

Week 14

<p>April 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 32</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 33</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 34</p>	<p>* Elihu is the youngest of Job’s friends. After the first three friends fail to prove Job’s guilt, Elihu speaks. Like the other friends, Elihu argues that Job <i>must</i> be guilty of sin since he is suffering.</p> <p>? As you read Elihu, does he seem closer to the truth than the other friends?</p> <p>? Elihu argues that God is a just God who punishes sin. Every Christian agrees with this statement. Does it apply to Job’s situation? Based on what you read in Job 1-2, is Job suffering as punishment for sin?</p>
<p>April 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 36</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 37</p>	<p>* Elihu reminds Job of God’s power and majesty. He concludes that every person must respond in one of two ways to God’s greatness: wise people will fear God; other people will be “wise in their own conceit” and will be rejected by God.</p> <p>? Does Job agree with Elihu that God is powerful and mighty? Both Job and Elihu agree that God is powerful; but how does Job believe God’s power is being used?</p> <p>? Before you read God’s answer to Job in Job 38-41, think about the answer you would expect from God. After Job’s suffering, what do you expect God to say to him?</p>
<p>April 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 38</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 39</p>	<p>* For many of us, God’s answer is a great surprise. It doesn’t seem to relate to Job’s suffering in any way. However, God’s answer is important for showing an answer to Job’s question, “Where is God while I suffer?” God’s answer shows that God is intimately involved in the daily operation of our world. He is interested in all things. Even when we can’t see Him, He is present.</p> <p>? Are you surprised by God’s answer to Job? What does God’s answer say to you?</p>
<p>April 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 40</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 41</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job 42</p>	<p>* Job comes to peace in Job 42:5. “I have heard of you..., but now my eye sees you!” Later God restores Job’s fortune, but Job is satisfied <i>before</i> he receives any physical blessings. Seeing God satisfies Job’s search. If Job had died immediately after Job 42:5, he would have died as a “blessed man.”</p> <p>? Is “seeing God” enough to satisfy your desires? When we truly love God, we are satisfied with God alone.</p>
<p>April 6</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 42</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 43</p>	<p>* Matthew is often called the “Gospel of the King.” Matthew shows how Jesus fulfilled the promises of a King who would sit on the throne of David. This is seen in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A genealogy that traces Jesus’ ancestry through King David (Matt 1) * The visit of the wise men who were looking for a king (Matt 2) * Herod’s desire to kill the baby Jesus as a rival king (Matt 2) * John the Baptist prepares the way for “the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 3) <p>* As you read through the Gospel of Matthew, use a highlighter to mark every time the word “Kingdom” or “King” appears. This will show how the Kingdom of Heaven is important in the Gospel of Matthew.</p> <p>? Notice these names in Jesus’ genealogy: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and “the wife of Uriah.” What do they have in common? Since Jewish genealogies did not include women, why do you think Matthew included these names?</p> <p>? Notice the order of stories in Matthew 3-4. When Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist, the voice from heaven says, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” In the next verses, Jesus is tempted by Satan. In your Christian life, do you find that times of blessing are often followed by times of temptation?</p> <p>? In Psalm 42, the writer “thirsts” for God like a deer thirsts for water. Do you thirst for God? Is He your greatest desire?</p>

