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Daily Devotional - Hannah's Example

MAY 07TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Hannah's Example

1 Samuel 1:1-20

In today's passage, the prophet Samuel describes his godly parents and the difficult time they had before he was born. From looking at the life of his mother Hannah, we can learn some important principles by which to live. Though her situation involved motherhood, the lessons apply to both men and women.

STAYING COMMITTED TO FAMILY. One of the women in Hannah's life tormented her unmercifully. While physical danger wasn't an issue, there was constant emotional turmoil because she could not avoid this person. How tempting it must have been to try and find a way out. And yet Hannah stayed in the home, prayed to the Lord, and did her best to cope. She demonstrated a commitment to family that overrode her need for relief.

COMMUNICATING LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE. Hannah considered her son Samuel a gift from the Lord (1 Samuel 1:20). I picture her telling him day after day, "God gave you to me. I love you and look forward to what He has planned for you." We have the power to build up our children and our spouses—or tear them down. Through our prayers, words of affirmation, and hugs and kisses, we show how much we value them. Demonstrating godly love strengthens the people who are most precious to us.

Some of us live with people who make life difficult. At times we are negatively impacted by the choices they make. God understands your situation just as He was fully aware of Hannah's. Draw close to Him and experience His love and commitment to you. Then

express the same to others.

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Daily Devotional - Supreme Love

MAY 06TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Daily Devotional - Supreme Love](#)

[1 Corinthians 13:1-3](#)

There is no value or human expression of greater importance than love. Paul's incomparable treatise on this subject in [1 Corinthians 13](#) is sandwiched between two chapters that deal with spiritual gifts. The Corinthians focused too much on their display of such gifts, so the apostle showed them the "more excellent way" ([1 Corinthians 12:31](#)). Interestingly, he made no attempt to define love but instead described its importance and expression.

The type of love Paul is talking about isn't human in origin but, rather, comes from God—a part of His very nature. It's unselfish, sacrificial love that acts on behalf of someone else. Since the Lord wants to transform our character into the image of His Son, this priority makes perfect sense. You see, whenever we display such selfless care for one another, that's when we are the most like Christ.

The first three verses of this chapter issue us a warning. Without the motivation of love, all our good deeds—even service for the Lord—will profit us nothing. In God's eyes, a loving spirit is more important than all our impressive words, knowledge, faith, generosity, and self-sacrifice. When we stand before Christ to be judged for our good works, those deeds done for selfish reasons will not be worthy of reward.

We are all blinded to some degree when it comes to our motives, so discerning why we serve God or do good deeds can be difficult. Pray to know your heart's hidden intentions, and replace any self-centered motivations with His “more excellent way” of love. Then your works will be of eternal value.

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Daily Devotional - The Challenges of Forgiving Ourselves

MAY 05TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Challenges of Forgiving Ourselves

Psalms 32:1-2

Yesterday, we considered why people fail to forgive themselves for wrongdoing. Today, let's look at seven questions to ask yourself when you struggle with self-condemnation.

- 1. Why should I continue to condemn myself when the Lord no longer condemns me?*
- 2. Is my self-condemnation drawing me into a closer relationship with God, or is it driving me further from Him?*
- 3. What good am I doing by refusing to forgive myself?*
- 4. Does self-condemnation help or hurt my relationships with others?*
- 5. Does my refusal to forgive myself impress God? Does He find me more devout because of my guilt and shame?*
- 6. Is there any biblical basis for withholding self-forgiveness?*
- 7. How long do I intend to condemn myself? What will be the end result?*

Normally, the answers to these questions are obvious. However, if you're in the throes of self-condemnation, the truth may seem hazy.

Often the only way to work through times of self-doubt and remorse is to focus on the basics of who God is and what He wants for your life. If you are struggling with an inability to forgive yourself, prayerfully consider the seven questions above. Read them aloud, and let them work through your spirit. You may even want to open a journal or take out a sheet of paper to record your thoughts as the Lord speaks to you. Don't be surprised by some intense wrestling in your heart as you consider these points—and as God reorders your thoughts about yourself.

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Daily Devotional - Obstacles to Forgiving Ourselves

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Daily Devotional - Obstacles to Forgiving Ourselves

[Psalms 51:10-12](#)

Every human being on earth has a sin problem. We all lose our temper, make mistakes, and do things that seem completely out of character. Sin is a universal problem, but the Lord has provided forgiveness for everyone who will accept it. And yet, many believers find it impossible to forgive *themselves*. Why?

First, we struggle with *self-forgiveness* at times because we find it difficult to accept God's forgiveness. Guilt can be so strong that it may seem to overshadow the enormous gift of pardon and restoration that our Father has freely provided. We may think, *What I've done is just too terrible. I doubt God could ever forgive me for this.* That's a tragic error.

Second, personal disappointment can prevent us from forgiving ourselves. We often have ridiculously high self-imposed standards for our behavior and achievements. When we fail to live up to them, we are all but crippled by disappointment, which can make self-forgiveness seem impossible.

Third, seeing the results of our sin can become an obstacle. That is, if our wrong actions produce a tangible negative consequence, we may become so blinded by the outcome that we can't forgive ourselves. Seeing the aftermath of our sin day after day keeps guilt alive in our minds, and we may simply refuse to let it go.

Are you harboring guilt and remorse for a sin from your past? God's forgiveness is available now ([1 John 1:9](#)). Christ gave His life to make you free. So do not *willingly* stay in chains because you're unwilling to forgive yourself for what God has already pardoned ([Galatians 5:1](#)).

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Daily Devotional - Why Believers Pray

Daily Devotional - Why Believers Pray

Psalm 103:19-22

Recognizing that God is sovereign prompts some questions about the nature of prayer. Specifically, many people have asked me, “If the Lord is in control, why does He expect us to pray?”

Prayer brings us into cooperation with what God has purposed to accomplish. He desires to involve believers in the work He is doing both in the world and in their lives. But the word “work” is a tricky one when it comes to our faith. Unlike the striving we see in the world, what God desires is for us to trust Him ([John 6:29](#)), surrender our burdens to Him, grow in relationship with Him, and allow Him to work through us. Prayer is a tool we can use to do all those things.

Jesus asked the Father to protect the disciples by the power of His name ([John 17:11](#) NIV). Did He think they might lose their salvation or drift from their commitment? Absolutely not. Jesus was God in human flesh. He knew exactly what was going to happen—how these men would spread the gospel and remain faithful even unto death. Jesus was taking part in the Father’s plan for His followers by interceding for them.

God certainly can build His kingdom without believers’ input or help. But a relationship develops depth and intimacy when the Lover and His beloved share an interest. Praying and working alongside our Lord strengthens our faith in His power.

The Lord created you to love Him and be loved by Him. Prayer nurtures and develops our connection with Him. Our Father calls us to communicate with Him so He can draw us close and involve us in building His kingdom.

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