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 Tuesday Bible Study Ponderings

Readings for January 13, 2012 – January 15, 2012
Emailed: Monday, January 16, 2012

For our ponderings, consider the questions listed below in regards to what we have read during the days of Friday, January 13th – Sunday, January 15th.

- **(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)

> **Did you know...**
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> 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.

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?