

## Devotionals for week of July 30, 2023

Our devotional section provides additional spiritual input for helping you go further and deeper in your journey with the Lord. It is our desire, our hope, and our prayer that this devotional section will be a helpful Spiritual Life tool for you to utilize on a regular basis. Each day's devotional will typically consist of Scripture, commentary, and a prayer response. Current Devotionals can be accessed each day online at [www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals](http://www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals) or by using the Cape Cod Church App (select "Connect" on the bottom main page and then "Daily Devotional" on next page). Be sure to check Saturday and Sundays for special postings of poems, stories, etc. Printed copies from the prior week are available at the Connection Desk.

### Monday – Wisdom from Above - Navigating Life Well – In the Reality of Heaven

I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment. I know where to discover knowledge and discernment. Proverbs 8:12

Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul observes them. The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for Your commandments. Turn to me and be gracious to me, after Your manner with those who love Your name. Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me. Redeem me from the oppression of man, that I may keep Your precepts. Make Your face shine upon Your servant and teach me Your statutes. Psalm 119:129-135

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. James 3:17-18

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Today is the start of week one of a five-week devotional series entitled, "Wisdom from Above." This series is all about heavenly wisdom that transforms earthly life. The Lord's prayer says, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Through the Lord Jesus Christ, heaven and earth have intersected in a powerful way to make it possible for life here on earth to be genuinely transformed in a way that lasts. As those who have been redeemed through Jesus Christ, we want to live life God's way, and we know we need the "wisdom from above" spoken of in our James passage above in order for our lives to be genuinely transformed in a way that lasts. Over the weeks of this series, we will explore in detail what "wisdom from above" is all about. We hope you will be encouraged, challenged, and guided as you seek to interact with, embrace, and be transformed by the "wisdom from above."

The series is a compilation of separate weeks of Devotional material. They were selected and put together because they all contribute very nicely to this emphasis. This series has five weeks of Devotional material with each week having five Devotionals. Week One: Navigating Life Well. Week Two: Divine Resources for Human Needs. Week Three: Resiliency in the Face of Troubles. Week Four: The Work of Living Fully. Week Five: Our Eternal Well-being. We begin Week One, Navigating Life Well, with the following:

People everywhere look for insights on how to navigate life. Such insights are referred to as wisdom. Where we look for wisdom and the kind of wisdom that resonates with us depends a great deal on the context or framework from which we view life at any given juncture. The following sentence is found in Scripture: "Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God." Assuming for the moment that you don't know where that sentence of Scripture is found, what "purpose" do you think is being referred to. As you consider your answer, the need for knowing the context or framework of understanding that surrounds this sentence about "purpose" becomes

apparent.

Consider the word “sharp” for a moment. What possible meanings come to mind? Notice how the following sentences provide a context or framework of meaning for the word, “sharp”: The knife has a very sharp blade; John is a sharp individual; Be there at 8:00 am sharp. Without a context or framework of meaning, we don’t know how to define appropriately the word, “sharp,” but with it we are all set. In our sentence from Scripture, the sentence itself provides some context or framework of understanding about the use of the word “purpose,” but not enough to show us what specific “purpose” is being referred to. So, we need a bigger context or framework if we are to know the specific purpose. What purpose did you come up with? The actual purpose being referred to is this: Leaving behind our earthly house (our body) for our eternal home in Heaven.

The bigger context or framework of 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 reveals to us the “purpose” being referred to. However, this sentence and the passage it came from were used, not to illustrate the importance of context and framework in writing, but to illustrate the importance of context and framework in life. And this passage wonderfully gives that to us. Living life here (earth) in the context or framework of what comes next (heaven) is huge and has everything to do with our actually living fully for God. The Lord’s Prayer says, “Your (Heavenly Father’s) will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When we seek to live life on earth in the reality of heaven, we will have a context or framework for living life that keeps in mind that our Heavenly Father calls the shots (commandment, precepts, statutes) about what is right and true, He reveals truth (wisdom) to us, and He empowers us to live that truth in practical ways in everyday life. This is the focus of this week’s Devotionals.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, in my life, I really do want “your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.” I confess though that far too often I get caught up in the things of earth and forget to keep heaven in mind. So, I really need your help with consistently keeping the reality of heaven in my mind and heart so that I truly do “navigate life well.” Lord, as the one who is truly in charge, I submit to you and the “wisdom from above” that you bestow. Thank you for your ordering of my life here on earth. Amen!

