

LIFEFAITHFUSION DEVOTIONAL

Above All, Get Wisdom

LIFEFAITHFUSION DEVOTIONAL DAY TWO

SCRIPTURE STUDY

1 Kings 2:2-3
Proverbs 1:10, 15; 3:5
1 John 2:14
Hebrews 12:2
Proverbs 4:20-27
Luke 1:39-45
Luke 2:41-47; 4:1-12
Ephesians 4:9

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

“Don’t use bad language. Say only what is good and helpful to those you are talking to, and what will give them a blessing.” (Ephesians 4:29 LB)

PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,
“Your words are a flashlight to light the path ahead of me...” (Ps. 119:105 LB) As I read this devotional, please shine your light on the words and scriptures that I need to focus on today. Amen



PARENTING AND PROVERBS

Parenting is hard. A baby does not come with a training manual...or does he? The Bible, especially the Book of Proverbs, has much to say about this daunting task. No infant exits the womb ready to run. A baby’s care requires round-the-clock vigilance, seven days a week. Assuming the parent does his job well, the child will emerge fully trained and competent. Child-rearing is definitely the most rewarding of all jobs when an offspring chooses of their own free will to love God, make wise choices, and become adult friends with their parents. But for many years, one never knows with certainty how successful their parenting will be. The uncertainty is what keeps parents on their knees in prayer.

Solomon’s parenting advice was predicated on the modeling and teaching of his father, King David. Deathbed declarations are often impassioned pleas for the will of the dying one to be carried out by those who remain behind. King David was no different. The Jewish monarch gave such a charge to his young son Solomon, as he gasped for his last few breaths:

“I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.” (1 Kings 2:2-3 NIV)

King David gave his son three commands: (1) be strong, (2) show yourself a man, and (3) obey God's commands. The Hebrew king was deeply influenced by the words of his father, and wrote much the same message about parenting in the Proverbs. His father's advice is reflected in these three recurrent themes in his writing. Proverbs chapter three paints a picture of someone who is "strong" (*mighty* in Hebrew). In verse one of chapter three, Solomon asks his son to "Trust in God with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5 NIV). King David's command to "be strong" or to "be steadfast" implies that the first foundational step for a godly person is the step of faith.

David's second injunction to his son was to "show yourself a man" (I Kings 2:2 NIV). In the ancient Hebrew culture, a young boy reached manhood after completing Torah school at the age of twelve. He knew the Torah, accepted responsibility for his own actions, and worshipped at the Temple in the court of the men. Soon after, he had a three-year apprenticeship at a trade. We see this in the New Testament, where John writes to "young men:"

"I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God lives in you,
and you have overcome the evil one." (1 John 2:14 NIV)

The final warning of David is to "fix your eyes" on God's Word and Will. A mature person—a wise man or woman—lives a focused life. Jesus described the path of a righteous man as the "narrow road that leads to life" instead of the "broad road that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13-14 NIV). Proverbs 1:10, 15 reads:

"If sinners entice you, do not give into them My son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on
their paths; for their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed blood." (NIV)

Iniquity (a'vah) in Hebrew, means to crook or to make crooked. Iniquity is one of the principal descriptors of sin in the Old Testament. The writer to the Hebrews tells us where to fix our gaze: "Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2 NIV). A life of faith is a life of focus.

Solomon almost repeated his father's advice word for word. The ruler succinctly defined such maturity in Proverbs 4:20-27. The wise king began with addressing the reader as "my son," and gave four precepts that characterize maturity:

1. Listen and meditate continuously upon God's Word
2. Guard your heart-keep it pure
3. Do not engage in corrupt speech
4. Be focused and passionate about following God's will for your life

- What is the most meaningful advice you received from your father or mother? How has their parenting influenced yours?
- Which precept of Solomon is the most helpful to you in your walk with God? Which precept is the greatest challenge?
- Do you know some people that, in your opinion, exemplify wise, consistent parenting