<p>April 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Matthew 5 ☐ Matthew 6 ☐ Matthew 7 	<p>* The Sermon on the Mount is often considered Jesus’ greatest sermon. It defines life in the Kingdom of God. Please read it not as a list of “rules” but as a description of “Kingdom life.” To outline it briefly, citizens of God’s Kingdom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Are blessed by a different standard than this world (5:3-11). * Are salt and light that brings glory to God (5:13-16). * Live by the law of love that goes far beyond the written traditions of the Jewish leaders (5:17-48). * Give, pray, and fast in order to please God, not to impress other people (6:1-18). * Do not focus on earthly treasure but on heavenly treasure. They are not greedy for money and they do not worry about money. They trust God for their provisions (6:19-34). * Do not judge others (7:1-6). But they are discerning; they recognize a tree by its fruit (7:15-20). * Trust God for what they need (7:7-11). * Treat others as they want to be treated (7:12-14). * Are careful to truly know God and build their lives on His Word (7:21-27). <p>? In the six examples of Matthew 5:21-43, “love” is the ultimate law. If we love a person, we will not treat them with uncontrolled anger. If we love our wife, we will not lust after other women. If we love our wife, we will not divorce her unjustly. If we love people, our word will not require special oaths. If we love those who wrong us, we will not seek unjust retaliation. If we love our enemy, we will be like our heavenly Father. As you read these examples, ask, “Am I treating others with Christ-like love?”</p> <p>? Jesus teaches about three spiritual disciplines: praying, fasting, and giving. He assumes that His followers will regularly practice each of these. Fasting is probably the least practiced of the three. Do you fast? If so, how have you benefited spiritually from this practice? If you have not, I encourage you to fast one meal with the purpose of using that time for prayer and Bible reading.</p> <p>? Greed (6:19-24) and worry (6:25-34) both show an inappropriate concern for money. Which of these two are your biggest problem? Are you learning to trust God instead of money?</p>
<p>Weekly Summary</p>	<p>Write down one “big lesson” that you have learned from this week’s readings. Each day next week, review this lesson and ask God to help you to apply the lesson in your daily life.</p>

Week 15

<p>April 9</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 8</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 9</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 44</p>	<p>* Matthew 8 shows the authority of the King. A Roman centurion recognizes Jesus' authority (Matt 8:5-13). The winds recognize His authority (Matt 8:23-27). Demons recognize His authority (Matt 8:28-34). Matthew shows that Jesus has power over the powers of this world.</p> <p>? Mathew 9:1-6 shows two miracles: a paralyzed man is healed <i>and</i> his sins are forgiven. Which of these two miracles (a physical healing or a spiritual healing) impresses you more? Which is more important for eternity?</p> <p>? Psalm 44 is a prayer for deliverance in a time of trouble. Have you ever experienced difficulties like this Psalm describes? If so, pray the prayer of verse 26: "Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!"</p>
<p>April 10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 11</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 45</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 46</p>	<p>* In Matthew 10, the King sends out His disciples to preach the message of the Kingdom. He warns that persecution will come from those who oppose His Kingdom, but we must not be afraid. God will be with those who preach the Kingdom.</p> <p>? Do you find Jesus' yoke "easy" and his burden "light"? (Matt 11:30). Or do you find the Christian life to be a struggle? If it is a struggle, give your burden to Christ and let Him bring peace to your life.</p> <p>* Psalm 46 is a wonderful song of hope. In times of trouble, we can remain confident that "God is our refuge and strength."</p>
<p>April 11</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 12</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 13</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 47</p>	<p>? Are your words "good" or "evil"? If you find that your mouth speaks evil, hurtful words, it is because your heart is producing evil, hurtful thoughts. Our words show what is in our heart (Matt 12:33-37).</p> <p>? Jesus' family is defined by obedience (Matt 12:50). By this definition, are you part of His family?</p> <p>* Matthew 13 contains seven "Kingdom parables" that show how God's Kingdom operates.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Parable of the Sower shows that the results of God's Word depend on our reception of the Word.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Parable of the Weeds shows that there will be a judgment at the end of time.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Leaven show the spread of the Kingdom far beyond its original size.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Parable of the Pearl of Great Value show that it is worth any cost to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The Parable of the Net again points to the judgment at the end of time.</p> <p>? As you read the Parable of the Sower, ask "Which soil am I? Am I allowing God's Word to bear fruit in my life?"</p>
<p>April 12</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 14</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 48</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 49</p>	<p>? In a storm, do you look at Jesus or at the wind? (Matt 14:30)</p> <p>? The miracle of the Feeding of 4,000 (Matt 15:32-39) takes place soon after the Feeding of 5,000 (Matt 14:13-21). But the disciples doubt that Jesus will feed the multitude (Matt 15:33). Why did they doubt?</p> <p>* Psalm 48 celebrates God's presence in Jerusalem, the "City of our God." God gave Israel victory over her enemies. This psalm was written to "tell the next generation that this is God" (Ps 48:13). Never forget to tell your children what God does in your life. They need to hear of God's goodness in the history of their family.</p> <p>* The teaching of Psalm 49 is simple: regardless of a person's wealth, everyone will die. Because of this, we must prepare for death. Only God can "ransom my soul from the power of the grave." He is the One in whom we must put our trust.</p>

