. There are some choices that could cost you your grades, your friendships, your relationship with your family, your health, even your life. And most importantly, there are choices that could cost you your soul. Moses reminds us to stop and think—what will be the consequences from this decision? Is it worth the cost?

1. Define in your own words what consequences are. What was the consequence from Moses’ decision?
2. What does “reaping and sowing” have to do with this study? What would you say to one who said, “There are people who make bad decisions all the time and nothing bad ever happens to them?”
3. The ability to make good choices hinges on being able to see ahead, past the current moment, to see how each choice would affect my life in the future. Work through some decisions with your parents—what are some choices you can make that will result in good consequences, and some that will result in bad consequences.

Friday March 6th

Numbers 20:14-29

Consequences... they continue to be the focus of this chapter. The Edomites are the descendants of Esau, the Israelites were the descendants of Jacob. These two brothers had a past. Jacob tricked Esau out of his inheritance and birthright. And though the two seemed to be friendly towards one another later in life, it's obvious that there were still bitter feelings between Esau's family and Jacob's. The Edomites refused to let Israel pass through their land—even though Israel promised not to take anything. They wouldn't budge.

Let's go back to our thought on consequences and draw some more application. Do you have any siblings (brothers or sisters)? Do you get along? Are there times you fight/argue? I'm sure there are times of frustration with your siblings—it happens in every family. But I want you to think about this: the actions of Jacob as a young man affected his relationship with his brother for generations. The Edomites and Israelites were enemies for many, many years.

It may be hard to see it right now, but the way you treat your siblings can result in lasting consequences. It could be that you remain close together as you grow up, and that as you start your own family, you and your siblings continue to love and support one another through life's journey. Or, you could be like Jacob and Esau, and once you grow up and start your own family, you have nothing to do with each other—separated because of poor choices in the past. What's the point? Treat your family well. Be kind. Be gracious and forgiving. Love your siblings—they're a gift from God.

-
1. What are some ways you can show your love/kindness to your siblings? When you get upset, what can you do to help the situation—to work it out?
 2. What are some of the things you and your siblings argue about the most? What are the things you're most thankful for with your siblings?
 3. What makes forgiveness hard? What does forgiveness involve? Why is an unforgiving heart dangerous to one's life (what would it result in)?

Tuesday May 19th

Joshua 17:6-18

We're ending our quarter through the wilderness. It has been quite a journey! There were some bad moments of sin, rebellion, disobedience and faithlessness. But there were also good moments—the faith of Joshua and Caleb, the leadership of Moses, the new generation claiming the promised land.

Joshua 17 is a continuation of a story that will keep on through the next few chapters of Joshua—how the faithful leader of God's people helped divide the land of promise. Joshua got to see the promised fulfilled with his own eyes.

The journey from Earth to Heaven may take you through a wilderness, a time of trial and testing. You may face hard and difficult times in your life. Just remember where you're going. Remember what all this is about. Remember who is with you always. Remember the promises He's given. Remember Heaven—think of Heaven—dream of Heaven.

Your journey doesn't end in the wilderness. You're heading to the promised land. When the road seems long and it's hard to press on, just remember where you're going. When times are hard—pray. When you need some wisdom—read the Word. When you feel all alone—lean on your godly friends/mentors. When you need some strength for the journey—look to the Lord. Keep your eyes fixed on Heaven. We'll be crossing that Jordan before you know it!

-
1. What did you learn this quarter from Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua?
 2. How would you describe the wilderness years for God's people?
 3. Why do you think these books are important/helpful today?

Monday May 18th

Joshua 16:1-17:6

In today's reading Joshua is continuing to divide the land of Canaan. In chapters 16-17 he is dividing the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

There is a sobering phrase found in v. 10—"But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers."

They did not fully obey the Lord. They did not drive out all the enemies from the land. God knew that if they let any of the pagan nations stay, in time they would influence God's people in negative ways. That's exactly what happened. Rather than completely removing the sinful influence from their midst, there were pockets of sinfulness, pockets that became a big problem in the next generation.

The way to win the battle over sin is much the same. If we have sinned, after repenting and asking God for forgiveness, part of that process of repentance is removing whatever caused me to stumble in the first place. If there's a drink I drank to become drunk, I won't keep it in my fridge. If there's a video I saw that I shouldn't have seen, I won't keep my phone/computer unprotected from those sites going forward. If there's a friend who encouraged me to sin, I will change that friendship immediately. Romans 13:14—make no provision for the flesh. Don't keep pockets of sin fresh in your life. Whatever may cause you to stumble—get it out!

-
1. Why do you think Israel didn't remove all of the people in the land of Canaan?
 2. What may be some reasons some don't remove the things that caused them to sin?
 3. Randy is dating a girl that pushed him to lie to his parents, and to go too far on a date. He feels horrible that he sinned, though his girlfriend doesn't seem bothered at all. What advice would you give to Randy?

Saturday March 7th

Numbers 27:14-23

Have you ever seen the passing of the torch at the opening of the Olympic games? Have you ever seen a relay race and the passing of the baton? That's what is happening in Numbers 27. Part of Moses' consequences was that he would die before the Israelites entered the promised land. With his passing, Israel would need a new leader. There was no question who that would be. It was Joshua!

Joshua had been mentored by Moses. He has spent years learning from Moses. He had been given responsibilities like leading God's people into battle, or spying on the promised land, and each time he proved himself faithful and capable of great things. Because of Moses' mentorship when Joshua was young, and because Joshua committed himself to learning from those older than him, he was well prepared for the task of leading God's people.

One day a torch will be passed to you. Yes, you can serve the Lord today in your youth. But there will be more roles for you to fill in the future. Think about our service to Lord in the church—teaching Bible class, serving as an elder or deacon or preacher, being a mentor to those who are younger, maybe leading/organizing and playing a role in our events like VBS or BLAST, etc. You can't wait for those days to come to get ready to lead. Start today. Start in your youth. Learn from those who are older. Ask for smaller responsibilities to help shape/mold your character. We will need your leadership when the time comes—start getting ready for those roles today by learning like a Joshua.

-
1. Who was Joshua? What helped Joshua prepare for taking over Moses' role?
 2. What are some roles of leadership in the service of God that will need to be filled in the future? Are there any that are appealing to you? What will you need to learn/do to prepare for those role over the next many years?
 3. Do you have a mentor figure? Choose one and commit to that person—learn from them—ask them questions, ask for opportunities to work with them. Let them be to you like Moses was to Joshua.

Monday March 9th

Numbers 20:2-8

Today's we return to Numbers 20. We look again at the wrong choices of Moses and Aaron, and how those choices have consequences. The first 8 verses set the stage. Moses and Aaron made the wrong decision. There is no excuse for their disobedience to God's command. That being said, can you see the frustration building inside he and Aaron's heart. It's a volcano about to burst.

The complaint of the people against Moses and Aaron was taking it's toll. Little by little they were chipping away at them—at their confidence, at their self control. Until here it bursts out in anger as they strike the rock.

Complaining and criticizing does that. Like constant dripping from a roof, over time it floods and damages a person's mind—filling them with anger, with doubt. How do we defeat a complaining heart, a critical spirit? Contentment and gratitude. Contentment—be satisfied with what you have. Gratitude—be thankful. When you feel the urge to complain, count your blessings. When tempted to tear one down with a critical tongue, say something nice—find something to be thankful for with that person.

Moses and Aaron weren't off the hook for their decision. But I wonder how different this scene might have played out had Israel chosen to be grateful for what they had, content with their blessings, and supportive of the men who were leading them home. Our words have the power to hurt or to heal, to wreck or to build. Choose wisely.

-
1. What does it mean to criticize and complain? Why would one do so?
 2. What are common things we complain about? Common things we criticize? Why are these words contagious?
 3. What does criticism say about a person's heart? How can we respond when we hear words of criticism/complaint?

Saturday May 16th

Joshua 14:6-15:12

We've read a lot about Joshua thus far. Today we read about his friend and fellow pillar of faith—Caleb. Here Caleb has a conversation with Joshua about a specific place in Canaan: Kadesh-barnea. He remembered the place from 40 years earlier when he saw it for the first time as a spy. All these years later he still has it in his heart, wanting to claim it for himself. So Caleb asks Joshua to give him the land, and he agrees.

Oh if we had a spirit like Caleb! Here's a man who is 85 years old, yet he is full of strength and vigor (v. 11). Here is a man who has walked with God for over 40 years, one who has followed the Lord His God fully (v. 9).

Do you have a friend like this? The friends we choose can help lift us up or pull us down. We can have friends that can weaken our faith, and dull our thinking. Or we can have friends like Caleb and Joshua—friends who are committed to serving the Lord, even if they have to do so alone. Friends who inspire us to grow and to learn. Friends who seek the best in us. Friends who make us better—who help us become more like Jesus.

One of the characteristics of strong Christians is that they surround themselves with strong people—with godly friends and spiritual mentors. He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm. (Proverbs 13:20). Which kind of friends are you pursuing?

