

Lenten Prayer Guide - 2022

Week 4 - Wisdom and Guidance

Many of us have a memory of a phase of our lives that we would prefer was erased or remember a past action that brings back pain or regret. Many people have such memories. These events in our lives cannot be erased but they have been forgiven – and God remembers them no more. *

But how do we move forward? How do we put the past behind us and move into this day and this week living wise and holy lives before our God? We can live holy lives by drawing on Godly wisdom and seeking God's guidance through the Holy Spirit.

This week we will be seeking the Lord's wisdom in all aspects of our daily lives. We want to make wise decisions and wise choices. We want to speak with holy mouths, we want all our speech to be gracious, our thoughts to be pure, and all our actions to be God honouring. We want to live as wise men and women of God.

*Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips.
Ecclesiastes 10:12*

Where do we start? The book of Proverbs is a book of Wisdom.

*The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young-- let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance-- for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
Proverbs 1:1-7*

*For a study on what God has done, and continues to do, with our sins check out these verses: *Jeremiah 31:34; Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 38:17; Isaiah 43:25; Isaiah 44:22; Psalm 51:1, 9; Micah 7:19.*

This week's breath prayer:

Lord, I pray your wisdom would guide me.

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Day 1 – Beware of Human Wisdom

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Genesis 3:6.

This very first sin was the sin of disobedience. The woman (and let's not have Eve take all the blame – Adam was right there with her) “saw” that it was “good for food” and pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom. How easily we can be deceived. The eye, the body and the mind can all deceive us. Scripture tells us to be careful of what we “think” is right because we can deceive ourselves.

*The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that **every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.**
Genesis 6:5*

Every inclination? Only evil? All the time? We should take this accusation seriously. If, in our human state, our hearts are inclined to evil all the time, then what hope do we have? Our only hope is to know God's will by being in the word, learning of God's ways. Only then will our minds be renewed (Romans 12:2) and every thought brought under Christ's dominion (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Beware when you start a sentence with the words, “*Well, what I think is....*” Really? Is what you think in line with what God's Word says? It is best that we first consider that human thought is flawed and consider what human thinking has brought to our lives.

Let us be people who seek God's wisdom and live accordingly.

*Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding.
Proverbs 3:13*

Give thought to your thoughts today and ask yourself if they are God honouring.

Pray the Lord will direct your thoughts today.

Lord, I look to you for wisdom and guidance. Please give me a heart that discerns your will. I pray that I will hear your voice first today and that when the noise of the world comes crashing in, that I will be able to tune in to hear you above all else. Amen.

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Day 2 – God’s Wisdom is Supreme

*For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight
1 Corinthians 3:19*

When it comes to wisdom we are faced with worldly wisdom, which is foolishness, or Godly wisdom which is perfect.

King Solomon is often called the wisest man who ever lived. Yet even his wisdom was not his own. He recognized that his own wisdom would not suffice to be king over the nation of Israel. So, Solomon petitioned God:

“Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?” 2 Chronicles 1:10

God’s response to this humble prayer was to grant Solomon all the wisdom he needed and much more (2 Chronicles 1:11-12). God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore (1 Kings 4:29).

Can any of us claim that we have wisdom enough to go through our lives making wise choices and decisions? No, we need Godly wisdom – that is freely available just for the asking:

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

Have you ever prayed simply for wisdom? Do people come to you for advice and counsel because you have Godly wisdom? Solomon did (1 Kings 4:34).

Do people seek you for your wisdom? Pray that God will invest His wisdom into your life, so you can share it with others, today.

God, I pray that you will invest your wisdom into my life so that I can speak your truth to others. Please help me to always rely on your word and ways, especially when pressed upon for counsel to others. Amen.

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Day 3 – The Righteous Have Wisdom

*The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just.
Psalm 37:30*

Just as Solomon called upon God to give him wisdom for the task at hand so, we too, need to ask God for the same wisdom. We need to be wise to the ways of this world (Ephesians 2:2). We need to use discerning words, speaking grace into each conversation (Colossians 4:6). The people of God should be able to speak into a situation, particularly tense, heated situations, or conflict, with pearls of wisdom that come from a righteous life lived openly and prayerfully before God.

In our lives we have to use wisdom to make decisions. From choosing a spouse to deciding on a career, deciding where to live and a host of other key life affecting decisions, all require wisdom. For when we make unwise decisions, we pay the price for a long time.

What does it look like to the unsaved to see the Christian talking foolishly or living unwisely, or making ungracious conversation, engaging in gossip or foolish talk? It reflects badly on the Name we claim. Instead, the righteous should exercise wisdom to speak and act with grace in all situations.

*Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Ephesians 5:15-20*

Take a wisdom check today, am I thinking, acting and speaking with wisdom or foolishness?

*The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.
Job 28:28*

Pray the Lord will direct your life today with wise decisions.

Lord, every day I am called upon to make decisions. Some of them seem simple and some of them are very difficult. I pray today every decision I make, simple or difficult, is directed by your wisdom. I pray that when I am in doubt, that I would be reminded to come to you in prayer and go to your word for counsel. Amen.