## **Tuesday – Wisdom from Above - Navigating Life Well – In Line with God’s Passions**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Proverbs 3:5-6

Do you like honey? Don’t eat too much, or it will make you sick! Proverbs 25:16

Finally, then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us *instruction* as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by *the authority of* the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3

Make me know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day. Psalm 25:4-5

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

While the words, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” provide a great context or framework for living life while we are here, they stand in stark contrast to the following words which capture a context or framework for living life by which many live their lives and from which we as believers seek to be free: “Grab all the gusto you can in life, you only go around once.” We need to become passionate about what God is passionate about. We must guard ourselves from the “wisdom from below” and make sure we do not have passions ruling in our lives that run counter to God and His ways. And for those passions that are not wrong and may be acceptable we must make sure

we do not allow them to control us so that they have priority over what God is “most” passionate about (wisdom from above). God is passionate about being to us the One who calls the shots (commandments, precepts, statutes) about what is right and true, who reveals truth (wisdom from above) to us, and who empowers us to live that truth in practical ways in everyday life.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I know you have forgiven me for the “gusto” I have grabbed in my life. The appeal of “gusto” is everywhere in my world, and I recognize the “sway” it can yet have in my life. Please keep the “wisdom from above” flowing into my life. Help me to understand more clearly than ever the things you are passionate about and help them to truly become my passions as well. I know that being in line with your passions, Lord, is what “Living Fully” for you is all about and that’s what I choose today. Amen!

### **Wednesday – Wisdom from Above - Navigating Life Well – In Resistance to Worldly Pressures**

Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety. Proverbs 29:25

Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? Matthew 6:25-26

Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:15-17

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore, He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. Psalm 25:8-10

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

I love the way J.B. Phillips translates the Romans passage above, “Do not let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.” Something becomes molded when it is subjected to pressure and its resistance is overcome. Our desire for the good opinion of the people of the world and our desire for the good possessions of the world become a great cause for why we struggle to resist the pressure the world exerts on us and our being squeezed into its mold. We must come humbly before the Lord and let Him transform our minds and hearts with the “wisdom from above,” so that He is able to empower us to live in ways that are wise and reflect that we are being molded by God Himself into his image so that we might live life fully for His will and purposes.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, having my life be truly in line with your passions is so dependent on my firm resistance to the pressures from this out of control world that feed and inflame destructive passions. I know that you and your ways (wisdom from above), Lord, are enough for me. Deliver me from seeking security and significance anywhere else. Mold me into your image and help me live fully for you. Amen!

## **Thursday – Wisdom from Above - Navigating Life Well – In Close Touch with the Master**

Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned. Hosea 7:8

Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Proverbs 3:7

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 1 Peter 4:1-2

Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. Psalm 25:12-14

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

The word “secret” in the Psalm above means intimacy. Those who fear the Lord are those who revere Him so much that they yield to Him as their Master and allow Him to be the centerpiece of their lives. As ones who have God at the center of their lives they learn to commune with God and knowing Him intimately they experience His presence in their day to day living. God shows them how life on earth is lived in a heavenly way (wisdom from above) and empowers them to do so. These are the ones who live in the world but are not of it. People who live life in this manner are those who walk by the Spirit (New Covenant) and are not like those who are half baked in the Hosea passage above where they are so in the world that they are of the world. But people can be half baked the other way, where they seek not to be of the world by not being in the world. May God grant that we walk by the Spirit and in the intimacy of His presence so that the life we live in this world is truly His doing.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I am learning about the intimacy of communion with you in the quiet, inner chamber of prayer. I deeply value and appreciate experiencing you as a refuge from the onslaught of the world and a source of nurture in heavenly realities (wisdom from above). You are my amazing, beautiful, and glorious Master. I worship, exalt, and bless you. Amen!

## **Friday – Wisdom from Above - Navigating Life Well – In Reliance Upon Christ's Power Alone**

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. John 10:27-28

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

If someone asked an expert, “how do I get into showbiz?” and they were told, “you’ve got to believe in yourself,” they might respond, “give me something practical; what can I do to make it happen? The most practical help for living the Christian life is not like this and that is because the Christian life is a supernatural life. If what we mean by practical is giving people what they need so they can make some area of their Christian life happen, we have given them the impractical. Jesus said, “apart from me you can do nothing.” Actually, we can do much apart from Christ and very often it is the so-called practical approach to Christianity that leads people to do just that. The most practical thing that we can possibly do is to teach people to abide in Christ (John 15:5) so that all that they do is the outflow of their relationship with Him and his powerful work in them and through them. When we abide in Christ

we experience His presence, when we experience His presence, we hear His voice and follow Him. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus says, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from me (wisdom from above), for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, thank you for the invitation to come to you, the only true source of power and strength in my life. I come to you today and enter into your rest. I choose to rely on you and your powerful work in my life. I forsake the wearying and burdensome path of self-effort in my Christian life. What a wonderful thing it is to navigate life well in total surrender to you and the “wisdom from above” as I travel on the path of truly “Living Fully.” Amen!