-
1. Can you name some other "friends" in the Bible?
 2. What do we know about Caleb?
 3. Proverbs 13:20 teaches us that friends are like roads, they take us somewhere. It can be to a better place or a worse place. What are danger signs of poor friends? What are the characteristics of a good friend?

Friday May 15th

Joshua 13:24-14:5

This chapter continues the dividing of the land east of the Jordan. However there is one detail that is mentioned here about the Levites. God did not give them a plot of land like He gave the other tribes. Instead the Levites were given cities within each of the tribe's lands.

Verse 33 states that God is their inheritance. There was a special privilege being a Levite. They were chosen to lead God's people in worship. They were blessed to serve as priests, representing the people to God and God to the people. They would receive gifts for their service from the people. Their inheritance was their role in the service of God.

Peter taught that we are a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9). There is an honor attached to the role of the priest. What a privilege to draw near to God! What a blessing to know Him personally, and to reflect His image to the world. What a gift it is to lift our voices in worship to the throne. Give thanks to God that today we are blessed to serve in this incredible role, to be considered a kingdom of priests.

-
1. What is the job description of a priest?
 2. How did God take care of the Levites?
 3. There are both blessings and responsibilities attached to the role of a priest. Name some!

Tuesday March 10th

Numbers 20:9-14

As we reread this section, there is something that stands out. Did you notice why God punished Moses—why Moses' actions were wrong? Yes, Moses hit the rock rather than speak to it, but there's more to it. Look at verse 12, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel...". God told Moses to speak to the rock, but in Moses hitting it with rock it showed he didn't believe. Maybe he didn't believe in God's plan. Maybe he didn't think it would work.

We see a similar scene with Moses' nephews in Leviticus 10:1-3. They disobeyed God's command about the specific fire they were to use in worship. They were punished, and God's response afterwards was, "I will be treated as holy...I will be honored" (Lev. 10:3).

We can find similar statements today—"God didn't mean that.... That was then, this is now... that would never stand in today's culture....". When we disobey God's commands, it often displays a lack of faith (belief that what God says is right, best, and true). It also fails to treat God as holy—the distinct, one, true God. It makes God and His words appear as common, not worth our attention. I mean if God's own people don't listen to His words, why would any one else? If God's people live just like the world, then why do we need God?

Trust and obey—those words take on a new meaning from this study, don't they? Will I prove my trust (belief) in God, and who He is in my life (holy) through obeying Him?

-
1. Why is it important to obey God?
 2. Explore the thought—my disobedience may be evidence of unbelief. In what ways is that true? Provide some examples...
 3. Explore the thought—my disobedience fails to demonstrate the holiness of God. How is this true? Provide some examples.

Thursday March 12th

Numbers 20:28-29; 21:1-9

There's a lot that takes place in these few verses. First, Aaron dies. There's much that could be said about Aaron—the brother of Moses, the spokesman for Moses before Pharaoh, the first high priest. Numbers 20 ends with Aaron's death. It was a significant loss to God's people. Aaron was the one chosen to represent God before the people, and represent the people before God. Verse 29 tells us the people mourned for 30 days. Time to grieve and mourn. Time to process.

But, life goes on, just as it did for God's people. The King of Arad came at an opportune time, fought against Israel and was able to take some captive. The people turned to God with a plea, a vow, that if He delivered them in battle, they would utterly destroy this evil man and his sinful cities. The Lord heard, and the people were delivered.

Do you know what we see here? It's legacy—the legacy of Aaron. It's seen in one sense by the clothing of Eleazar, Aaron's son, designating him as the next high priest. But it's also seen in Israel's reaction to this traumatic situation. Rather than retreating in defeat (back to Egypt), or turning to idols, they turn to the Lord for deliverance. Aaron is honored by God's people demonstrating faith in a dark time.

All through your life you will find older, godly people who can make a profound difference. It may be Bible class teachers, elders, preachers—maybe just wise friends and mentors. They won't be with us forever. Be thankful for them, and once they're gone honor them through living a life pleasing to God.

1. What do you remember about Aaron?
2. What are some of the highlights of the faith of Aaron?
3. Who are some people in your life that have made a big difference spiritually? What do you hope to learn from them before they're gone? How can you do so?

Thursday May 14th

Joshua 13:1-23

The land is conquered. The enemies are defeated. Joshua is now old and advanced in age. It is finally time to divide up and dwell in the land of Canaan.

Today's reading takes us back to an arrangement Moses made with three tribes of Israel. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (half) claimed land on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses made them promise to cross over and fight with the other 9 tribes, and they agreed. Now that the battling is over Joshua starts dividing the land with those to the east.

Over the next few days, one thought that will be prevalent is the faithfulness of God. Ever since the exodus God has been pointing His people to Canaan. Now they're finally here, finally claiming the land. What seemed so far away is now realized before their eyes.

I imagine Heaven seems that way to us. It seems so long away. We know it is there, and we know how wonderful it will be, but imagining us dwelling there seems far and distant from today. However I'm sure when we're there, in the presence of God and Jesus, standing with saints of all ages, we'll feel in an even grander sense what God's people felt standing in Canaan—God has kept His promise, and now we're finally home!

1. Can you name the 12 tribes?
2. Why did the three tribes want land east of the Jordan?
3. Share a thought tonight with your family about Heaven. What comes to your mind when you think of Heaven?

Tuesday May 12th

Joshua 10:40-43

When the 12 spies were sent in Numbers 13, one of the main sources of their fears was the Negev. In that land were a race of giants known as the Nephilim. Compared to them Israel felt like grasshoppers. These giants brought about such great fear in those spies that they gave up on God's plan altogether.

But here in Joshua 10, the armies are in the Negev. They are facing against those same giants that their father's saw. And not only are they facing them, they're defeating them!

What's the difference between Numbers 13 and Joshua 10? The men of Numbers 13 focused on the giants. The men of Joshua 10 focused on the Lord. The first were full of fear. The second were full of faith. The first didn't see any way possible they could win. The second didn't see any way possible that they could lose. The first died in the wilderness. The second claimed the promised land.

You'll see some giants in your life. Giants of temptation, of doubt, of fears, of guilt. If you try to overcome your giants alone, you're likely to give up in fear and lose. But if you focus on God, if you lean on Him in prayer, if you seek His direction through His words, if you honor Him in your decisions—through God you can slay your giants. Numbers 13 or Joshua 10—the choice is up to you!

-
1. What are some giants you have seen in your life?
 2. Why is fear so strong? How does Jesus take away our fear?
 3. How does someone come to say (and believe) "I can't"? How do you respond to one who says, "I can't"?

Friday March 13th

Deuteronomy 8:15; Psalm 78:1-32

There's a saying, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." That seems to be on the mind of the Psalmist who wrote Psalm 78. Asaph walks through Israel's history, from the wilderness journey to David.

There were high points and low points. But the main focus of this whole section, and really the main focus of Scripture, is found in verse 4—"...the praises of the Lord and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done."

When we read through these pages of Israel's history we are learning facts that are important. We find examples to emulate, and examples to avoid (see v. 7-8). But of all the things to see and learn is to see God through these texts. Look at the great deeds He did, how He redeemed and saved His people—He is worthy to be praised! See His wisdom. Learn more of His amazing plan. Be amazed with His patience, His grace. Feel His righteous anger.

Reading through the Old Testament is more than learning about history—we're learning about life, we learn about ourselves, and most importantly, we learn more and more about God.

-
1. What have you learned about God through our study of the wilderness books thus far?
 2. Look at Psalm 78:6-8—break it down. What was the purpose of the law? What happens when a generation is not told/forgets?
 3. Galatians 3:24 Paul said that the law was a tutor to lead us to Christ. How have you seen Jesus through the wilderness journey?

Saturday March 14th

Psalm 78:33-72

We return to Psalm 78 today. There seems to be a contrast through this section as Asaph remembers Israel's past. The contrast: God's goodness and Israel's rebellion. While there are many verses which show this, look at the following:

"How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! Again and again they tempted god, and pained the Holy One of Israel." (Ps. 78:40-41)

"But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; and often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath." (Ps. 78:38)

Often, when God is spoken about through His actions in the Old Testament, He is described as an angry, vengeful God. Without a doubt God certainly punished sin, including the sin of His own people. What we fail to discuss is how patient, how merciful, how forgiving God was with His people. When in need of food/water, God provided. When threatened by dangers, God delivered.

Sometimes people are motivated by fear—other times people are motivated by love. It's like what Paul said in Romans 11:22—"Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in his kindness; otherwise you will be cut off." What motivates you to love and serve God?

-
1. Give some examples—how do you see the kindness of God in the wilderness?
 2. Kindness and Severity—how is God both? Why is it important that God is both?
 3. A common belief is that God changed from the Old Testament to the New. God was severe in the Old Testament and kind in the New. How would you answer this? Provide examples to prove your answer.

Monday May 11th

Joshua 9:16-27

Gibeon had tricked Israel. Through their well crafted story they were able to secure their safety. But it came with a cost. From that time forward they were to be slaves of Israel (v. 22, 27).

We've discussed before that sin comes with consequences. When we try to trick and deceive others, it comes with a price. When our lies are found out (and they will be found out), trust is instantly broken. It may take years to restore one's confidence in me after they find out I've lied.

