

May 21 — Seeking Wisdom

READ

1 Kings 3:16-28
1 Kings 5:1-6:38
2 Chronicles 2:1-18
2 Chronicles 3:1-14

1 Kings 3:28, *“When all Israel heard the king’s decision, the people were in awe of the king for they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice.”*

THINK

Knowledge and wisdom don’t always go hand-in-hand. A person may have more degrees than a thermometer and a fancy title indicating vast book knowledge but then fail the test when it comes to understanding people and making good decisions. That’s because knowledge is obtained, but wisdom is a gift from God that requires a listening ear and a heart tuned to His voice.

That was the case with Solomon. New in his reign over Israel, he didn’t ask God for wealth and fame but for wisdom to guide his people. When two women came to him to settle a dispute over a child, he displayed his unique wisdom. One woman accused the other of swapping out her dead newborn for a live one during the night. He listened and made a wise decision to recognize the heart of the true mother — he called for a sword to cut the child in half to determine which woman wouldn’t want the baby harmed. Seeing the true mother’s heart, he rendered justice accordingly and correctly. The people were amazed by his discernment, and his reputation for being wise grew.

It’s apparent when you meet someone who possesses wisdom. They are quick to listen, and when they speak, it’s with words of truth that can only come from being in tune with God. Follow Solomon’s example and simply ask God for the gift of wisdom. The Bible says He gives it to anyone who asks without judgment. Do so, and you, too, will be counted among the wise!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving me. I ask for the understanding heart and wisdom that only You can give. Help me to truly listen to people and to discern Your voice that I may help others and be counted among the wise. In Jesus ’name, Amen.

May 22 — To Build a House

READ

1 Kings 7:1-51

2 Chronicles 3:15-4:22

1 Kings 7:51, *“When all the work King Solomon had done for the temple of the Lord was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated — the silver and gold and the furnishings — and he placed them in the treasuries of the Lord’s temple.”*

THINK

If you’ve ever built a home or even furnished an apartment, a lot of thought goes into making everything just right. Whether you hire a huge crew or master the art of DIY, you put in the work to make the finished product a smashing success.

Now, imagine building the first temple to house the Lord’s presence. Solomon was tasked with this — perhaps the largest and most consequential building project of all time! He even questioned, “But who can really build Him a worthy home? Not even the highest heavens can contain Him!” Talk about a daunting task! But God promised Solomon, “If you obey all My commands and decrees, I will live among the Israelites and not abandon them.” So, Solomon embraced the challenge.

We will never be given such a huge assignment when it comes to building God’s house. But we can be assured His promise still stands. If we make God’s house a priority, we will experience His presence. If we build His house by serving and investing, we will reap His rewards. And as we challenge and encourage one another to live a life of obedience, God will illuminate our paths and shine the brilliant blaze of His glory through us into the lives of others.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for the greatest gift — the gift of Your ever-loving presence in my life. I seek to obey Your commands and do my part within Your house to shine Your light before others. Amen.

May 23 — God's Dwelling Place

READ

1 Kings 8:1-53

2 Chronicles 5:1-14 & 6:1-42

1 Kings 8:10-13, *"When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled His temple. Then Solomon said, 'The Lord has said that He would dwell in a dark cloud; I have indeed built a magnificent temple for You, a place for You to dwell forever.'"*

THINK

Have you ever driven in a fog that was so dense and thick that you had to leave the roadway and pull over to be safe? Now, imagine that heavy, all-encompassing fog being a manifestation of God's glory, the very presence of the Lord Himself in a thick cloud!

It was a monumental day for Israel! After seven years, the temple was finally finished. And as the priests made music and sang, "He is good! His faithful love endures forever!" God showed up in a big way. In fact, the priests couldn't even remain in the temple because the cloud was so thick. And as they came face to face with God's holiness, it reminded them of His power in an extraordinarily tangible way.

We may never experience a physical manifestation of His presence in such an overt manner. However, we do have 24/7 access to something just as great! The New Testament says that when we accept Christ, our bodies become temples that house God's Spirit! It's God's radiance that warms our souls, nourishes our spirit, and guides us along the right paths — even in the foggiest of times!

So, today, give thanks that God called you by name, gave you purpose, and promised you eternal life! The one and only Living Lord, Jesus Christ, wants to make a home in your heart. Now, that deserves a huge "AMEN!"

PRAY

Lord, You are magnificent! Thank You for choosing to make my heart Your home. Even in the darkest of days, I will bask in Your radiant glory! Amen!

May 24 — God, Are You Really Listening?

