

LIFEFAITHFUSION DEVOTIONAL

Enjoying God's Guidance

LIFEFAITHFUSION DEVOTIONAL DAY THREE

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Proverbs 3:5-6
Genesis 3:1-4
Isaiah 55:8-9
Ephesians 2:10
Jeremiah 29:11-14
1 Kings 11:4-6

DIGGING DEEPER

Solomon built his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, her own palace. We know from 1 Kings 3 that she was one of the first of 700 royal wives that he married. What happened to his first love, the Shunammite bride described in Song of Solomon?

PRAYER FOCUS

Dear Jesus,
"Please allow me to seek Your will in humility and obedience. Protect me from deception and arrogance. I trust in Your perfect plan for my life." Amen.



SELF-RELIANCE CAN LEAD TO DECEPTION

Solomon teaches us in Proverbs 3:5-6 that God's guidance in our lives is predicated on three things: trust with wholehearted devotion, a teachable spirit, and a life of worship:

"Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6 AMP)

Human arrogance, rationalism and satanic deception are obstacles to our faith-walk. Man's intellectual pride is as old as the Garden of Eden. Satan appeared to Eve in the form of a snake and told her to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The wily serpent assured Eve that she would not reap the consequences of her disobedience; instead, she would become wise like God Himself (Genesis 3:1-4). Pride in one's intellectual prowess is at very heart of man's fallen nature. Moreover, we are unable to discern God's ways through the lens of our finite understanding:

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9 AMP)

- Have you ever tried to “out think” your Heavenly Father? What were the results?
- Did someone ever deceive you? How did it make you feel?
- Recall a time when God led you in spite of your own thoughts and plans. Did you feel comforted and blessed?

GOD APPEARS TO SOLOMON

Jehovah revealed Himself to Solomon twice during the king’s life (1 Kings 11:9). The first appearance is recorded in 1 Kings 3 when God said to the young king “ask whatever you want me to give you...” (1 Kings 3:3 NIV). Solomon, according to the historian Josephus, was a young teenager. He admitted his inadequacy to rule Israel and earnestly beseeched Jehovah for help. Pleased with Solomon’s humble prayer, God not only gave him wisdom, but showered him with riches and honor (1 Kings 3:13). Solomon was more brilliant than any man who ever lived. He also possessed wisdom and social graces. But for some unknown reason, Solomon rejected God’s warning not to marry foreign wives, and those wives turned his heart away from God (1 Kings 11:1-3). Perhaps he felt those marriages protected alliances made with nearby nations and insured Israel’s peace. Whatever the reason, Solomon knew he was directly disobeying God’s command: his sin was intentional:

“Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the palace of David king of Israel, because the places the ark of the LORD has entered are holy." (2 Chronicles 8:11 NIV)

God had appeared to Solomon. Solomon had heard the command of the Lord regarding intermarriage (1 Kings 11:2), but in his arrogance the king thought he knew better. The monarch’s trust in his own diplomatic savvy destroyed his relationship with God and assured the demise of his kingdom:

“As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.” (1 Kings 11:4-6 NIV)

- Have you ever turned aside from the revealed will of God in direct disobedience? What were the consequences?
- Was there a time that God spoke to you and, despite your doubts, you followed His leading?
- Do you recognize potential snares (temptations, compromises) right now that could hinder your spiritual journey? Write them down. Spend time in prayer seeking God’s help in these areas.

GOD'S PLAN IS THE BEST PLAN

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul the apostle writes that man is God's masterpiece:

“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (NIV)

Our Creator has perfectly suited us to fulfill His work in His kingdom. An old parable describes God as a masterful artisan sewing a piece of beautiful embroidery. While we are here on earth, we see only the underside, filled with knots and loose strings. But when we arrive in heaven, we see the finished project—a beautiful work of art. We need not fear walking with God by faith because He sees the finished work. His design is flawless:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 29:11-14 NIV)

- Have you caught a glimpse of the beautiful plan God has for your life? How does it make you feel? Are you still struggling to discover His plan?
- Do you see yourself from an earthly perspective (like the underside of the embroidery) or from a spiritual perspective (God's beautiful design)?
- How do the promises in Ephesians 2:10 and Jeremiah 29:11 make you feel? Do you feel excited and confident? Do you still struggle to believe God loves you and wants to bless you?

ONE MAN'S STORY

“Proverbs 13:16 says if we act without knowledge (counsel) then we are fools, but those who act with knowledge (counsel) are prudent. I recently experienced this truth in my own life. I own a vacation house on the Washington coast, which is 1,600 miles from where God called me to be. I can only visit once a year for a brief stay. The market for vacation homes in this uncertain time is very slow, and for nearly a year the house has remained vacant without a single prospective buyer. My family and friends have been praying endlessly for God to find a buyer and relieve the financial burden that it has created for me. I spoke with a good Christian friend of mine that I had been meditating on Solomon's words about Divine guidance. I finished telling him about my Bible study and he looked me in the eye. He said, ‘this isn't about God finding a buyer...it is about you trusting that God will either find a buyer or provide you with the resources to keep paying. Has there ever been a time when you didn't have the resources to meet this obligation?’ I was stunned. He had seen God's plan very clearly. I had been begging, pleading, sometimes demanding that God do what I wanted. Instead of seeking God's will and trusting that He would provide, I stewed and complained. My prayer has changed. ‘God, please give me the strength to trust You to resolve the beach house problem. Please provide as You always have.’ My trial may seem small to some, but for me it was a great test of faith. I learned patience and perseverance.” -Norm Bishop

We can choose to be self-reliant, but we've learned that didn't work for Solomon with all his wisdom, and it won't work for us. On Day Four we'll look at ways to “Acknowledge God” both positive and negative and how that affects our lives.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Read: 1 Kings 11:1-3, 9; 1 Kings 3:3, 13; 2 Chronicles 8:11

Write 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?