



Staff Devotions

Devotion 1

The Beginning of Life

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, the land was not like it is today. It was free from life and empty. During the Dreamtime, the Spirits made the land and people. They made rivers, hills, rocks, plants, and animals. They made laws about how people were to behave.

Sound vaguely familiar? This brief retelling of an Aboriginal creation story bears some similarities to the true creation account found in the biblical book of Genesis. At one point in the not-too-distant past, the ancient Aboriginal people knew the true account, as well. After the rebellion and dispersion from Babel (c. 2200 BC), descendants of Noah settled in Australia. As time passed and their descendants multiplied, the various Aboriginal tribes developed.

Noah, the keeper of the books of Adam and Seth, knew the true Creator God. If he did his fatherly duty and passed on that information to his sons and grandsons, then his descendants knew about the biblical God who created everything. Sadly, the information was corrupted over time, as Noah's descendants turned their backs on the truth and instead sought to develop their own view of history.

Today, many myths about the past exist. One of the more insidious and bizarre is the myth that we share an ancestor with the apes. Sadly, this idea reduces the all-powerful God to an apelike creature in whose image humans were made. It forces mankind to become just another animal without responsibility for their actions and without the need of a Savior from their sins. (When is the last time you've tried to preach the gospel to a monkey?)

Yet we have the truth about life in our hands. The Creator of all life has given us the true account of how things came to be in his book, the Bible. When we teach our children, as the Bible commands us to, the truth about

where they came from and where they're going, there are no "missing links." We need to be vigilantly watching what the world teaches so that we're prepared to tear down every false argument that sets itself against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) and build up a biblical worldview in those the Lord has entrusted to our care. Let's diligently impart the truth to our children and grandchildren.

As you go throughout your day today, think about how you can encourage a desire for true wisdom, which is found in Christ (Colossians 3:16), in the hearts of the kids you're working with.

My son, if you receive my words
and treasure up my commandments with you,
making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding;
yes, if you call out for insight
and raise your voice for understanding,
if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for hidden treasures,
then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.

For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
guarding the paths of justice
and watching over the way of his saints.
Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;
for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
discretion will watch over you,
understanding will guard you.

Proverbs 2:1-11



Devotion 2

The Wonder of Life

You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told. Psalm 40:5

Ngangkari are traditional Aboriginal healers. They pull from a vast body of knowledge about the body that has been gathered over time. They have devised treatments for many diseases. Although they've fallen away from knowledge of the one Creator God, enough memory of the truth has remained so that they attribute the wonder of life to spirits, rather than to purely natural, mindless processes working over countless eons of time. How is it today that many have digressed so far from the truth that they are willing to accept that no God has been involved in bringing about life—human or otherwise?

Consider the ramifications of teaching a young child that he is nothing more than the product of random mutations rather than a special creation bearing the image of God. If we're nothing more than evolved animals, then our thoughts are merely a collection of atoms bouncing around in our heads. There is no Creator to whom we are accountable, and thus, there is no logical basis for morality or reason to declare one action "right" and another action "wrong." Moral relativism becomes the rule of the day. Is it any wonder, then, that children are murdering and behaving as if they are accountable to no one?

Now consider the opposite—we teach that the Bible provides our true history and we are special creations, accountable to our Creator who has given us a standard of behavior to abide by. Suddenly, right and wrong are clearly defined, and there are penalties for our actions.

Does it matter what we teach our children about where they come from and in whose image they are created? Absolutely. For without the Bible, there are no absolutes, and no reason for us to teach that hitting a sibling is wrong while sharing our toys is right. Ultimately, if molecules-to-man evolution is correct and the Bible is incorrect, there is no reason for us to be saved from sin, and Jesus died on the cross for no reason.

As we teach our children about the wonder of life and their special place as image-bearers of the Creator of the universe, let's remember that this allows us to instill a basis for morality in their hearts and plead with them to seek wisdom, as Solomon did with his sons.

My son, do not forget my teaching,
but let your heart keep my commandments,
for length of days and years of life
and peace they will add to you.
Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
So you will find favor and good success
in the sight of God and man.
Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
It will be healing to your flesh
and refreshment to your bones.
Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the firstfruits of all your produce;
then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will be bursting with wine.
My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,
for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights.
Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and the one who gets understanding.

Proverbs 3:1–13



Devotion 3

The Value of Life

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. Matthew 10:29–31

In traditional Aboriginal culture, elders were honored and respected for their wisdom and experience. Indigenous people have an elaborate system of kinship, an understanding that every person in their family group is inter-related and responsible for each other.

Today, with the increasing acceptance of molecules-to-man evolution and denial of biblical authority, human life has been relegated to the level of animals. Unborn babies are treated the same as spare cats—they're gotten rid of when they're unwanted. The elderly and the infirm are treated as decrepit dogs—put down when their "quality of life" declines. Babies with disabilities are eliminated before they are born so they aren't a burden to their parents or society.

The Bible provides a different view of life—one in which people are created in God's image and are precious in his sight from the moment of fertilization until the moment we pass into eternity. The two greatest commandments are to love God and love others. We are exhorted to help the weak, the orphans, the widows, the poor, the hungry, the tired, those with disabilities—our neighbors. Within the biblical framework, helping others makes logical sense.

Is the value we place on life based on how convenient that life is to us, or do we hold to the Creator's view? Which view of human life are we teaching our children by example? As we interact with the children today, let's meditate on the Proverbs that provide many insights into ways we can love God and love others.

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favor is better than silver or gold.

The rich and the poor meet together;
the LORD is the Maker of them all.

The prudent sees danger and hides himself,
but the simple go on and suffer for it.