<p>April 13</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 16</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 17</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 50</p>	<p>* The foundation of Christ’s Kingdom is the profession of Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt 16:16). The church is not simply a social organization. It is built on faith in Jesus as the Son of God.</p> <p>? Read Matthew 16:24-26 and then answer this question, “By Jesus’ definition, am I a disciple?”</p> <p>* At the Transfiguration, Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the Prophets. These were the two large divisions of the Old Testament. Both appeared to recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah.</p> <p>? Jesus said that we must “become like children” to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What characteristics of a child are needed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?</p> <p>? Read Matthew 18:15-17 for a guide to resolving conflicts in the church. Do you follow each of these steps? When you read step 3 (“If he refuses to listen to the church, let him be as a Gentile and a tax collector” – in other words, “as an unbeliever”) ask, “How are Christians supposed to treat unbelievers?” Do we treat them with love?</p> <p>? Psalm 50 shows that there are two ways we can respond to God, the judge of the world. We can call on Him and He will deliver us (Ps 50:15). Or, we can “forget” Him and there will be no deliverance (Ps 50:22). Will you be a person who calls on God or a person who forgets God?</p>
<p>April 14</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 19</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 20</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 21</p>	<p>* To 21st century wealthy Americans, Matthew 19:24 sounds impossible! In our world, even a middle class American is “rich.” However, Jesus promised “with God, all things are possible.” What God requires, God makes possible.</p> <p>? Do you follow Jesus’ model of “servant leadership”? (Matt 20:26-28).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">How will servant leadership look in your family?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">How will servant leadership look in your business?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">How will servant leadership look in your church?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Which of these is most difficult for you to apply?</p> <p>? Matthew 21 is the start of Jesus’ last week of earthly ministry. He enters Jerusalem as a King honored by crowds. Within only five days, the same crowds will shout “Crucify Him!” Why?</p>
<p>Weekly Summary</p>	<p>Write down one “big lesson” that you have learned from this week’s readings. Each day next week, review this lesson and ask God to help you to apply the lesson in your daily life.</p>

Week 16

<p>April 16</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 22</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 23</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 51</p>	<p>* As we approach the end of Matthew, the Gospel focuses on the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The religious leaders have rejected Jesus as their King and now they “plotted how to entangle him in his words” (Matt 22:15). The Sadducees and Pharisees were rivals and despised each other, but they worked together in this chapter to try to trap Jesus. Matthew 23 records Jesus’ final public warnings before his arrest. He gives the religious leaders one final opportunity to repent.</p> <p>? Jesus identified two great commandments: love God and love your neighbor. Do you faithfully keep those commandments?</p> <p>? The world looks at the outside; God looks at the inside. Does your heart match your outward appearance? (Matt 23:28)</p> <p>* Psalm 51 is David’s great prayer of repentance for his sin with Bathsheba. Notice his spirit of true repentance. He does not simply regret the result of his sin; he repents for his offense against God.</p> <p>? Since you repented of your past sins, do you the joy of a “new spirit”? (Ps 51:10)</p> <p>? After reading Psalm 51, reread Psalm 32. Psalm 32 is David’s song of joy after he repented. This is the result of true repentance.</p>
<p>April 17</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 24</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 52</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 53</p>	<p>* Matthew 24-25 teach about the return of Christ. To those who reject him, this is a frightening teaching; when he returns, he will come to judge those who did not believe. For those who follow him, this is an encouraging teaching; when he returns, he will rule as our rightful King.</p> <p>? As you read about Jesus’ Second Coming, ask yourself, “Am I ready for His return?” If the answer is no, when do you plan to get ready? Remember that He can come at any time. We must be ready.</p> <p>? Psalm 53 says that only the fool denies God. Are you wise?</p>
<p>April 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 26</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 54</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 55</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 56</p>	<p>? Try to imagine yourself with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Where would you be: -With the crowd that came to arrest Jesus -With the disciples that waited -With Peter, James, and John that went with Jesus to the place of prayer -Not there at all because of disinterest How close do you want to be to Jesus?</p> <p>* Psalm 55 traces David’s emotional struggle in a time of trouble. Perhaps you too have faced this struggle. 1) David feels fear as he sees the danger around him (55:1-8). 2) He feels anger as he remembers the betrayal of a man he had trusted as a friend (55:9-15). 3) Finally, he chooses faith as the only right response in trouble (55:16-23).</p> <p>? Do you struggle with fear? If so, memorize Psalm 56:3. It is a great promise for times of fear.</p>
<p>April 19</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 27</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 28</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 57</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 58</p>	<p>* As you read the Passion story in Matthew 27, remember that Jesus suffered willingly for your sin and for mine. He suffered because “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son....”</p> <p>? Jesus’ final commission to his followers is “Make disciples.” This commission is for <i>every</i> believer; every one of us has a role to play in making disciples. Some are witnesses and evangelists who lead unbelievers to Christ; some are teachers who train believers; some are friends who encourage and support new believers. What is your role in the Great Commission?</p> <p>? In times of trouble, can you pray Psalm 57:7? “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast!” To be steadfast does not mean that you do not struggle. To be steadfast means that <i>even in the struggles</i> you will remain faithful to God. You may fall down, but you will not quit.</p>

