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Daily Devotional - God's Gift of Forgiveness

AUGUST 24TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - God's Gift of Forgiveness

Colossians 3:12-14

Motivated by love, God provided a way for our sins to be forgiven: He sent Jesus to be our Savior. When we trust in the Lord's substitutionary sacrifice on our behalf, we receive the gift of forgiveness.

Before placing faith in Christ, we were dead in our sins and objects of divine wrath ([Ephesians 2:1-3](#)). But our merciful heavenly Father sent His Son Jesus to redeem us. At the cross, the Savior took our sins upon Himself and experienced God's fury for our sake. His death secured a pardon for us; there was nothing we ourselves could do to acquire God's acceptance. We are saved by grace—through faith in Christ and what He accomplished ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). Our salvation is a free gift from the Father.

God's will is that we, as forgiven people, show mercy to those who wrong us—to the same degree that He forgave us in Christ. But the human tendency is to attach conditions when extending mercy. We think, *I will forgive you only if you apologize*. Or, *You must fix the problem, and then I'll stop being angry*. Or even, *You must make restitution before I will let this go*. That's not what our Savior did. [Romans 5:8](#) expresses it this way: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

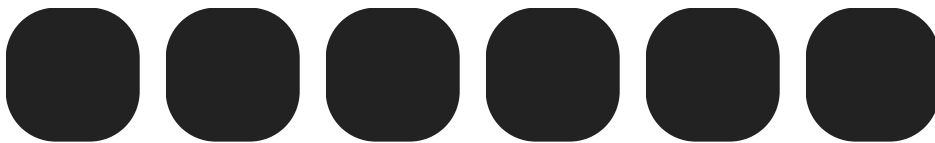
Depending on how much hurt we've experienced, we may require time and healing before we can truly forgive. But we are to remember that showing mercy is God's will. We're called to pardon those who have caused us pain. Through reliance on God's Spirit, we can

become Christlike and forgive.

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Daily Devotional - Perseverance of Prayer

AUGUST 21ST 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Romans 12:10-13

As a pastor, I speak with many people about their spiritual journey. From these interactions, I know that most individuals are not satisfied with their prayer life. They lack anticipation and faith, and time with God often feels empty. This is, no doubt, why many Christians pray so little and so indifferently.

Yesterday, we began looking at obstacles to a healthy prayer life. Let's explore one more hindrance to vibrant communication between God and us: impatience.

Most of us have at some point brought fervent supplication to Jesus but did not see the desired results. Unfortunately, humans are by nature faint-hearted. We get weary of asking when all we perceive is silence. Remember, though, that God does not act on our cue like some cosmic bellhop. If we could see the big picture as He can, we'd gladly wait for His way and timing.

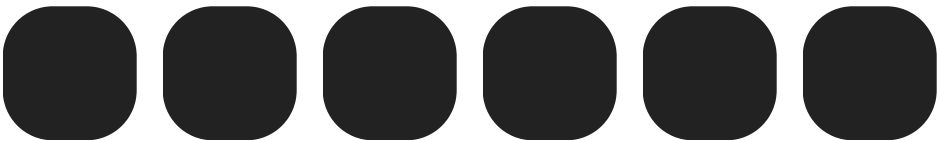
The truth is, I believe we benefit by not receiving all that we request. To understand this concept is a sign of spiritual maturity. When we are thoroughly satisfied with the Lord's presence, our relationship with Him will flourish, even when we don't get everything we ask. When that's the case, we grasp what prayer is—not a long list of wants, but regular communication in a relationship.

Barriers can develop if we persistently cry out to God and nothing changes. But by continuing to pray, we'll both sense God's presence beyond the "wall" and find peace, joy, and awesome glimpses of His glory. This will be completely satisfying, even if He never gives exactly what was requested.

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Daily Devotional - Hindrances to Prayer

AUGUST 20TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Hindrances to Prayer

Ephesians 3:14-21

When you pray, are you confident that God is listening and will answer? Or do you, like many other believers, feel doubtful that your words are even heard?

