

LIFEFAITHFUSION DEVOTIONAL

Success the Biblical Way

LIFEFAITHFUSION DEVOTIONAL DAY FOUR

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Psalm 25
Genesis 41:14-23
Daniel 2:26-38
Proverbs 4:7
Proverbs 8:11
Proverbs 2:2

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Proverbs 4:7:
“Wisdom is supreme, therefore, get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.” (NIV)

PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,
“Thank You for your guidance and willingness to commune with earthly creatures. Help me to be confident in Your love for me.” Amen



PRAYING FOR GOD’S DIRECTION

Fortune Cookies have remained the staple of Chinese restaurants for half a century. Why? They are too small to fill the tummy with sugary goodness. They actually taste like cardboard. Yet we look forward to unwrapping their plastic coverings and discovering our future on the inside. Every person longs for wisdom—some form of guidance to navigate the gray areas of life. But horoscopes and fortune cookies are woefully inadequate. Wisdom from God is a gift—one that is given to those who ask. So how do we pray for wisdom? We can learn much from the lives of Old Testament heroes of the faith and their petitions to Jehovah for Divine guidance.

JOSEPH’S PRAYER FOR WISDOM

In Gen 41:14-43, a young Hebrew slave named Joseph had been unfairly enslaved and incarcerated for crimes he did not commit. His only way out of his unlucky predicament was godly intervention. Fortunately, Joseph prayed for wisdom to interpret dreams, and God responded in spades. A baker and a cup-bearer were inmates with Joseph. Both had dreams, and Joseph interpreted them correctly. Some time after, the Pharaoh of all Egypt had a dream that caused him great consternation. None of his royal advisors could unravel the mysterious dream. So the Hebrew prisoner was called into the royal court. If Joseph’s interpretation was wrong, he would be decapitated. Genesis 41:14-16 recounts the story:

“So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." (NIV)

Joseph prayed to Jehovah for wisdom. His life depended on it, and God was faithful to answer. The interpretation that God revealed to Joseph not only saved Egypt during a dire famine, but saved Joseph's family in Israel as well. A prayer for wisdom requires faith in Divine revelation—and we must act on God's answer.

- Have you ever needed wisdom in a crisis? How did you respond?
- Do you remember a situation in your life when you listened to God, obeyed, and He blessed you for it?
- Did you ever find yourself in a situation where others depended upon you for direction? What happened? What were the results? If you could go back and handle it differently, what would you do?

DANIEL'S PRAYER

Daniel 2:23 describes another urgent petition. Daniel was a young Jewish captive ripped from his parents and carried off as a slave to Babylon. Any other person might have been angry and embittered by such a terrible plight—but not Daniel. Even as a young teenager, he refused to compromise his values. And when the chips were down and the great King Nebuchadnezzar needed a dream interpreted, Daniel, like his predecessor Joseph, cried out to God for His wisdom. Here is Daniel's response to the troubled Babylonian monarch in Daniel 2:26-28:

“The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come." (NIV)

The wisdom God gave Daniel in answer to his prayer prophesied the future kingdoms that would reign upon the earth. Such Divine revelation was so obviously supernatural that even a pagan king was overwhelmed by the prophecy:

“Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery." Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men.” Daniel 2:46-48 (NIV)

Daniel and Joseph became rulers of great nations because they beseeched God for wisdom. But let us not forget that when they first asked God to speak, they were lowly slaves. When we listen to God speak, we can never imagine the grace and blessing that will fill our lives! God speaks to ordinary people when they pray in faith, listening for His answers.

- Do you ever struggle with the feeling that your prayers are too insignificant to God—that He is distant from you? Memorize the short little verse in Hebrews 13:5b: “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” (NIV)
- Do you ever feel that God is demanding and can never be pleased with you? Why or why not? What are some of the reasons you might feel this way? Was your earthly father ever hard to please? Is it possible you carry some views of God that are not biblical, but unprocessed hurts from your growing up years?
- Do you ever feel condemned? Write your sins down on a piece of paper. Confess them to God, burn the paper or throw it in the trash, and write a note card to keep with you with 1 John 1:9 written upon it. God’s forgiveness is complete!

PAUL’S WISDOM PRAYER

Paul the apostle wrote many of his prayers for the saints at the beginning of his New Testament letters. One of the most notable and complete prayer models can be found in Colossians 1:9-13:

“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and **asking God** to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this **in order** that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.” (NIV)

God not only wants to answer our prayers for wisdom, according to the Greek word *pleerootheete*, God wants to cram, fill up, and completely supply us with His wisdom. Why would He want so desperately to impart to us His mind and heart? The reason for such a prayer is found in the following phrases—that we would live a pleasing, fruitful life for Him, that we would grow more and more intimate in our relationship with Him, and that we would have the grace and strength to walk victoriously through any hardship or test. Such strength is described by the Greek word *dunamis* that implies ability, force, supernatural power, might and authority. God’s *dunamis* power is the recipe for biblical success. We pray continuously. We pray for wisdom. We pray to live fruitful, obedient lives. We pray for a life characterized by authoritative faith, spiritual victory, and grace.

- Take time this week to read this passage everyday. Ask God what a pleasing, fruitful life would look like for you? How would that impact your emotions, your relationships, and your faith?
- Pray this set of verses for your pastor. Paul’s passion was to strengthen the baby churches he cultivated. If you are a pastor, think of ways you could be supportive and appreciative to your staff.