<p>April 20</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 59</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 60</p>	<p>* The book of Joshua records the conquest of Canaan. The first part of the book tells of important battles as Israel entered the Promised Land. The latter part of the book gives details of the division of the land. I will mark chapters that list the divisions in <i>italics</i>. If this is your first time reading through the Bible, you may choose to skip some of the lists.</p> <p>? In Joshua 1:5 and 3:7, God promised Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.” Think of one of your spiritual heroes. God wants to work in your life just as He did in the life of your spiritual hero. All of us can be close to God.</p> <p>? Memorials were very important to Israel. They were a means for telling the next generation about what God did for His people. What do you tell your children about God? Do they know the story of how God saved you? Are you passing your spiritual heritage to the next generation?</p> <p>? Psalm 59 is David’s prayer for deliverance when Saul sent soldiers to kill him. They surrounded David’s house watching for a chance to kill him. Read Ps 59:16. Realize that the soldiers are still there. David chooses to “sing aloud of your steadfast love” <i>before</i> deliverance comes. This is faith; to trust God even before we see His deliverance.</p>
<p>April 21</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 6</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 7</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 8</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 61</p>	<p>? As you read Joshua 6, try to place yourself in Israel’s situation. Would you trust God’s strange command to march around the city? Do you walk in obedience to God even when you don’t fully understand His purpose?</p> <p>? Joshua 7 and 8 contrast the results of disobedience (Josh 7) and obedience (Josh 8). Disobedience led to defeat; obedience led to victory. Are you living in Joshua 7 or Joshua 8?</p> <p>? David prayed, “Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!” (Ps 61:4) There is no safer place to be than under God’s protection. Do you enjoy the peace of living under the shelter of God’s wings?</p>
<p>Weekly Summary</p>	<p>Write down one “big lesson” that you have learned from this week’s readings. Each day next week, review this lesson and ask God to help you to apply the lesson in your daily life.</p>