The lack of trust will keep me from having close relationships. It will keep me from being asked to help in important roles and responsibilities. It will keep me from being helpful to others because they cannot rely on the things I've said.

A good name is better than precious ointment, (Ecclesiastes 7:1). Your reputation is important. Guard it well. Be genuine. Be honest. Keep your words. Do the right thing even when no one is watching. As the Gibeonites found out, once one's reputation is destroyed, it's hard to restore it again.

-
1. What is reputation?
 2. What do we determine about a person based on their reputation? How easily is reputation lost?
 3. If I've lost my reputation, can it be restored? Can you think of people in the Bible who were redeemed from their sins and restored their reputation?

Saturday May 10th

Joshua 10:16-43

Today's reading would be good to do with a map before you (you can use one on the back pages). The armies of Israel are furthering their conquest of Canaan. They are victorious against the 5 kings of the Amorites. From there Israel journeyed south. From Makkedah to Libnah, to Lachish and Gezer, to Eglon and Debir, even in the hill country of the Negiv where the giants dwelled Joshua and Israel defeated them all. Verse 42 reads, "Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the Lord, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

That's the main point in the book of Joshua. While Israel is successful and victorious in all these battles, it is not because they are so large, and so strong. Compared to the nations in the land they were much smaller and weaker. The reason for their victory was God. He was their strength. He defeated the armies. He empowered His people. He instilled fear in the Canaanites. Without God they could not have done it.

We sing a song in our hymn book, "The battle belongs to the Lord." What was true of Israel is true with us—our ability to overcome sin and temptation, to accomplish great things for His kingdom, it doesn't come from our own strength and abilities—God gives the victory. Don't forget that—every day be thankful for the victory found in Jesus.

-
1. Sing together "The Battle Belongs to the Lord"
 2. What impresses you with the victories of Israel in this chapter?
 3. Can you think of other times in the Bible when it was clear that the victory came from the Lord? Why do you think it is important to remember that God gives us the victory?

Monday March 16th

Numbers 21:4-5

Wait. We don't like to wait. And yet part of life is learning to wait. Waiting in line. Waiting in traffic. Waiting at the doctor's office. They remind us of the need, the great value, of patience.

Numbers 21:4 tells us that Israel became impatient because of the journey. Certain traits go together. Impatience tends to cause irritable moods, complaining/grumbling tongues, doubtful/forgetful hearts.

Instant gratification—I need what I want right now. That's not how life works. That's not how God works. And this kind of spirit can take us to a dangerous place. Many sins are committed by those who have no patience, who want their desires fulfilled this very instant.

God didn't take Israel the quickest way to the Promised Land, He took them the safest. The journey through the wilderness kept them from some dangerous enemies. The journey provided opportunities for their faith to grow stronger.

Life will be filled with times we need to wait. Those can be good moments. Moments to reflect. Moments to pray. Moments to meditate on things above. Moments to realign our focus, to prepare for busier seasons ahead. Think of the song we sing, "Teach me Lord to wait...".

-
1. What is patience? Why is waiting hard?
 2. What are the dangers of an impatient heart? What are some dangers of instant gratification? What does the story of Jacob and Esau teach us about instant gratification?
 3. Come up with some strategies—how to handle moments I'm required to wait.

Tuesday March 17th

Numbers 21:6-9

The people complained about the Lord and His provisions. They questioned God's motives. They hated His food. Unkind. Ungrateful. So God responds by sending fiery serpents among the people and many of them died. They people confessed their wrong and pleaded for mercy.

What happens next is interesting. God has Moses make a bronze serpent and set it up where it could be seen. If anyone was bit by a snake, if they would look at the bronze serpent, they would live. God didn't just remove the snakes—He provided a means to save them, which was also a way to test them. If they didn't look at the bronze serpent, they wouldn't be saved from the snake bite.

Jesus spoke about this in John 3:14-21. The lifting up of the serpent was like the lifting up of Christ on the cross. Christ is God's solution for our sin. Just as there was no other way to be saved from the venom of the snakes than by looking to the bronze serpent, there is no other way to be saved from our sins (forgiven) than by looking to Jesus. What does it mean to look to Jesus? The Jews in Acts 2 asked what they must do to be saved (Acts 2:37), and Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). Peter was telling them to "look" to Jesus for salvation from the sentence of death. Just like Israel, just like the Jews at Pentecost, if I want to be saved I must trust and obey God—I must look to Jesus!

-
1. Why did God send the fiery serpents?
 2. What are the similarities between the bronze serpent and Jesus?
 3. Look at 1 Corinthians 10:9-10—what does it mean to "try the Lord?" What are some examples of trying/testing the Lord? What would you say is the opposite of testing the Lord?

Friday May 8th

Joshua 10:1-15

The events of chapter 9 bleed over into chapter 10. When the neighboring nations heard about Gibeon's alliance with Israel, they decide to attack Gibeon. The 5 kings of the Amorites gather their armies to destroy them. Joshua made a promise, and his held to it. Word is sent to Joshua that the Gibeonites are under attack. He could have let them get destroyed for their trickery. But not our Joshua. He does the right thing by keeping his word and protecting the Gibeonites.

Jesus taught in Matthew 5:37, "Let your yes be yes and your no be no." In other words, you need to keep your word and honor your commitments. If you say you will do something for someone, you need to do it. If you say you will meet someone at a certain place and at a certain time, you need to be there at that time. When we make a promise we need to keep it. In so doing we are demonstrating a Christ-like character, because God always keeps His words. God always keeps His commitments.

This is a good reminder—be careful what you promise. Be careful what you commit to. Don't commit to things you have no intention of fulfilling. Mean every word you say. You'll be seen as a trustworthy person of character if you do!

-
1. What is a commitment? Why is it important to keep it?
 2. What does it say to others when we make a promise and don't keep it?
 3. Maybe this is my struggle—I over commit to things and find it hard to meet all my commitments. What would you advise me to do?

Thursday May 7th

Joshua 9:1-27

Joshua and the army of Israel is gaining quick popularity through the people who live in Canaan. First Jericho, now Ai—they are sweeping through the land. This news frightened the inhabitants of Gibeon. So they devised a plan. Rather than trying to fight Israel, they decided to trick them. They pretended to be from a far away land, and asked Joshua to make a covenant to protect them, and he did so not knowing they were supposed to be on his target list.

Something we hear a lot of today is false news. There seems to be a rise in our inability to trust the source of the reports we're hearing. Some say that major broadcasting stations are all biased. The articles posted by news outlets are not always verified as factual. Certainly on social media anyone can say anything about any subject regardless if it has any semblance of truth.

There's a lesson we learn from Joshua—be skeptical of what you hear, especially when it is about God and His word. Don't just take a person's word as truth. Paul told the brethren in Thessalonica to "test everything" (1 Thess. 5:21). The brethren in Berea were examining the Scriptures daily to make sure the things Paul was teaching was true.

With your Bible opened as the standard of truth (John 17:17), test every word before you accept it as truth in your life.

1. Why did the Gibeonites trick Israel? Is it right to trick others to get our way?
2. What are some examples of fake news you've heard today?
3. To know if something is false, one has to know the truth. What does that say about how to approach false teaching today?

Thursday March 19th

Numbers 21:10-20

God's people are on the move. From Oboth, to Iyeharim, to Wadi Zered, to Mattanah, to Nahaliel, to Bamoth, to Pisgah—have you ever heard of those places? They're hard to pronounce, aren't they? They're all found in the land east of the Jordan River, all along their wilderness journey. What makes this section special is that there's no recorded incident. No sin. No rebellion. No punishment. No death. The people successfully travel along, following God's leadership. There seems to be some learning and growing taking place.

Because this has been a peaceful travel, and because the Lord provides water for them again, the people sing a joyful song. There are times in life when we mourn and weep, and there are times we celebrate and rejoice. As we travel from Earth to Heaven we will encounter victories. There'll be victories over sin and temptation. There'll be times God uses us for great things—teaching, helping, encouraging others in their daily walk with Christ. There'll be prayers that God will answer. And each time we look back and see those victories, they ought to produce from within us a song of joy!

Think about it—after a BIG win, don't we sing? There's songs like "We are the Champions" or "Celebrate Good Times" as we express the happiness of winning. It's that thought—when God grants us the victory, our hearts should be full of joy and thanksgiving, and our lips should pour forth praise and thanks for what He has done for us!

1. What are some hymns we sing that express great joy?
2. What are some hymns we sing that express the idea of victory?
3. What are some victories God has given you in your life? Look back and talk about them as a family? What are the victories that have yet to come, that are promised in Jesus?

Friday March 20th

Numbers 21:21-35

The battles begin. As they march closer to Canaan, the surrounding nations on the east side of the Jordan River don't take to their presence well. Here in this last section of chapter 21 Israel faces Sihon the king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan. God told Moses not to be afraid because He has given them the victory (v. 34). And thus Israel defeated both kings, and took possession of their lands.

Just a few observations for this section: At this point, Israel only fought those nations which first attacked them. When they fought against another nation, their aim was total annihilation of their enemies, which in this chapter meant taking their lands. Most importantly, the victories they found in battle came because of God's blessings and power (v. 3, 34). God was the One leading them through the wilderness, and God was the One who gave them the victory.

