



Thru the Bible in 2012

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God endures forever. Isaiah 40:8

Ladies for Jesus Thursday Bible Study Ponderings

Readings for March 9, 2012 – March 15, 2012

Emailed: Tuesday, March 13, 2012

For our ponderings, consider the questions listed below in regards to what we have read during the days of Friday, March 9th – Thursday, March 15th.

- **(Genesis 25:27-34)** Esau selling his birthright may seem ridiculous to us as we read it, but consider the fact that we do the same in our lives. Esau was hungry and couldn't focus on anything but the gnawing feeling he felt in his stomach. Jacob was conniving and wanted his brother's birthright. As his brother snarled at him for some soup, Jacob knew he had Esau where he wanted him so he went for it. Esau traded the lasting benefits of his birthright for the immediate pleasure of food. He acted on impulse, satisfying his immediate desires without pausing to consider the long-range consequences of what he was about to do. When you see something you want, are you following your impulses and "selling out" whatever you can for that momentary pleasure? Are you allowing Satan's temptation of short term satisfaction to overtake you to the point that when you indulge for the immediate pleasure you don't consider the long-range consequences? In what ways are you being proactive about not allowing yourself to be in a place where this temptation for Satan is easy to give into?

Special Note: Andy Stanley has a fantastic sermon on this topic entitled, "More," Here's a link to that sermon:

http://www.intouch.org/broadcast/video-archives/content/topic/more_video

- **(Genesis 26:17-22)** Three times Isaac and his men dug new wells. When the first two disputes arose, Isaac moved on. Finally room was available for everyone. Rather than start a huge conflict, Isaac compromised for the sake of peace. Would you be willing to forsake an important position or valuable possession to keep peace? Ask God for the wisdom to know when to withdraw and when to stand and fight.
- **(Genesis 27:5-10)** When Rebekah learned that Isaac was preparing to bless Esau, she quickly devised a plan to trick him into blessing Jacob instead. Although God had already told her that Jacob would become the family leader in verse 25:23, Rebekah took matters into her own hands. She resorted to doing something wrong to try to bring about what God had already said would happen. For Rebekah, the end justified the means. No matter how good we think our goals are, we should not attempt to achieve them by doing what is wrong. Would God approve of the methods you are using to accomplish your goals?
- **(Genesis 28-35)** At first glance, Jacob's trickery with his family (including his uncle Laban) looks like it is all paying off for him. However, don't overlook the consequences that Jacob is going through in this story. They could have been quite different if He would have followed God, Who is honest in all His ways. Although Jacob got the blessing he wanted, deceiving his father cost him dearly. These are some of the consequences of that deceit:
 - ✓ He never saw his mother again;
 - ✓ His brother wanted to kill him;
 - ✓ He met up with his uncle who was just as conniving, if not more so, and he deceived Jacob as well.
 - ✓ His family became torn by strife. Although Esau ends up "getting over it" and they reconcile, he initially was determined to kill Jacob. This caused Jacob to have to leave his family and the stress that he left behind was great.
 - ✓ Jacob was exiled from his family for years.

Jacob would have received the birthright and blessing anyway. Imagine how different his life would have had been had he and his mother waited for God to work His way, in His time! Jacob, like Esau when he sold his birthright for the bowl of soup, was not considering the long-term consequences. What “trickery” actions are you taking in your life to obtain a promise from God? Consider how following God’s way can bring about the joy of our blessings. How are you allowing God to lead you in obtaining His promises?

- **(Genesis 38)** Judah saw no harm in hiring a prostitute for a night; after all, he was more than willing to pay. He was ready to execute Tamar, however, because if she was pregnant as a result of prostitution his grandchild would not be part of his family line. Apparently the question of sexual morality never entered Judah’s mind; his concern was for keeping his inheritance in the family. Ironically, it was Tamar, not Judah, who acted to provide him with legal heirs. By seducing him, she acted more in the spirit of the law than he did when he refused to send his third son to her. This event in no way implies that God thinks lightly of prostitution. Throughout Scripture, prostitution is condemned as a serious sin. If the story has a moral, it is faithfulness to family obligations is important. Incidentally, Judah and Tamar are direct ancestors of Jesus Christ (See Matthew 1:1-6)

When Tamar revealed she was pregnant, Judah, who unknowingly had gotten her pregnant, moved to have her killed. Judah had concealed his own sin, yet he came down harshly on Tamar. Often the sins we try to cover up are the ones that anger us most when we see them in others. Do you become indignant with others in regards to their sins? Many times we have to examine ourselves to see if there is a similar tendency to the same type of sin in our own lives. When we admit and ask God to forgive us, forgiving others becomes easier.

- **(Genesis 39:9)** Potiphar’s wife failed to seduce Joseph, who resisted his temptation by saying it would be a sin against God. Joseph didn’t say, “I’d be hurting you,” or “I’d be sinning against Potiphar,” or “I’d be sinning against myself.” Under pressure, such excuses are easily rationalized away. Remember that sexual sin is not just between two consenting adults. It is an act of disobedience against God. What is your initial reaction under pressure? Do you immediately acknowledge sins against God or do you rationalize by avoiding admitting it is a sin against God?
- **(Genesis 39:21-23)** As a prisoner and slave, Joseph could have seen his situation as hopeless. Instead, he did his best with each small task given him. His diligence and positive attitude were soon noticed by the warden, who promoted him to prison administrator. Are you facing a seemingly hopeless predicament? At work, at home, or at church, follow Joseph’s example by taking each small task and doing your best. Remember how God turned Joseph’s situation around. He will see your efforts and can reverse even overwhelming odds.
- **(Genesis 40:23)** When Pharaoh’s cup-bearer was freed from prison, he forgot about Joseph. Two full years passed before Joseph had another opportunity to be freed (41:1). Yet Joseph’s faith was deep and he would be ready when the next chance came. Do you feel passed by, overlooked, or forgotten by others or by God? Are you surprised that people are often ungrateful? If so, then place trust God as Joseph did. God has opportunities waiting for you to not only free you from the predicament you are currently enduring, but reward you for using the gifts He has given to you for His glory.
- **(Genesis 41:38)** Pharaoh recognized that Joseph was a man “filled with the spirit of God.” You probably won’t get to interpret dreams for a king, but those who know you should be able to see God in you, through your kind words, merciful acts, and wise advice. Do your relatives, neighbors, and co-workers see you as a person in whom the Spirit of God lives?



The law about marrying a widow in the family is explained in Deut. 25:5-10. Its purpose was to ensure that a childless widow would have a son who would receive her late husband’s inheritance and who, in turn, would care for her.