Week 17

<p>April 23</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 9</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 11</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 62</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 63</p>	<p>* Joshua 9-11 tells more stories from the conquests of Canaan. Once again, these chapters demonstrate the dangers of operating apart from God’s direction (Josh 9) and the blessings of operating in God’s power (Josh 10).</p> <p>? In dealing with the Gibeonites, Joshua made a crucial mistake. The treaty with Gibeon led to a three-year famine during the reign of King David (2 Samuel 21:1). What led Joshua to make this mistake? (The answer is found in Josh 9:14). Have you ever failed to seek God’s direction before making an important decision? What was the result?</p> <p>? Highlight the name “the Lord” each time it appears in Joshua 10. Notice that victory over their enemies is not the result of Israel’s power, but the result of “the Lord” fighting on their behalf.</p> <p>? David prayed “He (God) <i>alone</i> is my rock and my salvation” (Ps 62:2). “Trust in him <i>at all times</i>” (Ps 62:8). Do you trust in God alone? Do you trust in Him at all times? That is a life of true faith.</p>
<p>April 24</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 12</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 13</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 14</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 64</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 65</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 66</p>	<p>* Joshua 12 links Joshua’s leadership to Moses’ leadership. By putting these two lists together, Scripture highlights Joshua’s role as the chosen successor to Moses.</p> <p>* Don’t skip over Joshua 13:22. It might seem unimportant, but stop and ask, “Where have I read about Balaam before?” Balaam is the prophet hired by the enemies of Israel to curse Israel (Numbers 22-24). Although God did not allow Balaam to curse Israel, he now dies with the enemies of Israel. If we begin to move away from God and toward sin, we will eventually find ourselves as willing participants in sin.</p> <p>? Do you have the heart of Caleb? Can you testify, “I wholly followed the Lord my God”? (Josh 14:8)</p> <p>? Someday you may go through a time of discouragement and lack of faith. Make a list today of the “awesome deeds” God has done in your life. Keep that list to review in times of discouragement.</p>
<p>April 25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 16</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 67</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 68</p>	<p>* Joshua 15-16 list the tribal allotments of the land. But notice Joshua 16:10, “...so the Canaanites have lived in the midst of Ephraim to this day.” By Judges, Ephraim turn to the gods of the Canaanites. God commanded Israel to drive out the Canaanites in order to protect His people from idolatry. Israel’s failure to obey fully led to spiritual disaster.</p> <p>? Psalm 67 reveals something important about the heart of God. The psalmist prays, “May God be gracious to us and bless us...” (Ps 67:1). Why? “That your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations” (Ps 67:2). God blesses His people <i>as a testimony</i> to others. Do you seek God’s blessing on yourself? That’s fine! But now, do you use that blessing to bring God’s saving power to unbelievers?</p>
<p>April 26</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 17</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 19</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 69</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 70</p>	<p>* Psalm 69 is one of David’s most intense laments. He feels that he is drowning in trouble and cries out to God for deliverance. However, even in trouble, David trusts that God’s “steadfast love is good” (Ps 69:16). That is the confidence that keeps him from despair.</p> <p>? In times of trouble, to whom do you turn for deliverance? Do you trust God to save you in those difficult times?</p>

<p>April 27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 20 <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Joshua 21</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 22 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 71 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The “cities of refuge” in Joshua 20 show an important principle of biblical justice. They provided protection for a person who had unintentionally killed another person. This demonstrates the principle of justice; the cities of refuge prevent unjust revenge. However, the killer had to remain in the city of refuge for the rest of his life. This demonstrates the value of human life; there was a personal cost to taking a human life, even unintentionally. ? The end of Joshua 21 is a great testimony to God’s faithfulness. “Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass” (Josh 21:45). God keeps His promises. Do you trust God to keep <i>every</i> promise He has given you? ? As you read Joshua 22:5, ask, “Do I obey each of these imperatives? Do I love God? Do I walk in His ways? Do I keep His commandments? Do I cling to Him? Do I serve him with all my heart?”
<p>April 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 23 <input type="checkbox"/> Joshua 24 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 72 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * At the end of Joshua’s life, he charged Israel’s leaders to continue to be faithful to the covenant. He then arranged a ceremony of covenant renewal for all the tribes. This is similar to the ceremony at the beginning of the book of Joshua. This ceremony was intended to inspire faithfulness among the people of Israel. ? Read Joshua 23:11. Are you “careful to love the Lord your God?” Here is the test to know if you love Him: Do you obey Him? God’s “love language” is obedience. If we love Him, we will obey Him. ? Joshua 24:15 contains one of the Bible’s great statements of commitment; “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Before leaving the book of Joshua, make that commitment for you and your family. Tell God, “Regardless of the challenges, I will serve you!”
<p>Weekly Summary</p>	<p>Write down one “big lesson” that you have learned from this week’s readings. Each day next week, review this lesson and ask God to help you to apply the lesson in your daily life.</p>