The result of the victories over Sihon and Og was that other nations learned to fear them (22:2,3; Joshua 2:9-11). It not only caused fear, but it also caused non-Israelites to believe in the power of the true God. We can do that today too. When we attribute the blessings and good things in our lives to their origin (the giver of every good and perfect gift—James 1:17), we can help those who don't believe start that journey of faith. God is certainly at work today. Magnify God, show how great He is, by giving thanks to Him, both privately and publicly. One of my friends when asked, "How are you?" always says, "Blessed." Point others to Jesus. Help them see the God we know—the God who gives the victory!

-
1. What does it mean to magnify God? What are some ways we can magnify God?
 2. Why did the other nations fear Israel? What had they heard? What does that say about the confidence we should have in our God today?
 3. There's a lot of "fake news" out there today. What are some of the common things people have "heard" about God? Discuss how you would answer those false claims.

Tuesday May 5th

Joshua 7:16-26

Achan is chosen as the culprit, and is confronted by Joshua to confess his sin. He does so in v. 20-21. Notice the progression of his sin:

- When I **saw** among the spoil...
- Then I **coveted** them...
- And **took** them...
- They are **concealed** in the earth...

Saw...coveted...took...concealed. He saw something that didn't belong to him. He saw something that was tempting to him, and rather than turning away, he lingered, and his lingering led to a strong desire to have it, which led him to taking it and hiding it.

You are going to see many things on your journey from Earth to Heaven that will be tempting to your eyes. It may be possessions. It may be beauty or fame. It may be relationships or physical affection. If you keep your eyes on the things of the world, the more likely you are to travel Achan's path of wanting, taking, and hiding.

Instead, fix your eyes on Jesus. There is a satisfaction found in Jesus that all the gifts of the world can't compare with. What do you have your eyes on?

-
1. What is coveting? How do we overcome the sin of coveting?
 2. Achan hid the treasure. If we have to hide something, it must be ____? Can we ever truly hide anything from God?
 3. The sin of Achan didn't begin with his hands, it started in his heart. Read Matt. 15:18-20. How can we keep our hearts safe from these dangerous diseases?

Monday May 4th

Joshua 7:2-9

You will find times in your life when you receive bad news. It may be about someone you know or someone you love. Joshua and Israel received those news in chapter 7 when they were told that 36 men died in the first battle against Ai.

When Joshua received the news he gathered with the elders of Israel and wept before the presence of the Lord (the Ark). Joshua asked the question: “Why?” This is a question that runs through our mind when tragedy strikes. Why him? Why now? Why did this happen? Why wasn’t he spared? Why didn’t God stop this from happening? “WHY?”

God told Joshua the reason why, but we need to know that we are not always given the answer. In fact, in almost every case we may not know the answer to “why.” Job didn’t know the reason why he suffered. He asked to speak with God about everything that happened to him, and when he finally got the chance to do so God didn’t tell him why he lost everything. He simply told Job that he needed to trust in His God.

It’s hard not knowing the answer to questions that arise from hard times. But when those questions come, rather than trying to find answers to things we cannot know, focus your mind on what we do know—God is always good. Sin is evil and brings death. God is with us, even in the storms. This world is not my home, Heaven will be perfect. Keep walking with God and trusting in Him, fixing your eyes on Jesus. You can make it through this with Jesus. Stay with Him.

1. What do you believe Joshua was feeling in this chapter?
2. What verses in the Bible are helpful when facing difficult times?
3. What can you say to someone who is facing a tragedy? What should we not say? What is important to keep in mind?

Saturday March 21st

Deuteronomy 2:1-15

I thought of a quote from C.S. Lewis as I read today’s reading. He once wrote: “Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.”

In our reading, God tells the people it’s time to press on towards Canaan. They’ve traveled in circles long enough (v. 3). On their path they would come through the land of the Edomites, and the land of the Moabites. But God tells them about both places, “I will not give you any of their land as a possession.” Don’t get caught up in those lands. Keep your eyes on the goal. You’re heading to a much better place. I’m giving you Canaan. Don’t stop—just keep heading home.

I think that’s what Satan wants us to do. He wants us to forget about Heaven and to settle down here. Forget about holy living. Forget about pleasing God. Forget about why you’re here, and just enjoy all the world has to offer.

Don’t do it. Don’t give into his lies. Yes, there is much to enjoy here on Earth, but we’re pilgrims. We’re citizens of a different country—a Heavenly country. Keep your eyes on Heaven. Keep living today as if it’s the day Jesus will return and take us home. We sing the song, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through...”.

1. What was the land of Canaan going to be like? What will Heaven be like?
2. How are some ways Satan tries to distract us from our goal of Heaven?
3. Describe the mentality of a pilgrim. What happens when we forget about our goal? What are some ways we can keep Heaven in our minds?

Monday March 23rd

Deuteronomy 2:16-25

This section of Deuteronomy is a retelling of what we read in Numbers 21. Israel continues on towards the promised land, and along the way they battle and defeat Sihon the Amorite king. And upon defeating him there is a sense of dread and fear that spreads across the nations. God is with the Israelites, and nothing can stand in their way.

There's an interesting thought in v. 16—"so it came about when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people." The last of the older, rebellious generation finally passed away. For 40 years the nation had been wandering in the wilderness as over 1 million people from the spies generation died. And now, the last one is gone.

There's something sobering about that thought—the passing of a generation. It's hard to imagine it, but one day (Lord willing) you will grow older, and will live to see the passing of a generation. Much of who we are is because of the generation before us—our parents. They taught us. They raised us. They sacrificed so much to help us be as strong and successful spiritually as possible. No, our parent's generation were not perfect, but they have helped us more than words could express.

One day they will be gone, and it will be our turn to help the next generation—our children. It is the hope of every generation that the one which follows them will be stronger than themselves. Appreciate the time you have with your parents. Love them. Learn from them. One day you'll be in their shoes, helping a new generation walk with God.

-
1. Ask your parents what their hope and desire is for you, and how you can achieve it.
 2. What had the older generation of v. 16 seen and experienced? What were their strengths? What were their failures? How did they help the next generation?
 3. Ask your parents about the generation before them. How did that generation help them? What did they learn from that generation? What challenges did that generation face? What challenges have your parent's generation faced? And what challenges/opportunities do your parents see for your generation?

Saturday May 2nd

Joshua 8:19-35

As chapter 8 ends, Israel is getting back on the right track. Sin derails us. It disrupts our habits, distracts our thinking, destroys our influence. As we see here, choosing to sin is a good way to kill godly momentum.

Notice what Joshua does to get God's people back on the right track:

- They trust in God's battle plan against Ai
- Obeyed God's command about the spoils from Ai (v. 27)
- He built an altar to honor and worship God (v. 30)
- Rewrote and read God's law before the people (v. 32-35)

If you've sinned and stopped your progress of godly living, follow this example from Joshua about getting back on the right path.

- Strengthen your faith/trust in the Lord
- Obey His words
- Spend time in worship
- Devote yourself to reading and knowing His words.

-
1. What is momentum? How does sin stop it?
 2. What are some wrong ways to respond to sin?
 3. How can you regain spiritual momentum?

Friday May 1st

Joshua 8:1-18

Achan has been punished. The sin dealt with. And now Israel is ready to face Ai again. The first time they took around 3,000 men. This time Joshua chose 30,000 men. When you read through this scene you see the brilliance of the Lord shown through this incredible battle strategy. They were going to lure the men of Ai out with a few thousand pretending to be defeated, then ambush them from behind with the rest of the 30,000.

The Bible teaches that God is omniscient (all knowing). There is nothing He doesn't know. God doesn't have any questions. There's nothing that God ponders on. He knows everything there is to know.

Think about this from a more practical standpoint—God knows how to live the best life possible here on Earth. God knows about relationships, about friendships. God knows about illnesses and sickness. God knows about facing hard times and navigating through life's storms. God knows what talents we have, what we are capable of, and how to use those talents wisely. God knows how to handle conflicts and fears. From military strategies to daily choices, God knows it all.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Do you trust God's wisdom? Do you seek God's wisdom? Are there some questions weighing you down? Open the Word and learn from the One who knows it all!

1. What does omniscient mean? How much does God really know?
2. James 1:5 teaches us about the source of wisdom. If I want to grow in wisdom, what steps should I take?
3. Finish this statement: I know I am trusting in God's wisdom when _____

Tuesday March 24th

Deuteronomy 2:26-37

Today we read how the Lord delivered Sihon the king and his cities into the hands of Israel. God's people tried the path of peace. They tried to pass through, paying for anything that they might need (food and water). But his heart was hard. He wasn't going to have it. And because of his stubborn pride God delivered him into the hands of His people.

Notice the phrase in v. 36—"There was no city that was too high for us; the Lord our God delivered all over to us." No city too high—not for our God. What a statement of confident faith!

Sometimes we tend to limit God's power. This is too hard. The sickness is too strong. The problem is too great. There is no "too" for God—"too hard", "too strong", "too deep", "too late." Not with our God. Paul said that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond what we ask or think (Eph. 3:20-21).