READ

1 Kings 8:54-9:14
2 Chronicles 7:1-22

1 Kings 9:1-3, *“When Solomon had finished building the temple of the Lord ... the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. The Lord said to him: I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before Me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting My Name there forever. My eyes and My heart will always be there.”*

THINK

Have you ever prayed for something big and felt as if God wasn't really there or fully mindful of your pleas and requests? Or, likely, you know intellectually that there's nothing He doesn't see or know — but it's easy to put blinders on to the fact that He *does* hear us pray is just as personal to Him as it is to us — even when He seems silent and non-responsive. He simply just doesn't always answer prayers in our preferred timing. The bottom line, though, is this: God hears us and responds when and how He deems best!

In today's reading, Solomon had just prayed before all the Israelites to dedicate the Lord's temple. Several times he asked God to “hear” His people in numerous situations, such as when they prayed in the temple. Solomon had confidence that God did, in fact, “hear” because God had appeared to him in a dream when he was new to the throne in a show of faithfulness and promise. Twenty-four years later, God uniquely appeared to him for a second time during the night, and as we see in the passage above that the Lord Himself made it clear — He did indeed hear!

How great is it to know that no matter what, God is there, fully attentive to every word, every thought, every desire, every hurt, every aspect of our lives! So, if you have a prayer that seems to be going unanswered or feel that God is far away or too busy with bigger fish to fry, think again. He knows, He hears, He sees, and He loves you beyond understanding. Today, rest in that thought and give thanks!

PRAY

Lord, Thank You for being involved in even the most minute details of my life. I recognize that You see me, hear me, and love me. I praise You for the gift of Your presence! Amen.

May 25 — Bullseye!

READ

1 Kings 4:1-34
Psalm 72 & 127

Psalm 127:3, *“Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.”*

THINK

Have you ever shot an arrow at a target and hit the bullseye? Even if it gets close to the center, it’s a wonderful feeling because it takes great skill! The proper aim, a steady hand, and good technique are essential in a successful launch. But without a carefully made bow and arrow, the trajectory will fail every time.

God handcrafted each of us for greatness. Whether we have children of our own or have the opportunity to influence children around us, they are little sprouts of potential, eager to take on the world. But without upbringing in God’s house, the trajectory of these arrows can be wayward and off the mark.

God needs to be in the equation for these youngsters to launch with power, soar with their unique giftedness, and reach their maximum potential. They need the Holy Spirit’s direction and guidance to hit the sweet spot of success. Apart from God, they may achieve great things, but true success happens as they become the hands and feet of Jesus, aiming to spread His Word and touch the hearts of humanity. This strong foundation will give them a shot in life to hit the mark and fulfill God’s purpose — the ultimate bullseye!

PRAY

King of kings, You are greater than all. You take my breath away as I stand in awe of Your goodness and power. As I experience You, transform my heart that I may live in a way that causes others to turn to You as well. Amen.

May 26 — Breathless

READ

1 Kings 9:15-10:29

2 Chronicles 8:1-10:29

1 Kings 10:4-5, *“When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the Lord, she was overwhelmed.”*

THINK

“Take My Breath Away” is a famous song from the movie Top Gun. The songwriter said the line was a phrase that had been running through his mind — a description of the kind of awe that is so striking that you can't breathe.

What do you find so inspiring that it leaves you speechless and steals your breath? Maybe it's a loving gesture or an act of forgiveness. Perhaps it's being in the mountains or watching the waves crash onto the seashore. For the Queen of Sheba, it was witnessing Solomon's wisdom and riches firsthand. She was so amazed by his prowess, leadership, and manner of operation that it led her to praise his God. God's work was so evident in Solomon's life that he could point her and others to Him.

Take a long look at the King of kings today and be in awe. Let Him take your breath away by what He's done and can do! With a renewed heart, let God's overwhelming love and grace spur you on in faith and obedience so that you, too, can point others to Him!

PRAY

King of kings, You are greater than all. You take my breath away as I stand in awe of Your goodness and power. As I experience You, transform my heart that I may live in a way that causes others to turn to You as well. Amen.

May 27 — The First Step

READ

Proverbs 1:1-4:27

Proverbs 1:7, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*

THINK

What is the first step toward living the best life possible? Take a moment to think of your answer. Now, keep reading. The answer to this question is the key to everything in life!

The Bible says the first step is to fear the Lord. In this context, the word “fear” means awe, reverence, and worship — not dread or trembling. But why is this the first step, the beginning, the starting point? The answer: God exists. So, the first step in living our best life is acknowledging that God is God, and we are not. We exist as His creation. He didn’t have to create us; He created us to love us! He *was, is, and always will be* the Almighty God of all. He calls the shots, not us. Understanding this priority is vital to our lives in every way.

Most of our problems arise from trying to “play God.” As soon as we — through our words, thoughts, or actions — take on the mantle of pretending to be God, we are at odds with the fabric of our existence, and things start going wrong. But when we fear God and submit to His leadership, we will walk with the wise, taking steps each day towards living the best life possible!

PRAY

Dear God, I owe my existence to You and, as such, I acknowledge that You call the shots in my life. Thank You for loving me and allowing me to know You through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.