Week 18

<p>April 30</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 5</p>	<p>* The book of Judges tells the sad story of Israel’s failure to complete the conquest of Canaan. Instead of fulfilling God’s purpose, she soon began to tolerate and then worship the gods of the Canaanites.</p> <p>? Why did Israel fail to drive out the Canaanite tribes? (The answer is in 2:2 and 2:20-23)</p> <p>* Six times in Judges, Israel goes through a cycle of sin, judgment, and deliverance. Each time, she falls further into depravity. As you read Judges, highlight the verses that show this pattern. Look for this pattern (here is the first of six cycles): Sin (3:12) Judgment (3:13-14) Cry for deliverance (3:15) Deliverance (3:30)</p> <p>* Judges 4-5 tell the same story in two different ways. Judges 4 tells the story of Deborah in prose; Judges 5 tells the story in poetry.</p>
<p>May 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 6</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 7</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 8</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 9</p>	<p>? Gideon trusts God only after he receives a sign (6:36-40). Do you believe God on His word alone, or do you require a sign?</p> <p>? Why did God shrink Gideon’s army from 32,000 to 10,000 to 300?</p> <p>* Following Gideon’s great victory, he made a religious symbol (an ephod) that “became a snare to Gideon and to his family.” Throughout the Bible you will see that great victories are often followed by times of temptation. After a time of victory beware of the temptation to carelessness.</p> <p>* Judges 9 fits into the pattern of Judges by showing that even Gideon’s own family divides and fails to follow God’s plan for His people. In Judges 11, Jephthah delivers Israel only after making a foolish curse that costs the life of his daughter. Each time Israel falls into sin, she moves further from God’s plan.</p>
<p>May 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 11</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 12</p>	<p>? Read Judges 11:30-31. God did not ask Jephthah to make this vow. Jephthah appears to believe that Jehovah is like the gods of the Canaanites – a god who must be “won” with vows. Do you try to bargain with God or do you walk with Him in confident faith?</p> <p>* Judges 12 shows the continuing disintegration of the nation. The tribe of Ephraim is part of Israel, but 42,000 Ephraimites are killed in this civil war.</p>
<p>May 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 13</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 14</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Judges 16</p>	<p>* Samson is the last of Israel’s judges. Although he is the strongest physically, he is the weakest spiritually. From the beginning he is careless in his faithfulness to God’s law. He marries a Philistine woman (contrary to God’s laws against marrying the unbelieving Canaanites). He eats honey from the carcass of a lion (contrary to the laws of uncleanness).</p> <p>? As you read the story of Samson, notice how he moves closer and closer to trouble – spending time with the Philistines and then marrying a Philistine woman. The story of Delilah (16) portrays this dangerous tendency: each time Samson answers her, his answer is a bit closer to the truth. Finally he reveals his secret, is captured, blinded, and mocked by being forced to do the work of an ox (providing power for the mill).</p> <p>Look at your life. Is there an area where you are careless about sin? Is there an area where you allow yourself to come ever-closer to an area of disobedience to God’s Word? If you continue that path, where will it lead you?</p>

<p>May 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Judges 17 <input type="checkbox"/> Judges 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Judges 19 <input type="checkbox"/> Judges 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Judges 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The final chapters of Judges show the chaos into which Israel has fallen. Judges 17-18 show the religious chaos – Micah makes his own god and hires his own priest. Judges 19-21 show the social chaos – Israel now commits the same sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. ? Two phrases in these chapters show why Israel is in trouble. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The first is in 18:1; “In those days there was no king in Israel.” Why is this important? -The second is in 21:25; “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Why is this important? ? As you read the story of the Levite’s concubine (Judges 19), remember the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). Do you see the similarities? ? What happens to a society when “everyone does what is right <i>in his own eyes</i>?”
<p>May 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ruth 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ruth 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Ruth 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Ruth 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * This is a beautiful short story set in the time of the judges. It tells of a Moabite woman who is faithful to Israel’s God and who becomes the great-grandmother of King David. * It is helpful to remember two Jewish customs as you read the book of Ruth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ruth 2 is based on the law of “gleaning” in Leviticus 19. As a landowner, Boaz was required to leave part of the crop for poor people to glean. This was God’s means for providing for the poor. -Ruth 4 is based on the law of the “kinsman-redeemer” in Deuteronomy 25. By this law, the close relative of a man who died would marry the widow in order to preserve the family name and inheritance. Boaz marries Ruth under this law. ? What is the importance of the phrase “in the days when the judges ruled” in Ruth 1:1? Put this story of faithfulness in the setting of the stories you have just read from Judges. Then remember that Ruth is a Moabite; the people in Judges were Israelites. Notice how the author contrasts the faithfulness of a Moabite with the unfaithfulness of the Israelites. ? Compare your commitment to God with the commitment of Ruth in 1:16. Will you serve God with this undivided loyalty?
<p>Weekly Summary</p>	<p>Write down one “big lesson” that you have learned from this week’s readings. Each day next week, review this lesson and ask God to help you to apply the lesson in your daily life.</p>