Jesus encountered a man who struggled believing in the power of God. In Mark 9:20-27 the man made the statement, "If you can do anything, take pity and help us!" Jesus responded, "If you can? All things are possible to him who believes." The man responds with the words, "I do believe, help my unbelief." There's nothing God cannot do. Nothing too great, too hard, too powerful—not for our God. "My God is so great, so strong and so mighty, there's NOTHING my God cannot do." Do you believe it?

1. How can we know God can do all things?
2. What does James 1:5-8 have to do with this study? What does it mean to pray without doubting? Why is this hard for some?
3. Your friend Sarah is doubting in the existence of God. Her grandmother is sick and in the hospital, and doesn't seem to be getting better. She once believed, but now is unsure. What can you say to help her regain her faith, and trust in God's power and love?

Thursday March 26th

Numbers 22:1-21

There was Balak, and there was Balaam. Balak was the king of Moab. Balaam was a famous diviner (Joshua 13:22), who had a reputation of blessing and cursing. Balaam is approached by Balak who wants to curse Israel. The king has heard about the power of this nation, and thus he's afraid of what will happen to Moab if something is not done.

Balak sends for Balaam on two occasions. It is during these requests that we find an amazing phrase. Balaam said in v. 18, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the Lord my God." What faith!!

There's a thought here to consider—what would it take for me to break God's commandments? How much? How great? How strong would the offer have to be in order for me to do something contrary to God's commands? In our minds we say, "No offer, great or small, could get me to break God's commands." Yet our struggle with sin is over this very thought. Would I give up my purity for a moment of passion? Would I give up my influence in drinking or smoking in order to gain approval from some popular friends? Would I give up my right standing before God in cheating to get a good grade, or in lying to keep from trouble?

Sin comes with a price—a deadly one (Rom. 6:23). In each decision, weigh the cost. You'll realize, like Balaam, nothing the world offers could compare to what you have in God.

-
1. What does Romans 6:23 mean? How does the verse end?
 2. How is Jesus' question in Mark 8:36 similar to this study?
 3. When someone chooses to disobey God's commandments for something else, do you believe it's because they honestly weighed out the consequences of their choices and still decided to sin? If not, how does one make those kind of choices above? What does that teach us about how to make good decisions?

Thursday April 30th

Joshua 7

Notice the first words of chapter 7: "But...". The Lord was with Joshua. They had celebrated a great victory, "but." The bright light from chapter 6 is replaced with the darkness of chapter 7. Achan disobeyed the Lord's command and took things he was told not to take.

His sin came with devastating consequences. Because of his sin 36 men lost their lives in the battle of Ai. 36 families lost their husbands, their fathers. Because of Achan's sin he and his family were punished and killed.

Sometimes we hear the argument, "[This sin] is ok, so long as no one gets hurt." Wrong! Sin is wrong period. Sin is breaking God's commandments. Sin is disobeying God's laws. And the consequences of sin are far reaching. My decision to sin can harm not only my soul and my influence, but can bring damage to my family, to my church family, to my friends, and most importantly it can bring shame or dishonor to God.

Something we've focused on this quarter is how our choices come with consequences. It is crucially important to make wise choices. Today's lesson teaches us that when we make those choices, they need to be made with others in mind. Will this decision impact the lives of others in a negative way? Will it bring harm to their lives? Will I bring shame to those I love? Will this decision involve sin? If so, the answer always is immediately no.

-
1. What was Achan's sin?
 2. How can one person's sin affect others (even those innocent of that choice)?
 3. How would you answer a friend who believed, "[This sin] is ok, so long as no one gets hurt"?

Tuesday April 28th

Joshua 6:12-21

Before we leave chapter 6, let's look at one more detail which will set up our study in the next lesson. Joshua and the Israelites obeyed God's command in marching around the city. The walls fell down and the city was ready to be conquered. Before they did so Joshua gave the people some rules.

- They were not to harm Rahab and her family (v. 17)
- They were not to take things that were "banned" (silver and gold) (v. 18-19)

The gold and silver taken from Jericho belonged to the Lord. They were not to take it for themselves. Were they not to listen it would bring trouble upon the whole nation (v. 18). Sin brings consequences. We'll see that in our next lesson.

But today, look at the good! Look at Joshua who led with such faith. God told him to be strong and courageous, and that's exactly what Joshua did. He obeyed every command God gave him, and because of it God gave he and Israel the victory.

When we read about such people in the Bible, take time to learn from them and admire them. Joshua was an ordinary man, just like any other man today. What made him great is what makes others great today—his faith in God. You can be pleasing to God. You can overcome your fears with faith. You can be strong and courageous!

-
1. What are some great things Joshua has done thus far?
 2. What made Joshua great was his faith. How do you believe Joshua came to have such great faith? What must we do to have that kind of faith?
 3. The Bible is a book about people—ordinary people who put their faith in an extraordinary God. Read Hebrews 12:1-3. What difference should these stories make in our lives today?

Friday December 27rd

Numbers 22:22-41

Can you believe what you just read? Can you imagine hearing one of your pets speak to you? We've seen this portrayed in movies, but that's all fake. This really happened! Throughout the Bible God uses various animals to accomplish His purpose (giant fish, locust, snakes, birds, etc.).

There's an element in the story that's not very clear. In v. 20 it seemed like God gave Balaam permission to go to the king, but in v. 22 it says that God was mad Balaam was going. Some suggest it was how Balaam was going—perhaps full of greed or ill-intent in his heart. The command to only speak what God tells him is repeated before and after the event with his donkey, so perhaps Balaam was thinking of cursing Israel rather than obeying God's command.

Whatever the reason, God was angry with Balaam, and yet he is spared by the warning of his donkey. And the message got across to Balaam, because once he arrives to king Balak, he says, "...the word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak."

There are some who struggle with this story. To them it seems too far fetched. How would we answer the doubts of others concerning miracles in the Bible. There's a simple answer—if you believe Genesis 1:1, everything else in the Bible is possible. I don't have to understand "how" when I understand "who." How did God make a donkey speak? How was it able to know words? I don't know how—but I know the One who did so, the One who can do all things. Nothing is too great for Him!

-
1. Name some different occasions in the Bible when God used animals.
 2. Why do you believe people struggle with the miracles mentioned in the Bible?
 3. There are some miracles we cannot prove—we were not there when it happened. However there is one in which there is ample evidence. What evidence do we have for Jesus' resurrection? How does proving this miracle help answer claims for other miracles?

Saturday March 28th

Numbers 23

Balaam has come to King Balak in order to curse Israel. What follows in chapter 23 and 24 are the messages Balaam received from God—messages that blessed Israel rather than cursing them. There are 4 messages, broken up with Balak’s disapproval over the blessings, and their change of location, hoping that a change in scenery will change the tone of the message.

There is an important lesson here—God’s plan will not be thwarted. When man intends curses, God turns those curses into blessings. The king of Moab thinks he can stop God’s people, their progress towards Canaan, and God unravels all his plans.

This is but one battle in the major war. Revelation 12:1-4 points to the big picture. Satan, the dragon, wants to keep the child (Jesus) from being born. Throughout history Satan tried many ways to keep this from happening. Think about it—Pharaoh killing the baby boys, Haman’s plan to execute all the Jews, King Herod killing all the baby boys when Jesus was born—or even here, the king of Moab seeking to curse and put an end to Israel.

Since the beginning of time God has had a plan. Paul calls it God’s “eternal purpose” (Eph. 3:11). When God creates a plan, when God makes a promise, He keeps it. Praise God for His incredible plan!

1. Why didn’t Balaam curse Israel? Why didn’t Balak give up?
2. Look at v. 10—what is different about the way God’s people die?
3. Can you summarize God’s eternal plan? What does the plan have to do with you? What does that tell you about what God thinks about you?

Monday April 27th

Joshua 6:6-11

Today we return to the battle of Jericho. Here’s something to consider today—look at all the specific details/commands God gave to Joshua regarding Jericho:

- March around the city for 6 days (v. 3)
- On the 7th day they were to march around the city 7 times (v. 4)
- 7 priests will carry seven trumpets of ram’s horns before the ark (v. 4)
- The people were to be silent as they marched the first 6 days (v. 10)

Have you ever wondered what if Joshua decided to just march 13 times one day rather than stretching it out a week? What if they skipped a day? What if the priests forgot their trumpets one day? What if they only marched around 5 times on the 7th day? Did it matter if they obeyed God?

We know the answer. Of course it matters to God that we obey Him. If God says build an ark out of gopher wood, we build it out of that wood. If God gave Joshua specific marching orders, He expected them to be followed. Had he not obeyed God he would have lost the battle (Josh. 1:7). Jesus is the source of eternal salvation to all who “obey Him” (Hebrews 5:8). What He says about our thoughts, our words, our actions, our relationships, about the church—it all matters. “...there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey.”

1. Why is obedience important to God?
2. Some say, “God was very specific in the Old Testament, but not that way in the New Testament.” Is that true? Are there specific laws God has given under the law of Christ that He expects us to follow?
3. Something you will hear a lot is, “All that matters is that you love God.” How do we know we love God? What does the Bible teach about how to love God?

