

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Genesis 41:1-2, 16-17

Rivers Large and Small

Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly, there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow.

So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river."

If you live in any part of the country where cows are raised, you know that on hot, dry days it is quite normal for cattle to seek relief in farm ponds or creeks. My children and I call this 'cow-pooling.' It was no different in the days of Joseph and Pharaoh. The Nile River and its tributaries were often the source of relief for cattle from heat and insects (The Zondervan NASB Study Bible).

God was very specific about the events surrounding Pharaoh's dream. There was only one meaning, for one people, for one time, for one place, and for one person to interpret it. Pharaoh's and Joseph's reaction to God's warning is the real story here. God revealed His greatness through the obedience and trustworthiness of Joseph. Because Pharaoh was willing to trust in that type of integrity, many people were saved.

I've been on a riverbank a time or two myself – in real life, not in a dream. I've also had to cross a river a time or two during my outdoor adventures, usually when fishing. But even on a few hunts I've had to kick off my shoes, roll up my pants, and wade across. I wonder what the wildlife thought about me when I came up out of the river?!

I remember one day during my work as a camp director, I led a group of boys on a hike through the woods. Standing on the banks of a creek, I described how the water drained out of the highlands and created the small stream before us. I dropped a leaf into the water and we daydreamed about the journey it would take from Highland Creek, to the White River, to the Wabash River, to the Ohio River, to the Mississippi River, and eventually into the Gulf of Mexico.

Imagine, if you would, all the adventures that little leaf experienced in rivers large and small on its journey to the Gulf. Our lives are like that. Some people live life on a grand scale. Some people live life unnoticed in the world. Yet whatever we make of life or however important we think we are, we have this in common: our lives will one day come to an end.

If you want to go to heaven, you need Jesus and His saving grace. Nothing of human design can move you any closer to the kingdom – no grandiose living or humble circumstance of life. Eternal life in heaven is made possible only by the blood of Jesus covering our sins. And regardless of what you think about the bigness or smallness of your life, "it took just as much blood to save you as it did to save anyone else" (Charles Fuller).

When the blood of Jesus covers our sins, we find new life in Him and new direction in the purpose He has for our lives. This is not a lonely adventure. Like different rivers combine to fill a large body of water, we too must unite to fill the kingdom of heaven. That's our ultimate purpose, our ultimate end. It is the objective of the Great Commission given to us by Jesus: to preach the Gospel to every created person (Mark 16:15). That they, too, can join other believers on the way that leads to heaven.

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Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Genesis 41:1-2, 16-17
Rivers Large and Small

HOOK

1. What is the primary source of water for livestock in your area?

2. Describe what you remember about the last time you stood on a riverbank or creek bank.

3. What is the smallest stream closest to your home? Detail the water's journey to its end.

LINE

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How large or small is your life? What have you done with Jesus that gives you the assurance you will go to heaven? If you've not done anything with Jesus, what will you do?

How are you involved in working for Christ? Is this meaningful for you? If so, why? If not, what will you do to make your work for Christ meaningful and intentional?

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: river salvation heaven
