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Read, Connect, Reflect #9

I read 100% of 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter.

Hebrews is, in my opinion, the book that stands out the most among those that I read for this section of reading. It talks a lot about the Old Testament and the many rituals that Jews would have been familiar with. For this reason (and also because the book is titled ‘Hebrews’), I think that Hebrews was written for the Jews. Much of what the book focuses on is how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus is often referred to as the priest; He is compared to Aaron, who was a priest in the order of Melchizedek; however, there is something that separates Jesus from Aaron. Jesus is perfect; usually, the priests would have to offer sacrifices first for themselves and then for the people, but Jesus did not have to offer a sacrifice for Himself because He is perfect. Also, His sacrifice that He offered on behalf of all humanity is a lasting and permanent one. The author of Hebrews is trying to get the Jews to see that Jesus really is the messiah and to understand that by believing in Him, they can be set free.

Something that caught my eye in this reading was James 2:14-26. This section is titled ‘Faith and Deeds’. I think that this passage is very important to read because it is something that a lot of people, myself included, can get confused with. I know that doing good deeds does not produce faith, but I also know that faith is not a rite of passage to sin. In this section of James, I think that the relationship between faith and deeds is perfectly explained. One’s faith should push them to do good deeds simply because their faith has changed them and makes them want to live a life pleasing to God. It is not enough to have faith and then do nothing about it; this kind of faith is idle and worthless. Who wants to believe in something that does not move people to action? In James, it mentions that even the demons believe that there is one God; so what is to separate us from them if not the way that we live our lives in light of the faith we have? It also says in James 2:24, “You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.” It talks about how Abraham was considered righteous for having faith and then, from his faith, being willing to sacrifice Isaac on the altar. I really like this passage of scripture and I will use it to motivate me whenever I am in a place where I am struggling to do the right thing.