Saturday April 25th

Joshua 6:22-27 1 Kings 16:34

The city of Jericho is destroyed. Rahab and her family are spared. The Israelites celebrate the first victory God had given them. But something else happens in the end of this chapter—something we tend to overlook. It's found in verse 26, "Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the Lord I the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with this loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates."

It may seem like simply angry words or an empty threat, until we read 1 Kings 16:34. The Lord heard Joshua's words. The Lord kept Joshua's words. Hiel learned this the hard way. Just as Joshua's curse stated, Hiel lost his firstborn and his youngest son trying to rebuild Jericho.

Warnings exist for a reason. They try to keep us from danger and harm. There's a lot of warning signs on roads—take turns slowly, sharp turn ahead, road closed due to flood. There are some who ignore the warnings and plug, head first into danger. Those are often the ones who face terrible consequences.

The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it—Proverbs 22:3. Pay attention to God's words. They'll help you get where you want to go—they'll help you make it home!

1. What is the purpose of a warning sign? What happens if someone ignores it?
2. What are some "warning signs" we read of in the Bible? Why do some feel the need to overlook them?
3. Your friend Trisha thinks that the Bible is too constricting. There are too many rules to follow. "If God really loved us He wouldn't place so many rules on us." How would you answer Trisha?

Monday March 30th

Numbers 24:1-9

In today's reading we continue Balaam's blessing of Israel. This specific blessing points to the fairness of Israel, and to the deliverance of God. He delivered His people out of Egypt (v. 8), and He will continue to deliver His people.

There's an interesting picture in v. 6 of God's people. They are described as stretched out valleys, gardens beside the river, aloes planted by the Lord, cedars beside the waters. Those are pictures of life, of growth.

That's God's plan for us—growth! Much like a tree, through spending time daily reading and meditating on the Bible, we learn and grow—we dig our roots deep into His truth. We are not easily swayed by words of doubt, or by the lure of the world. We stand firm on the words of God. And what that word produces through our lives are the sweet fruits of obedience, the very attributes of God Himself.

This thought is expressed in Psalm 1. The blessed man is the one who spends time daily in the Word. The picture of God's people is one of growth. Is that what people see when they see you? Someone who is daily learning, daily growing, daily becoming more and more like Jesus? "Just like a tree that's planted by the waters..."

1. How are we to be like a tree?
2. Why is reading the Bible every day important? What difference does daily Bible reading make in one's life?
3. 1 Tim. 4:15 says, "...that your progress may be evident to all." What are signs of spiritual progress/growth? What will others see in me? What if they don't see any signs of growth?

Tuesday March 31st

Numbers 24:10-25

Today ends Balaam's words directed towards Israel. These weren't the words that Balak was expecting. He thought he would get his ways, and learned that God's will comes first—His WILL be done.

In this final message, God declares judgment on the surrounding nations. The wickedness of the surrounding nations will be punished by God.

What's interesting to me is the final verse of this chapter. Balaam arose and went back to his place. After everything he has seen, and everything he spoke by inspiration of the Spirit—after everything he has learned about God's people, when all is said and done he returns back home.

Why didn't he go to join God's people? Why not align yourself with this God and the people He is protecting and blessing? If in going back home, did he learn anything? Did he make any changes in his life, in his faith? We know the answer to that question, and will come to it in the book of Joshua.

Here's the simple question for today—after all the Bible studying, all the classes, all the sermons, all the devos, all the spiritual discussions, have I learned anything? Do I leave from those times changed, stronger, better than before, or do I simply leave and go home, same old me—back to the same old ways. Learn from Balaam here—don't stay the same. Each time the Word is opened, learn, grow, change!

-
1. What helps you learn the most when studying the Bible, attending Bible class, listening to a sermon?
 2. Balaam was sent by Balak for his purposes. How did God use Balaam in these past few chapters?
 3. In James 1:23 we find a description of one who looks at his face in the mirror and then goes his own way. Why would one see something that needs changing, and then leave unchanged? What does James say is the answer to that problem?

Friday April 24th

Joshua 6:1-21

Nothing is impossible with God. This chapter helps us see this clearly. Who would have thought that marching around a city would result in its mighty walls crumbling down? God did.

Can you imagine the scene? The army was commanded to march around the city once a day for six days, with the seven priests carrying and blowing their seven horns. Aside from the horns not a sound was to be made. Can you imagine what the people of Jericho must of thought? "What are they doing?" "Are they looking for a hole, a crack, a weakness?" "Are they trying to intimidate us?" For one week they march, till on the seventh day they march around, the silence was broken with the shout of the army and the blowing of the trumpets, and those walls collapse!

What seems impossible to man is possible with God. When God promises victory (v.2) believe Him. Standing on the promises! There will be times in your life that it seems like you're facing some impenetrable walls. "I can't get out of this rut... I can't overcome this temptation...I can't step up to this challenge...I can't lead...I can't grow...". And yet Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Not that I can do it alone, or through my own strength, but if I believe that all things are possible through Christ, don't doubt—step forward in faith and watch those walls of impossibility crumble before your eyes.

-
1. What did God command Joshua and the people to do in order to defeat Jericho?
 2. What are some things that seem impossible today? From what we've read in Numbers and Joshua, how do we know nothing is impossible with God?
 3. How does Ephesians 3:20-21 fit with this study? What does it mean to "pray big prayers?" Give some examples.

Thursday April 23rd

Joshua 5

Before their first battle, there's a moment of preparation. Two important things happen in this chapter:

First, the people obey God by observing the sign of His covenant. It was established in the days of Abraham that all the men of Israel would be circumcised on the 8th day after their birth. There were some in Joshua 5, born in the wilderness, who had not been circumcised. Their parents had not listened to God (v. 6). Thus this new generation decided right then and there to obey God, and ensured all the males were circumcised (v. 7-9)

Secondly, Joshua gets a meeting from a special visitor. He is simply called "The captain of the Lord's host." Was it an angel? Was it Jesus? It's not clear, though Joshua is told to take his sandals because he was standing on holy ground, just like Moses and the burning bush. Before the first battle, God sends His captain to strengthen the leader of Israel. I can only imagine what Joshua was told.

Here's a thought to consider—don't put the cart before the horse. Before they entered into battle God's people needed to complete what He expected of them. If we've sinned, we may feel the need to do something good to make up for the wrong we've done, and that's a good intention. But first, seek God's forgiveness. Confess the wrong in prayer. Make right what I've made wrong to another. Truly repent of my behavior—THEN get busy doing good things.

-
1. What is circumcision?
 2. What would have happened had God's people pressed on without first being circumcised? What happens when one today presses on doing good without first seeking forgiveness for sins they've done?
 3. Colossians 2:11-14 Paul describes baptism as a spiritual circumcision. What is the point Paul is making? How is God's work in baptism similar to circumcision?

Thursday April 2nd

Numbers 25:1-9

Sin is ugly. It is destructive. It always brings pain and suffering. It costs the sinner greatly. Numbers 21 begins with sin in the camp. The men start to go after women from other nations, and historically when this happened, the women led the men astray to false gods. It happened in the time of the judges. It happened in Solomon's life. It happened to Judah in the time of Nehemiah. The people started to worship false gods because of these women.

Some are lax towards sin. Others see it as it is, disobedience to our almighty God and must be stopped. That's the spirit found in the heart of Phineas. He was bold. He killed a man and a woman who were caught up with worshipping false gods. Though it may sound extreme, Phineas defended God's honor, acted righteously, and prevented a great disaster had their influence spread through the people.

The sins that may arise in our lives from the selfish choices we make—like Phineas - they must be destroyed. Paul used the language of "crucifying" the deeds of the flesh (Gal. 5:24). Dead to the old ways. Dead to the old habits. It's not just that I acknowledge they were wrong. I need to put an end to any path, and roads, that would take me away from God. It's a serious commitment—as serious as ending a life with a spear. Whatever threatens my walk with God must be confronted and removed from my life. Don't let anything take your eyes off of Heaven.

-
1. Who was Phineas? What do we know about him?
 2. What happens when we don't take a serious approach to sin? What are some practical examples of "crucifying" the deeds of the flesh/
 3. Though this is not the primary point of the passage, we certainly see the importance of choosing your mate wisely. Through the influence of ungodly women, the hearts of God's men were turned away. What are some important criteria I must use when choosing a mate? Why is this decision so important?

Friday April 3rd

Numbers 25:10-18

Today's reading provides an interesting thought—sometimes jealousy is a good thing. We often define jealousy as wanting what someone else has. It may be a possession, it may be a relationship, it may be a talent—it is desiring something that someone else has. Similar words are envy and covet.

Our God is a jealous God. What does God want? He wants our complete devotion to Him. He wants our faithful commitment to Him. He wants us to only worship Him. This is why God was so adamant about idolatry and worshipping false gods—the Israelites were His people, and they were not to join themselves to any other (false) god.

