



Let's Read! August, 2013 Hosted by Open Doors

*Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Job

* Psalms 82-92

* Proverbs (chapters 20-21)

* Galatians through Thessalonians II

Dear Readers of the Word,

Here we are in August already, with some of the greatest Scripture yet ahead of us. Every month is awesome, isn't it? And every part of the Bible has so much to offer us: food for thought, nourishment for the spirit, and encouragement to step out in faith. My mantra for months now has been a little prayer:

“Lord, help my love to grow, help it to show,
so others will know, the way to go.
May be it be so!”

Our Bible Study group had two outings this past month: one to the Christ Fellowship's Women's Conference and the other to a Bible Trivia dinner at the West Palm Presbyterian Church, where we did better at eating the food than we did on the Bible trivia questions. Some were really challenging, like *How old David was when he became king?* and *What was the name of Hosea's wife?* (30 and Gomer, for those of you who didn't know... like us!) I recently saw the Bible Challenge (on TV Thursday evenings) for the first time. They asked easier questions, like *Who was saved by an angel that kept lions' mouths shut?* and *Who didn't die but was taken in a whirlwind?* (Bet you know these answers, too). Maybe we should take part in the TV Bible Challenge, and perhaps even win up to \$100,000 for our non-profit, Open Doors.

I must say, however, that God has already blessed Open Doors—so much so, that we have much more to give away than we thought we did. In order to comply with IRS rules we must donate to registered charities at least 5% of our invested assets, which now include the proceeds from the sale of the two NJ condos Open Doors used to help people through its program called New Horizons. It's been a fun month having to decide where to donate. We finally decided on Hope Of Freedom (from human trafficking), St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Salvation Army, Network of Biblical Storytellers, Lake Worth Christian School, and other people and animal non-profits. And that doesn't include our over-and-above-the-5%—our donations and expenditures for private individuals and families, made through our Lord Provides grant program. As my Dad always said: The more we give, the more God gives back to us in the form of blessings galore. Our cup, indeed, runneth over, and for that we are so grateful.

On that note of thanks, let's take a look at what's ahead for August:

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Job: Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one unit. Together they tell the story of the return of the Jews to Judah after their Babylonian captivity—how they rebuilt the temple and walls of Jerusalem. Especially interesting is how forcibly Ezra's dealt with the mixed marriages! Esther is a story that the Jews today still tell and retell on their holiday called Purim. It's a great story about how one woman supported by prayer and blessed by God, saved the entire Jewish nation from extinction. Job is a much longer story... about bad things happening to a good person. It may not explain the mystery of suffering, but it does probe the depths of faith in the midst of suffering.

Psalms: We have a nice variety this month, including ones from the Sons of Korath, Ethan the Ezrahite, and of course David--as well as ones entitled *A Prayer of Moses* and *A Song for the Sabbath*.

Proverbs: There are only two on our schedule, but they're chock-full of good advice to ponder... like

The sluggard does not plow in autumn; he will seek at harvest but have nothing. (20:4)
He who keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. (21:23)

Galatians through Thessalonians II: These wonderful letters from Paul to various churches contain many wonderful verses, such as:

God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled (the Fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23)

Rejoice in the Lord. Again I say Rejoice!...Don't worry about anything; pray about everything... God will bless you with peace no one can completely understand...keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. (Philippians 4:4-9)

Let's see how many life-changing verses we can locate, and apply to our own lives. God will bless us as we step out in faith!