



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 Reflects

Readings for April 6, 2012 – April 12, 2012

Emailed: Thursday, April 12, 2012

For our ponderings, consider the questions listed below in regards to what we have read during the days of Friday, April 6th – Thursday, April 12th.

- **(Exodus 16:2, 3)** Once again the Israelites encounter danger, shortages and inconveniences. They began to complain bitterly and wanted to return to Egypt. As always, God provided for their needs. Difficult circumstances often lead to stress, and complaining is a natural response. In the pressure of the moment, the Israelites could not focus on the cause of their stress. They could only think about the quickest way to escape. When pressure comes your way, do you focus on a quick escape? Resist this temptation. Focus on God's power and wisdom to help you deal with the cause of your stress. When you focus on Him, He will reveal to you eternal lessons that you can use when pressure returns.
- **(Exodus 17:2)** Again the people complained! Some problems can be solved by careful thought; rearranging our priorities; discussion and good counsel. But some problems can be solved only by prayer. We should make a determined effort to pray when we feel like complaining. Complaining only raises our level of stress. What is your first response to a stressful situation? Do you begin with prayer? Consider how prayer quiets our thoughts and emotions and realize that it prepares us to listen.
- **(Exodus 18:8-11)** When Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, arrived to visit, Moses told him all that God had done. In doing so, Jethro was convinced that the Lord was greater than any other god. Our relatives are often the hardest people to tell about God. Yet we should look for opportunities to tell them what God is doing in our lives because we can have an important influence on them. In what ways do you look for opportunities to share what God is doing in your life with your family and friends?
- **(Exodus 18:13-26)** Moses was spending so much time and energy hearing the Hebrews' complaints that he could not get to other important work. Jethro suggested that Moses delegate most of this work to others and focus his efforts on jobs only he could do. People in positions of responsibility sometimes feel that they are the only ones who can do necessary tasks; but others are capable of handling part of the load. In what ways has the Lord placed you in a leadership position? Are you trying to do all the work on your own or are you delegating the tasks out so that you can work best on the duties only you can do? Proper delegation can multiply your effectiveness while giving others a chance to grow.
- **(Exodus 19:5-8)** In Genesis 15 and 17, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to make his descendants into a great nation. Now that promise was being realized as God restated his agreement with the Israelite nation, the descendants of Abraham. God promised to bless and care for them. The people promised to obey Him. The covenant was thus sealed. But the good intentions of the people quickly wore off. Have you made a commitment to God? How are you holding up your end of the bargain?
- **(Exodus 20:1-6)** *You must not have any other gods before Me.* What is so difficult about this commandment? As Christians, on the surface we say, "I worship the one and only God and I do not worship any other gods." However, as we look closer into our lives we realized that in today's world we allow many things to become gods to us. Money, fame, work, pleasure, even our own families can become gods when we concentrate too much on them for personal identity, meaning, and security. No one sets out with the intention of worshiping these things. However, by the amount of time we devote to them, they can grow into gods that ultimately control our thoughts and energies. What do you allow to control your thoughts and energies? Is it God or some other god? Letting God hold the central place in our lives keeps the things of life from becoming gods that we worship.

- **(Exodus 20:7)** Why is God's name special? God's name carries His personal identity. Using it frivolously or in a curse is so common today that we may fail to realize how serious it is. The way we use God's name conveys how we really feel about Him. We should respect His Name and use it appropriately, speaking it in praise or worship rather than in curse or jest. Most of our speech has been developed habitually. Are you in a habit of speaking God's Name in curse or jest? Never take lightly the abuse or dishonor of His Name. Realize that we are called to be His holy people, commonly bond together because we call upon the Name of Jesus! (1 Corinthians 1:2)
- **(Exodus 20:20)** Throughout the Bible we find the phrase: "Don't be afraid." God wasn't trying to scare the people. He was showing His mighty power so the Israelites would know He was the true God and would therefore obey Him. If they would do this, He would make His power available to them. God wants us to follow Him out of love rather than fear. In what ways are you fearful? Has the Lord called you to obedience, but you are afraid to take action? To overcome fear, think more about His love. Recall that 1 John 4:18 tells us, "*Perfect love expels all fear.*"
- **(Exodus 23:24-25)** God warned the Israelites about their neighbors whose beliefs and actions could turn them away from Him. We also live among neighbors whose values may be completely different from ours. We are called to maintain a life-style that shows our faith. This can be a struggle, especially if our Christian life-style differs from the norm. Our lives should demonstrate that obeying God takes precedence over conforming to our neighbors' way of life. God's Word, not society, dictates how we should live. In what ways have you given into society's ways? Pray about how the Lord wants you to purge your life of things that conform to this world and not to Him.
- **(Exodus 28:3)** The tailors who made Aaron's garments were given wisdom by God in order to do their task. Later in the building of the temple we see craftsmen who have been given wisdom to fulfill their task of building the Tabernacle. All of us have special skills. God wants to fill us with His Spirit so we will use those skills for His glory. What special talents and abilities has God given you? In what way can you use them for His Work in this world?
- **(Exodus 29:10-41)** Why did God give such detailed rituals in connection with sacrifices? Partly it was for quality control. A centralized, standardized form of worship prevented problems of belief which could arise from individuals creating their own worship. Also, it differentiated the Hebrews from the pagan Canaanites they would meet in the Promised Land. By closely following God's instructions, the Hebrews could not possibly join the Canaanites in their immoral religious practices. On a personal level, God was showing them how serious He was about His relationship with them. Do you worship God in a way that is pleasing to Him?
- **(Exodus 34:6-7)** Moses asked to see God's glorious presence in verse 33:18, and God responds in this verse. What is God's glory? It is His character, His nature, His way of relating to His creatures. Notice that God did not give Moses a vision of His power and majesty, but rather of His love. God's glory is revealed in His mercy, grace, compassion, faithfulness, forgiveness, and justice. God's love and mercy are truly wonderful, and we benefit from them. We can respond and give glory to God when our characteristics resemble His. In what ways do your characteristics resemble God?
- **(Exodus 34:28-35)** Moses face was radiant after he spent time with God. The people could clearly see God's presence in him. How often do you spend time alone with God? Although your face may not light up a room, time spent in prayer, reading the Bible, and meditating should have such an effect on your life that people will know you have been with God.