Picture a marriage. A man and a woman become married, making promises to each other (and to God) that they will love one another, be committed to one another, and faithful to one another as long as they both will live. What happens when the wife sees her husband spending time with another woman—giving attention to this woman that he used to give to his wife? What happens when a husband sees his wife flirting with another man? It produces jealousy. That love, that affection, that attention belongs to me and I don't want you to share it with anyone else.

That's how God feels. That's how Phineas felt towards God (v. 11), and it's how we should feel towards God as well. Just like a marriage, be protective of your heart. Make sure the only God in your life is the One True Living God!

1. Define jealousy.
2. God would describe Israel's pursuit after false gods as committing "adultery" against God. (Deut. 31:16; 1 Chronicles 5:25). Why did God describe it that way? Is it possible to be guilty of this today?
3. Phineas' jealousy for the Lord resulted in standing up against sin. How is standing up against sin a way we can defend God's honor? Does it matter how we stand against sin? Why?

Tuesday April 21st

Joshua 4:14-24

Let me ask you some questions:

- What's the purpose of the cross?
- What's the purpose of the church? Why do we worship the way we do? Why are we organized the way we are? Why do we do the work we do?
- What's the big deal with the Lord's Supper? Why do we take it every Sunday? What are we supposed to be thinking about during it?
- Why is daily Bible reading so important? How do we read/study the Bible?

It's good to ask questions. We learn through asking questions. God told the people that their children may ask about the 12 stones from the Jordan when they saw them. And it was the job of the parents to teach their children about God, about what He had done, and why it was so important.

Do you have questions? Are there things you're curious about? Ask your parents, and be ready to listen and learn as they share their faith, as they share the truth, with you!

1. Why can we trust our parents with our questions?
2. Should we be afraid to ask questions? Why/why not?
3. Hot Seat Time! With their permission, sit your parents in the "hot seat" and ask them any question you have about God or the Bible. They may not know every answer (and that's ok!), but have fun learning and growing together.

Monday April 20th

Joshua 4:1-13

As the people cross over the Jordan, God does something very special. He commands them to pick up 12 stones from the river bottom. Those 12 stones would be set up on the other side as a memorial. Every time they saw those stones, they were to remember the power, the deliverance, the faithfulness of God.

God has done this for His people. With Abraham it was altars. With Noah it was a rainbow. They are visual reminders for the people—to help them remember how God has been with them before, and is with them now.

We have a reminder on Sunday mornings in the Lord Supper. When we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine we remember Christ's love, Christ's sacrifice, the price for our sins and the devotion that ought to flow from our lives towards Him.

But do you have visual reminders in your life that point you to God? Maybe a Bible—you see it and think of the truths taught on it's pages? Maybe a certain heirloom given by a grandparent who loved the Lord, and you're reminded of God when you see it. There are some who wear bracelets with certain sayings or slogans on them like WWJD, to remind them of the importance of daily decisions.

It's important to remember who you are, whose you are, where you're going, and how you're going to get there. Set up some stones and remember the Lord who is always with you.

-
1. Why 12 stones?
 2. Why do we forget? What keeps a memorial from losing it's meaning?
 3. What am I to remember in partaking the Lord's Supper? How can I keep my mind focused during that time? Why is that time/reflection so important?

Saturday April 4th

Numbers 26:1-11

Years have passed—nearly 40. The book of numbers began with a census, and now that the generation of the spies have all died, it is time to renumber the people, to number the new generation. Like before, the census is counting the number of men twenty years old and upward (26:2, 4). There's a chart in the back of this book which shows the breakdown of the two censuses.

At first it may seem like just numbers—just a lot of people. But there is a big difference between this census and the last. The difference is in the people they are counting. The previous generation grumbled and complained all the way to the Promised Land. They were the ones who worshipped the golden calf. They were the ones asking to go back to Egypt. They were the ones who rebelled time and time again, like Korah and his company (the story repeated here in v. 9-10). They tested God. They made life hard for Moses.

The generation being counted now is a new generation. They haven't seen everything that their parent's generation saw, but they have something their parents seemed to lose during the wilderness—faith. They trusted in the words of the Lord, and because of it, they are ready to march in and claim the promised land. How would you describe your generation? Young believers? Passionate about God? Zealous for the truth? A group of young people who are serious about their faith? That description is up to you. Make the years of your youth years that honor God and strengthen your faith.

-
1. What is a census? Why is God commanding this census to be done?
 2. 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul tells Timothy to not let anyone look down on their youthfulness. Why couldn't the older generation in the wilderness look down on the younger generation? How do you keep the older generation from looking down on the younger?
 3. Discuss your current generation. How would you describe it spiritually? How can you play a part in helping your peers best use the years of your youth?

Monday April 6th

Numbers 26:12-56

There's a lot of numbers in this chapter. Each of the tribes are represented in this count. The census accomplishes a few things for Israel—it helps put into perspective the great loss from the previous generation (and the price of sin. Imagine how much larger/stronger they would be if the previous generation were still living). It also showed the people the faithfulness of God. One writer put it this way:

“The grand total of 601,730 counted represents a slight loss of 1,820—a remarkable fact in considering that all those over twenty years of age at the time of the exodus are now dead, and that they had endured such a rigorous life in the rugged terrain through which they had come. It is evident that the hand of God had led and blessed them in a marvelous way.” B. Doty

God had been with His people. He had seen them through the difficult journey to the Promised Land. We sing a song in our hymn book, “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” Though one generation has passed, another generation stands ready to press on. God has kept His promise. God has delivered on His word. God had been good to His people, blessed them with families and children, was patient and gracious towards their failures. Through God they overcame. Through God a new generation arose. Through God great wonders and deeds will soon be done across the Jordan. What about your life—how have you seen the faithfulness of God?

1. What does the word faithfulness mean? What are examples of God's faithfulness?
2. How was God faithful to His people in the wilderness? What did this new generation have to give thanks for?
3. How have you seen God's faithfulness in your life? Finish this phrase, “Because God is faithful...”

Saturday April 18th

Joshua 3

The nation of Israel were about to step into uncharted territory. There were several unknowns they were facing:

- A land they had never entered before
- Enemies they had never fought in battle
- A new leader who is filling this role for the first time

God said it well, “You've not passed this way before” (v. 4). But they didn't need to be afraid. The Ark of the covenant, the special box which represented God's presence, was going before the people (v. 11). What God is saying to the people is, “Don't be afraid. I'm crossing over first. You just follow Me.”

You'll face several unknowns in your life. Maybe a new school. Maybe a new class. Maybe moving to a new place—a new church family, new friends. Maybe it's on to college, or starting a job, or getting married. But don't be afraid. Just as Israel had the ark, we have Jesus—the true presence of God (John 1:14). There's no where we can be that He is not there. As we sign the song, “Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go.”

1. What was the Ark of the Covenant? What was inside the Ark?
2. How is Jesus similar to the Ark of the Covenant? How is Jesus greater than the Ark?
3. Let's try some scenarios—you're about to move to a new location, you're about to start college in a new town, you're about to get married—how does having Jesus with you help take away your fears?

Friday April 17th

Joshua 2

In chapter 2 of Joshua spies are sent to Jericho. If Israel is going to make it into the promised land they have to get past this well fortified city first. As they're spying out the city, they find safety and protection from an unexpected person—from Rahab. She is called, "Rahab the Harlot." She's known for her immorality. It's a job as well as an identity. You wouldn't expect such a person to do something good for others. You wouldn't expect a harlot to protect men of God. But she does. She believed in God (v. 11-12). And because of her faith she helped protect these two spies.

Do you know what's incredible about Rahab? Because of her good deed, she and her family are spared from the future attacks on Jericho. She marries an Israelite man, and gives birth to a son named Boaz (we'll read about him next quarter). Boaz is the great grandfather of David. So yes, Rahab is in the lineage of Jesus!

Do you know what this means? God can take people from all walks of life, from all different backgrounds (as messy as they can be), and can use them to accomplish great things. No one is too far gone to be saved by God and useful in His kingdom. If God can redeem a harlot, and use her to advance the nation of Israel, today God can redeem the broken lives and pasts of all people, and use them to teach, to preach, to encourage and further the gospel across the world.

Even Rahab? Even Samson? Even Saul of Tarsus? Even me? Yes—even you!

-
1. How did Rahab come to believe in God?
 2. Rahab is mentioned in James 2:25—how is Rahab an example of faith and works?
 3. We might look at Rahab's today and say, "There's no way they'd be interested in the gospel, that they'd believe." How does this story change that thinking? What does this teach us about how we treat people with broken pasts?

Tuesday January 7th

Numbers 27:1-13; 36:6-13

One of the reasons God had Moses take a census of the people was to prepare them for the claiming and dividing of the promised land. They will soon cross over the Jordan and split up the land by tribes.

In our chapter today we have an issue. The daughters of a man named Zelophehad come to Moses and Eleazar (the High Priest) stating their problem. Their father died and didn't have any sons, only daughters. Their question was whether or not they could inherit land in Canaan. This really wasn't about women's rights as much as it was about not wanting their father's name to be forgotten in Israel. The conclusion of the matter is found in Numbers 36. So long as they married within their same tribe (Manasseh) they could keep their father's inheritance. His name would be remembered.