Let's consider some obstacles to a healthy prayer life. First, poor concentration can inhibit our communication with the Lord. Human minds are prone to wander, and it is common for our thoughts to drift from prayer to other topics. One antidote for this is to realize with whom we are speaking. The more we grasp God's power, love, omniscience, and holiness, the easier it will be for us stay focused.

Second, we may feel unworthy to talk with the God of all creation. Guilt over sin in our life can tempt us to avoid time alone with Him, but He wants us to bring our wrongs into His light. On our own, we will never be worthy to be in the presence of pure perfection. But Jesus' death and resurrection brought us forgiveness and acceptance, so we can come to the Father without fear or embarrassment.

Third, fear can stand in our way. Some people worry, *What if I don't pray correctly?* The truth is, none of us knows how to pray in a manner worthy of a holy God. That's why the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf. The Lord desires our hearts, not perfect words.

The Lord has made Himself available to us through prayer. Do you realize that the most powerful tool and greatest privilege is accessible to us? We can come before almighty God in prayer. Our heavenly Father is waiting to listen to our praise, confession, and requests.

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Daily Devotional - Our Helper in Prayer

AUGUST 19TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Our Helper in Prayer

[1 Thessalonians 5:16-19](#)

One of the most painful emotions is loneliness. Of course, there are times in life when being alone is unavoidable. But since God has sent His Spirit to live within us, we are never truly on our own. The Holy Spirit—whom Jesus referred to as our “Helper”—is with us and available every second of every day.

Let’s think about ways that the Spirit of God helps us in our prayer life. First, He burdens us to pray. Have you ever felt a strong sense that you needed to spend time with the Lord? Perhaps you weren’t even sure why. That is the Spirit convicting you. He has many reasons for doing this. For instance, He may know that you need strength because of an imminent difficulty. Or He sometimes encourages us to confess sin so that our fellowship with the Father is not hindered.

Second, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. There are times when we do not know how to pray—when sorrow or helplessness overwhelms us to the point that words are impossible to speak, even to the Lord. Thankfully, when all we can do is cry to Jesus, the Spirit will lead on our behalf. He understands the depth of our thoughts, feelings, and needs, and He

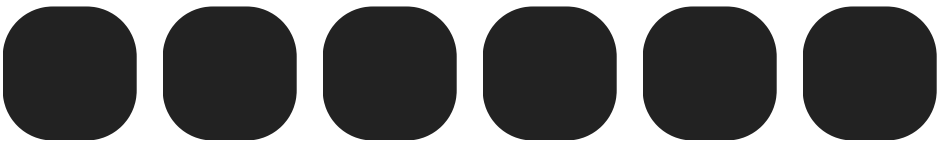
translates them into effective supplication according to God’s will.

The Savior loves you intimately—enough to die in your place and send a Helper to reside within you. What a privilege to have God’s Spirit dwelling in your heart. Do you recognize His power and love throughout your day? He longs to comfort, enable, and guide you each and every moment.

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Daily Devotional - Sovereign Over Sin

AUGUST 18TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Isaiah 14:24-27](#)

God is sovereign. This means that He is the supreme authority over everything, including sin and its consequences. Yet He doesn't *cause* anyone to sin—to do so would violate His righteous and holy nature. The Lord does, however, *allow* temptation to enter our lives. And since we have free will and the Holy Spirit, we can decide how to respond and are fully equipped to resist. Thankfully, He retains ultimate control and weaves the consequences of our actions in accordance with His purposes.

Sometimes God permits our sin to run its full course. For instance, when the Israelites refused to turn away from their disobedience, He “gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, to walk in their own devices” ([Psalms 81:12](#)). Without divine protection, the nation succumbed to corrupt influences and ultimately was overrun. The Lord could have sheltered them, but the consequences drove the Israelites into repentance, which was His original plan.

Conversely, God will sometimes put an immediate halt to sin. Such was the case when King Abimelech took Abraham's wife to himself. The king had been misled by the couple and was not aware that he was about to commit a sin. But the Lord knew of the deception, and He intervened ([Genesis 20:1-6](#)).

Of course, the wisest plan is to obey fully so God never has to use either of these tactics. Temptation is inevitable, but sin is not. The Lord's sovereignty over our life means that any temptation must first pass through His permissive will. In this way, He makes sure His children are never tempted beyond what they can resist ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

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