The reward for humility and fear of the LORD
is riches and honor and life.

Whoever oppresses the poor to increase his own
wealth,

or gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.

Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise,
and apply your heart to my knowledge,
for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.

That your trust may be in the LORD,

I have made them known to you today, even to you.

Have I not written for you thirty sayings
of counsel and knowledge,

to make you know what is right and true,

that you may give a true answer to those who sent
you?

Do not rob the poor, because he is poor,

or crush the afflicted at the gate,

for the LORD will plead their cause

and rob of life those who rob them.

Proverbs 22:1–4, 16–23



Devotion 4 Eternal Life

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” John 6:68

Traditional Aboriginal belief teaches that a person’s soul will continue after physical death. Their spirit will return to the Dreamtime and experience rebirth as a plant, rock, animal, or human.

Most ancient cultures had some idea of an afterlife and devised their own way to get there. Each had forgotten the truth that their ancestors, descendants of Adam through Noah, once knew. The first gospel was preached in the garden, after the first people disobeyed their Creator, bringing on the promised punishment for sin: death (Genesis 3). God promised to one day send a Savior (Genesis 3:15), providing hope for mankind.

In our world, death is a very real part of life. And we all deal with death’s accompaniments: sickness, sorrow, disease, suffering. We can ask the “why?” questions: “If there is a loving God, why would he allow so much death and suffering?” or “Why would God let this innocent child suffer?” But we must be willing to answer the question with a firm look at our own sin. Sin—my sin, your sin, our sin—is the cause of what ails us, not God. If we’re honest with ourselves, no one is totally innocent before our holy God. We are descendants of Adam, born “in Adam.” All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Nothing good dwells in our flesh (Romans 7:24). We are all dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). Without Christ, our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; there’s none righteous, no not one (Jeremiah 17:9).

There are no innocent people anywhere in the world. That’s why all people will die. That’s why we need to think beyond the grave. When it comes to death, it’s not really a matter of “why,” and it’s certainly not a matter of “if.” What matters is that death is imminent . . . and left to ourselves, we stand condemned before a holy God.

The Aboriginal people were right to look beyond this life to the next one, but they need to know the truth. We who are children of God have hope—free from magic rituals and ceremonies, free from the desperate wish that

we’ve been good enough to make it on our own. We hold the key to eternal life in our hands—the Bible gives us the truth about what happens when we die and how we can ensure that we will spend eternity with our Creator. It’s our responsibility to pass on that hope and truth to the children in our care so that they know how to receive the free gift of eternal life.

Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction,
and be attentive, that you may gain insight,
for I give you good precepts;
do not forsake my teaching.
When I was a son with my father,
tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,
he taught me and said to me,
“Let your heart hold fast my words;
keep my commandments, and live.

Get wisdom; get insight;
do not forget, and do not turn away from the words
of my mouth.

Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;
love her, and she will guard you.

The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,
and whatever you get, get insight.

Prize her highly, and she will exalt you;
she will honor you if you embrace her.

She will place on your head a graceful garland;
she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.”

Hear, my son, and accept my words,
that the years of your life may be many.

My son, be attentive to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings.

Let them not escape from your sight;
keep them within your heart.

For they are life to those who find them,
and healing to all their flesh.

Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.

Proverbs 4:1–10, 20–23



Devotion 5

Using Your Life

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon . . . she said to the king, “. . . Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.” 1 Kings 10:4–9

In Aboriginal culture, laws about marriage, family, which foods could be eaten, how to share foods, caring for the land, and sacred rituals were provided from the Dream-time. It's clear that they have retained some knowledge of a lawgiver and how to live according to those laws.

In fact, one of their distant relatives had also retained some knowledge from Babel and had implemented it into Egyptian society. In the revised Egyptian chronology proposed by some archaeologists, the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon was Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt (1 Kings 10:1–13; 2 Chronicles 9:1–12). At the same time that Hatshepsut was ruling the powerful, advanced kingdom of Egypt, Solomon was ruling Israel and writing proverbs.

One nation, descended from Noah through Ham, ignored the true Creator and sought to worship multiple gods instead. Another nation, descended from Noah through Shem, acknowledged the Creator and sought to live by his laws—the laws given to Moses after he led his people out of Egypt.

One ruler spent her life building a temple that would house her dead body; another ruler spent his life and resources building a temple in which to worship the one true living God.

One queen had an encounter with a godly king and acknowledged his God; another king had an encounter with a pagan queen and surely imparted the truth of Scripture to her.

One woman used her life to further her own interests and that of her kingdom; another man used his life to righteously rule a nation and impart wisdom to the next generation.

This short comparison of two rulers can serve as an encouragement to us to examine our own lives. How are we living—to please ourselves or to please our God? Are we thinking about how we can further the kingdom of God with our life or about how we can further our own kingdom? Do we realize, as Solomon did, that we need to train the next generation to seek for wisdom?

Although we may not be rulers of great civilizations, we are no less children of the King than Solomon was. And our position in his kingdom is no less important. We were all created by God for a purpose and called into his family to do good works. How will you use your life?

For wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
and I find knowledge and discretion.

The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.

I have counsel and sound wisdom;
I have insight; I have strength.

By me kings reign,
and rulers decree what is just;
by me princes rule,
and nobles, all who govern justly.

I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.

Riches and honor are with me,
enduring wealth and righteousness.

My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.

I walk in the way of righteousness,
in the paths of justice,
granting an inheritance to those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

Blessed is the one who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.

For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains favor from the LORD,
but he who fails to find me injures himself;
all who hate me love death.”

Proverbs 8:11–21, 34–36