These were women of faith! Their request reflected their belief that Israel would conquer, occupy and divide the land that God promised them. And as it states in 36:10, what the Lord commanded, they did! God took care of these godly women.

There are many examples of women who had incredible faith. These daughters would make the list. They were brave. They were respectful. They loved God and honored His words. There are many today who have their same spirit within them—women of faith in 2020 who continue to make a difference. Praise God for their excellent example!

-
1. Name some women today who you look up to, who have strong faith.
 2. Name some women from the Bible who had incredible faith.
 3. Some seem to say that women are not pictured favorably in the Bible, nor in the church today. How would you answer that claim? What are great things women are doing in the Lord's work today?

Thursday April 9th

Deuteronomy 1; Numbers 27:15-23

The people are 11 days journey out (v. 2). It's been 40 years since they were here before (v. 3). God's words come loud and clear, "You've stayed long enough at this mountain." (v. 6) It's time to go on. It's time to enter the land. It's time to fulfill this promise. The question for them to consider is, "What's going to be different this time?" The first few chapters of Deuteronomy is a walk through history – reminding this new generation of where they came from, and how their parent's generation failed. God was willing to take this new generation into the land – to let them fulfill the promise – but they needed to learn from their parent's mistakes – they needed to walk by faith – not by fear; they needed to trust in God to bring the victory – not in their own strength.

One of the changes taking place is in leadership. Moses had led them to the promised land, but because of his disobedience he would not go over the Jordan with them. Instead there was a man chosen—Joshua. Joshua was the clear choice. He had been the attendant of Moses from his youth (Num. 11:28; Ex 33:11). He led Israel in battle against the Amalekites, had accompanied Moses on Sinai when he received the law, and was one of the spies sent to scout the promised land. Joshua was the one to replace Moses as leader of Israel - not by accident or coincidence, but by design and preparation .

Legacy doesn't happen by accident. It is the product of preparation. Joshua learned from Moses. One day a baton will be handed to you—you will need to lead your family, you will need to lead in the church, you will need to provide a voice and example of wisdom for the younger generation after you. Learn and grow today—you have great roles to fill in the future.

-
1. Why was Joshua a good pick for the next leader of Israel?
 2. Look ahead in the future, what roles do you see yourself filling? How does one prepare for those roles?
 3. Joshua had Moses. Who is your Moses? How are you utilizing them now?

Thursday April 16th

Joshua 1

Today we start the book of Joshua. This book is full of faith and action packed. God's people will finally claim the land of Canaan, and they will do so under the leadership of this incredible man.

There is a phrase repeated 3 times by God in this chapter: be strong and courageous (v. 6, 7, 9). What God was asking Joshua required great courage. They were going to face some strong enemies with fortified fortresses. They were going to face armies that well outnumbered their own. The generation before Joshua let their fear conquer their faith. God tells Joshua 3 times—be strong and courageous.

It's not easy standing up for one's faith. It's not easy overcoming sin and temptation. It's not easy walking by faith when the world walks by sight. But don't give up. Don't give in. Don't be afraid to do the right thing. Don't be afraid to speak the truth. Don't be afraid to stand with Christ.

Be strong and courageous. Conquer your fears by placing your trust in the Lord. Just as God was with Moses, He promised to be with Joshua. And just as God was with His people before, Christ promises He is with us always (Hebrews 13:5-6).

-
1. What is courage?
 2. What would be things Joshua could have been afraid of? What are things Christians today are afraid of?
 3. Faith or fear. How does a stronger faith help us overcome our fears? How does one get a stronger faith (see Rom. 10:17)? Notice then what God says to Joshua in v. 7

Tuesday April 14th

Deuteronomy 33

The final words of Moses to the people are recorded in this chapter. The layout of this chapter looks very similar to Genesis 49 when Jacob blessed his 12 sons. Moses takes a moment and blesses each of the 12 tribes. The overall tone of this chapter is very positive and optimistic. That says a lot about Moses and his heart. Rather than being bitter about life and the way it all ended, Moses chose to be thankful for the people, and to express his faith in what was to come.

Look again at v. 29—Blessed are you O Israel; who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, who is the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! What Moses is saying is, “You are blessed to be the people of God.” They are blessed because God had saved them, rescued them out of slavery. They are blessed because God had kept them safe through all the dangers they faced in the wilderness journey. They are blessed because God had promised them victory, of which they had briefly tasted in the defeat of the nations east of the Jordan.

Let me ask you—is it good to be a Christian? Is it good to belong to God? Why? This question is at the heart of evangelism. Why give your life to God? Why surrender your will to Jesus? What difference does God make in your life?

-
1. What does the word “Christian” mean?
 2. Why is it good to be a Christian? What difference does Christ make in your life?
 3. Describe, as if you would to a friend, why life is “abundant” in Jesus? (John 10:10)

Friday April 10th

Deuteronomy 31:14-30

Moses’ time has come. His journey is completed. God will call him up to the mountain and there his life on earth will end. Before this happens, Moses speaks to the people. He points the Levites to the law (v. 26). He calls for the elders to give one final address (v. 28). But he also spends time with Joshua. I can only imagine the look in Moses’ eyes as he speaks to Joshua. He knew what it was like to lead this people. He had done so for over 40 years. He knew the difficulty of the task that Joshua had before him. Moses had received so much criticism and complaint. It’s hard to be a leader, people tend to blame leaders for everything. With Moses present, God tells Joshua, “Be strong and courageous.”

One day you’ll be there. You’ll be older. You’ll be wiser from the years of learning and living. You’ll have words to share with the younger generation—words to help prepare them for the roles they will fill. But today you are in Joshua’s shoes. Today you’re young. There’s so much for you to learn along life’s way.

Joshua made Moses’ departure easier because of who he was. He was a man of faith and character. Moses could leave knowing the people were in good hands. If there’s anything that we can instill in the older generation, it’s a sense of peace and confidence in us. We won’t lose our faith. We won’t give up the fight. We will live good, righteous, God-fearing lives. We will teach our children the words of the Lord. We will continue to follow Jesus until the day we too are called home.

-
1. Joshua was a man of great faith and character. What is character?
 2. When you look at the older generation, what are some things you would like to learn from them before they’re gone?
 3. Joshua is told multiple times, “Do not be afraid.” Why? Can you see yourself older, having to step into some serious roles? What are things you might be afraid of? What’s the answer to facing those fears?

Saturday April 11th

Deuteronomy 34; Hebrews 3:1-5

It is finally time. God calls Moses up the mountain. But before Moses' departs, from the top of mount Pisgah God lets him view the land from a distance. That's grace. God lets the leader of Israel see from a distance this special promised land. Imagine getting a tour of Canaan by it's creator - by God. "Look to the North..." "See that river..." "Notice the hills...". What an incredible scene! There Moses would stand, facing the end of his story yet staring at Israel's next chapter. By faith he could envision what it would look like occupied and claimed by Israel.

I imagine we all will face our mountain moment like Moses - when our life comes to and end. It may not be when we want it to. Like Moses we may wish we had seen more, experienced more. Truth is that much of our life is planting seeds, the fruit from which we'll never see - yet it may be a blessing to another generation. Moses led them to Canaan. They wouldn't have made it without Moses.

Do the good you can today, be busy in good works, help teach/train/prepare the next generation for their service to God, so that when your time comes (whenever it may come) you leave this life having done what you could with what you have been given. Serve the purpose of God in your generation (Acts 13:36). Is there any more that could be asked of us?

1. What comes to mind when you think about Moses?
2. What did you learn from the life of Moses? How has his example helped you?
3. Moses was able to stand on Mount Pisgah and see the promised land. Can you see Heaven (with eyes of faith, thinking on what the Bible says)? What do you see? What will it be like? How are you feeling being there? How does keeping your eyes on Heaven help you live each day for Christ?

Monday April 13th

Deuteronomy 32

This chapter is called the "Song of Moses." It records some the final words Moses speaks to the people. The song points to the goodness and faithfulness of God. It also points to the faithlessness of the nation.

Notice the phrase in v. 29—"would that they were wise, that they would understand this, that they would discern their future." The past few nights our readings have pointed our attention towards the future. One day you will step into a role of leadership. One day you will be the Moses, an older and wiser child of God. One day your journey on earth will end and you will go on to be with the Lord.

We don't like to think about this. We don't like to talk about death. We don't like to think about our end—but avoiding the subject doesn't mean that death is any less real. Hebrews 9:23 reminds us that there is a day in which we will die and go on to eternity. Whether if we're ready or not, that day will come. What we learn from Moses and from these past few studies, is how important it is to live every day ready for my departure.

How do you live every day ready for Christ's return, or my journey to eternity? Live every day for God. Seek forgiveness for sins you have committed, and truly repent (turn away) from those sins. Use your time and talents today in view of eternity—bless others, point others to Jesus, speak the truth in love.

It won't be very long.... are you living today ready for that day to come?

1. Why do we die?
2. What can we do to prepare for our last day on earth?
3. Your friend John is afraid of death. He's really shook up over news of someone famous dying. What hope/comfort can you bring to John about death? What would you say?