LEGACY OF GOOD PARENTING

Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, his step-father, made wise decisions from the moment they learned Mary was pregnant. However, have you thought about *their parents*? When God considered choosing the right mother for Jesus, He also had to consider the step-father and both sets of parents. The extended family was very important in the Jewish culture. Shortly after she became pregnant, Mary visited her mother's sister, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a great woman of faith, and ministered deeply to Mary during her pregnancy (Luke 1:39-45). After Mary and Joseph returned from Egypt (Matthew 2:19-23) to Nazareth, it would be reasonable to assume that Mary and Joseph's parents and extended family would be an influence on God's Son. Mary and Joseph's parents are not discussed in Scripture, but the wise actions of their children, Mary and Joseph, must have been a reflection of the careful parenting that they received. His parents taught him to worship God and learn the Torah. His parents took him to the Temple when Jesus was twelve, and He

amazed everyone with his knowledge (Luke 2:41-47). Jesus' parents made sure He went to school and completed His lessons. For example, when tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Christ not only knew the scriptures, but applied them immediately and correctly (Luke 4:1-12). He blessed the children even though the disciples wanted to send the little children away. Jesus, being the oldest sibling in his family, knew the importance of loving and teaching children because He would have helped His parents with His brothers and sisters (Luke 18:15-16). As the oldest son, Jesus was responsible for the care of His Mother. At the cross, near death, He passed on that responsibility to His disciple John (John 19:26-27). The scriptures must have been so much a part of Christ's life, He quoted the lament, Psalm 22, on the cross.

- Parents, are you modeling prayer for your child(ren) so they learn how to pray? Do you listen to their prayers?
- Parents, in the presence of your child(ren), do you tell others that you are proud of them?
- Did your parents go to church with you? Do you go to church with your child(ren)? Attending church with your child(ren) provides a wonderful time for talking with them about God's truths.

[Note: It was at the Temple when Jesus was 12 that he said, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house" (Luke 2:49 NIV)? These are Jesus' first recorded words and it's interesting to note that He has transferred the name of "father" from Joseph to God. Jesus used Father in the Lord's Prayer; He prayed to His father in the garden in Gethsemane; and we are told we can call God *Abba* in Romans 8 and Galatians 4. *Abba* is the word a little Jewish boy calls his father at home. In Jerusalem today you hear the shout of *Abba Abba*, the little boy calling his father. What a compliment to Joseph! What a wonderful father Joseph must have been. ("Discovering Jesus" William Barclay)]

- Parents, do you model Christian ideals and purposefully teach the Word of God to your children? Do you support your adult children when God places a call upon their lives? God's call can come at any age—even to a young child like Samuel. Are you open to support them when they hear God speak?
- Spend some time thanking God for the parents (both physical and spiritual) who have encouraged you in your walk with God.
- Ask God to bring good Christian adults who model godly living into the lives of your children.

Do you think Jesus' mother and brothers knew that it takes four positive statements to negate the effect of one negative statement? Probably not, but we know that in today's environment, studies have shown that the average home, for every positive statement, a child receives 10 negative statements. In school, the students hear seven negative statements from their teachers for every one positive statement. Ephesians 4:29 is the answer to the negative statements—we need to say words that are good and helpful.

"Do what I say, not what I do" is often heard in parenting. However Paul says in Philippians 4:9: "Whatever you have learned or received or *heard*, or *seen in me*—put it into practice." (LB) That is a challenge for all parents to follow!

Helpful Parenting Websites/Resources:

- ✦ <http://www.family.org/parenting/> ("Focus on the Family" website)
 - ✦ <http://www.drleman.com/> (Speaker and author Dr. Kevin Leman)
- Learning Style Strengths worksheet from "Apple Street Applied Learning Styles" <http://www.applest.com/pdf/Back%20to%20School%20Profile.pdf>
 (This is a free page that lets you learn about your learning style. Very helpful for families, offices, schools, etc.)

✦ “Five Love Languages of Children”, Book by Dr. Gary Chapman

<http://www.safekids.com/> (This is a website with a free email newsletter with current information regarding keeping your children safe on the internet.)

APPLYING THE TRUTH

In the area below, write out the scripture(s), thought(s), and question(s) from today’s devotional that you want to spend more time thinking about. What will you apply to your life?

SCRIPTURES ON WISE PARENTING:

Exodus 10:2 Tell your children what God has done in your life

Deuteronomy 4:9 Never forget what God has done in your life and tell children and grandchildren

Proverbs 15:1 Gentle answers even when angry

Proverbs 25:15 Patience and soft answers

Proverbs 2:1-2 Son learns from father

SCRIPTURE PROMISES FOR CHILDREN

(SUMMARIZE BELOW)

Joshua 1:8-9

1 Chronicles 28:9

Psalms 1:1-3

Isaiah 11:2

Isaiah 43:1b

Isaiah 54:13

Jeremiah 29:11

Ephesians 1:17-19a

Philippians 1:9-11

Philippians 4:4-7

Colossians 1:9-10

1 Timothy 4:12

Hebrews 13:20-21