Weekly Bible Reading - May 2019

//May 5//
John 21- Peter's Restoration
Several weeks after Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus confronts Peter about his denial. But the confrontation is not negative, but rather it gives Peter a chance to express his true love for Jesus and for Jesus to help redirect Peter to the work he needs to do in the kingdom

- As you read chapter 21, do you see the gentleness of Jesus as he confronts Peter with the aim of restoration?
- How do you think Peter felt during the time since his denial up until this moment? Have you ever felt this way in your relationship with the Lord? Did you ever experience a restoration that not only brought healing but also greater purpose in your walk with the Lord?
- At the end of the story, Peter is concerned about comparing his walk versus that of John's. We all have our own journey and God will use us all in different ways. Have you ever compared your life experiences to someone else and thought "it's not fair"?

//May 12//
John 2:1-12 and John 19:17-27 - Jesus and Mary
These two passages from John's gospel give us insights into Jesus' relationship with His mother, Mary. In the first passage, we see Jesus honoring Mary's request to help the wedding host due to the wine running out. On the cross and in His suffering, He finds a minute to again honor His mother by making sure that John would take care of her after His death - even though He had brothers. We know that John lives to an old age and ends up in Ephesus, and church history/ legend says that Mary lived in a house there.

- In what ways can you follow the example of Jesus to honor your mother even in the midst of your busy life and career?
- Are you making or have made plans for the care of your mother as she gets older?
- Finally-Happy Mother's Day to all mothers!

//May 19//
Philemon - Love over authority
This short letter is packed with gems which illustrate the power of love over authority and power. It also shows that in doing so there will always be an element of risk in that there is no guarantee love will prevail. It is the road less traveled, but one that Jesus has called us to walk.

- Paul starts by reminding Philemon of his love and kindness which have refreshed many of the brothers. Yet he wants him to grow and to begin to show generosity as a result of faith. Would your close brothers and sisters call you a generous person? Like Philemon, do you need to grow in generosity that comes from faith?
- Verses 8 & 9 are the heart of this letter in my opinion. Paul chooses the route of asking for a favor out of love as opposed to making a demand he had the right/authority to make. Have you ever given up your right in order to let love be the deciding/motivating factor like Paul does with Philemon?
- Although we don't see the ending of this story, how do you think it ends? Is Onesimus received as a brother without punishment? Does Paul later visit and how you expect that visit went? Do you have an opportunity in your life to appeal to love instead of using authority - maybe at work or with your kids? Find a situation where you can risk showing love when it is unexpected.

//May 26//
2nd Corinthians 7:9-11, Hebrews 6:1-9 & Hebrews 12:14-17 - Repentance
Paul tells us in 2nd Corinthians that true repentance is reflected in a changed life, not in the depth of the emotions that are expressed. The Hebrew writer gives us warnings that the heart can become so hard and distant from God that we cannot or will not repent. We need to heed the warning in Chapter 12 that sin can put us into a position where, like Esau, we reach a point where repentance is too late.

- What do you need to repent about in your life? Are you willing to show true repentance in a changed life or are you more content with showing worldly sorrow?
- Clearly the Hebrew writer is speaking to Christians in chapter 6 who have turned away from God. Have you ever turned away from God? Are you at a point where you have turned away from God, but continue to hang around church/Christianity? Do you fear reaching a point of your heart being so cold and hard that God's message fails to move you to change?
- Don't let Esau be your example. Learn to repent before it is too late.

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