

Food for Thought

For the week of July 14, 2013

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. We've all heard the quote that "insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Part of "leaving our Egypt (our past) behind" is committing to new behaviors aimed at new results and growth. Read through Proverbs 2:1-15 and write down anything that could help break the cycle of repeating old behaviors, or help you let go of the past. Then answer the following questions.

How would you describe the "if-then" clause used in this passage?

What does this passage say about what it means to fear the Lord?

What description of God's protection is given for those who follow him?

2. Some of the scariest "skeletons in our closet" are things involving our family, or those who know us best, that can linger even after we make healthy changes in our lives. How can the following verses help us continue to pursue freedom from our past while also managing difficult relationships with family and friends?

Matthew 7:1-5

Matthew 5:23-24

Romans 12:14-21

Which of these verses is most challenging for you to do? The least?

3. One of the remarkable things about God is the way he sees his children despite whatever "Egypt" they've gone through. What do the following Scriptures teach us about God's view of sin and forgiveness, and how does that differ from or affirm your own view?

Psalm 103

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Colossians 2:13-14

After reading these Scriptures, how would you describe God's forgiveness to a friend or co-worker?

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Proverbs 2:1-15

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

- 1 My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
- 2 turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—
- 3 indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
- 4 and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
- 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord
and find the knowledge of God.
- 6 For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
- 7 He holds success in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
- 8 for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.
- 9 Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.
- 10 For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
- 11 Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.
- 12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,
from men whose words are perverse,
- 13 who have left the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,
- 14 who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,
- 15 whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways. [NIV]

2. Some of the scariest "skeletons in our closet" are things involving our family, or those who know us best, that can linger even after we make healthy changes in our lives. How can the following verses help us continue to pursue freedom from our past while also managing difficult relationships with family and friends?

Matthew 7:1-5

Judging Others

7 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. [NIV]

Matthew 5:23-24

23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. [NIV]

Romans 12:14-21

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. [NIV]

Which of these verses is most challenging for you to do? The least?

3. One of the remarkable things about God is the way he sees his children despite whatever “Egypt” they’ve gone through. What do the following Scriptures teach us about God’s view of sin and forgiveness, and how does that differ from or affirm your own view?

Psalms 103

Of David.

- 1 Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- 2 Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
- 3 who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
- 4 who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
- 5 who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.
- 6 The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
- 8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,

slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
14 for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
15 The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
16 the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
17 But from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children—
18 with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.
19 The Lord has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.
20 Praise the Lord, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.
21 Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.
22 Praise the Lord, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.
Praise the Lord, my soul. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. [NIV]

Colossians 2:13-14

13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. [NIV]

After reading these Scriptures, how would you describe God's forgiveness to a friend or co-worker?