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Day 4 – Truthfulness is Foundational

We are surrounded by a world of falsehood. Who can we trust to tell us the truth about anything? Does industry tell the truth about the products they sell? Do governments speak truth into the nations they lead? Who can be trusted?

It starts with you and me. We who call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ should be the most trustworthy people on earth.

Do those around you know you to be a person who will always speak the truth? Can you be relied upon for truth in all you say?

This is a serious matter. If we are to be the ambassadors of the gospel to the world, the people we speak to must already hold us in a high regard for our consistent truthfulness. For someone to hear from us the message of God's love and how they too can be saved by faith in Jesus Christ, then we must have already established ourselves as people who can be trusted.

This truthfulness begins in the inner person. The wisdom to be truthful in every aspect of life is foundational to a life lived in the presence of a Holy God. To be truthful with ourselves about who we are in God's sight is to begin developing a character that speaks the truth into every situation.

Consider who you are as a creature of God – created in His image. Be truthful about yourself to yourself and you will be able to speak wisdom and truth into the lives of those around you.

*Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place,
Psalm 51:6*

Check yourself today – am I speaking truth in all situations?

Pray the Lord will guide you to speak truth into every conversation today.

Lord, you are my sovereign King, and I pray that I would honour and glorify you in all that I do and all that I say. Please guide me to check my truthfulness and watch for falsehoods in my statements. I pray that I would reflect your holiness with my words and my deeds and my thoughts. Amen.

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Day 5 – Start with Wisdom and Stay with It

*King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.
1 Kings 10:23-24*

Solomon wrote many wise words as recorded in scripture. He is renowned as being the wisest man who ever lived. Certainly, he was a great and wealthy king and people sought an audience with him. But having wisdom and using it are not the same. Even though Solomon wrote some of the wisest words and sayings ever recorded he failed to keep his own advice later in life.

Having urged and exhorted his readers to seek the Lord, follow His precepts and live justly and wisely, Solomon turned aside from God's wisdom in his later years. Solomon had many foreign wives and his love for them caused him to turn away from God and turn to idols. This great man of God lived well and bountifully for many years but in his later years his own words of wisdom failed him in the most critical area of his life, the focus of his worship.

May we take heed of this. That even a man so great and so wise as Solomon, who left us great passages of wisdom in scripture, lost that wisdom when he needed it most and lost it in an area that has eternal consequences.

Let us all remember to walk humbly before our God (Micah 6:8) to be wise and not foolish in our ways.

*Wisdom is supreme; therefore, get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.
Proverbs 4:7*

Lord, may our steps be guided by your wise counsel. May our words be wise and gracious. May our decisions and choices today be guided by divine wisdom. Amen.

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Day 6 – Wisdom is More Valuable Than....

*Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you.
Proverbs 4:6*

*...for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.
Proverbs 8:11*

What do we learn from these verses? The writer, Solomon, wants us to understand that wisdom is precious, worth more than valuable gems and is worth spending all our wealth to get it. Wisdom is more valuable than gold or silver (Proverbs 3:14).

Why such accolades for wisdom? Why the urgency to gain wisdom above all else? Because from a life lived with wisdom, we can handle any circumstance or situation.

So many people pursue wealth and riches and are drawn into schemes and scams, and they lose it all. Lives are ruined through the pursuit of money, fame, or material possessions.

*People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.
1 Timothy 6:9*

The child of God is aware of these traps, these schemes of Satan to deceive the world with riches. He even tried it with Jesus (Luke 4:5-7). But the wise one, the child of God who pursues righteousness is wise to this deception.

Are you living wisely, today? Are your plans wise before God? Are you involved in any foolish scheme or idea that will bring ruin or hardship? Be wise.

*"I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion"
Proverbs 8:12*

Lord, examine my choices today. Guide me away from foolishness and towards a way of life marked by wisdom. Amen.

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Day 7 – Divine Guidance is Yours

Many of us, at some time, have had life decisions to make and sought out advice from a friend or a trusted colleague. Life is full of times of decisions. Hardly a day goes by when we do not have to make decisions. Where do we go to for life's most important decisions? Who is your most trusted advisor? Who or what guides your life?

While friends and family have our best interest at heart when they give us guidance no one knows you like your Creator does. He knows you intimately and He is always with you – you cannot escape His presence.

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there **your hand will guide me**, your right hand will hold me fast.*

Psalm 139:7-10

No matter where you are, even if you have been away from the Lord, running your own life your way, He has not abandoned you.

***The LORD will guide you always**; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

Isaiah 58:11

Do you really want to do life your way or live your life under the perfect guidance of your Father who loves you and has your best interests at heart?

I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths.

Proverbs 4:11

Lord, correct my ways today. I seek Your wisdom and guidance, today. I want to live according to Your Holy Spirit's counsel. May my life be lived in glory to you, graced by your wisdom and guidance. Amen.