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## Daily Devotional - The God to Whom We Pray

SEPTEMBER 18TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The God to Whom We Pray

### Nehemiah 1:1-11

Nehemiah demonstrates power in prayer. As a servant to King Artaxerxes of Persia, he had no right to request leave to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, much less to requisition materials and protection. Yet knowing the nature of the God he served, Nehemiah did not hesitate to act boldly and ask the king for what was needed.

His prayer began, "I beseech You, O lord God of heaven" ([Neh. 1:5](#)). *Lord*, when it appears in all capital letters, denotes the word *Jehovah* (a form of *Yahweh*, the Hebrew name for God). It means "God who is eternal in His being"—conveying that everything everywhere is in His presence. So, when God makes a promise, He knows how He will keep it. That is why Nehemiah called Him "the awesome God who preserves the covenant." He knew God was committed to bringing repentant Israelites back to their homeland to dwell in His presence ([Neh. 1:9](#)).

Another Hebrew name used to refer to God, *Elohim*, is translated "He who is absolutely sovereign." If He spoke the world into being, then He is certainly more than able to provide Nehemiah with supplies, some time off from work, and favor from the Persian king.

There are many other names for God, such as *Adonai* ("master"), *Jehovah-Jireh* ("provider"), and *Jehovah-Rapha* ("healer"). Since the Hebrew language is precise, it can help us to better know who He is—when we need solace, we call upon the God of comfort; in our confusion, we have the God who teaches. Just as knowing one's audience

affects which words we choose to sp

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## Daily Devotional - The Blessing of Loyalty

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Daily Devotional - The Blessing of Loyalty

### [Ruth 4:13-22](#)

I believe Ruth’s remarkable loyalty is what earned her a place in both the Bible and the lineage of Jesus Christ. Our culture idealizes “looking out for number one,” but Scripture teaches us to protect loved ones and those in need ([1 Cor. 13:7](#); [Ps. 82:3-4](#)). Ruth is a shining example of faithfulness—she willingly adjusted her own schedule and expectations to meet Naomi’s needs.

With no family left to care for her and no neighbors who shared her faith in God, Naomi found herself in a foreign land, far from the comfort of a familiar and like-minded community. During those dark hours, Ruth—her son’s pagan widow—sacrificed everything to stay at Naomi’s side. Then, to care for her aging mother-in-law, Ruth set aside hope of remarriage as well as the prospect of a child. She packed her bags for a foreign country and swore to follow a strange religion: the worship of Naomi’s God.

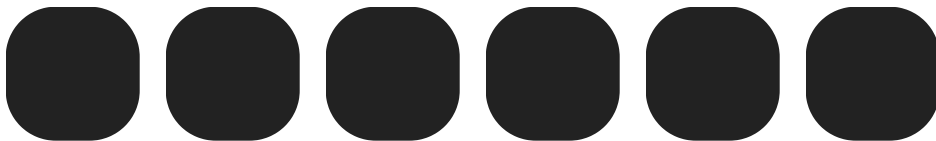
Ruth undoubtedly was aware of the risks involved in casting her lot with another woman in a male-dominated society, but she did so without hesitation. And the young woman’s commitment did not end when they arrived in Israel. It was Ruth, following Naomi’s directions, who kept the two women fed. And it was Ruth, again under Naomi’s tutelage, who made a strategic alliance with Boaz that secured their future.

Ruth sacrificed mightily for her mother-in-law, and as a result, God gave her the very things she thought she’d forfeited—a God who loved her, a home, a husband, and a son. Moreover, Ruth is counted among the ancestors of the Messiah, Jesus. What a testimony of the reward for loyalty.

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# Daily Devotional - The Price of Loyalty

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## Daily Devotional - The Price of Loyalty

### Ruth 1

The Christian life isn't free of obligations. The many "one anothers" in the Bible are God's instructions about how to treat people in our circles and give of ourselves to enrich those relationships. Yet many people today prefer not to invest in deep friendships, opting instead for casual acquaintances that demand little. The devoted loyalty of Ruth—a pagan from Moab—stands in sharp contrast to such superficiality.

Casual friends can talk about politics, movies, and sports but avoid discussing deep concerns. Then they won't have to bear anyone else's burdens or heartbreak. But neither will they learn the deep joy of expressing loyalty to a person in need. The human heart was created to crave intimate fellowship—the kind of connectedness that can share feelings without fear of judgment. Because of loyalty based on mutual trust and love, close companions can point out blind spots and challenge each other to greater faith.

Ruth is an example of this kind of selfless dedication. When her mother-in-law Naomi went through a bitter period of hopelessness and loss, the young widow Ruth chose to follow the older woman. Though this meant sacrificing the comforts of home and any prospect of marriage to a countryman, she demonstrated absolute allegiance.

Loyalty demands a high price that too few are willing to pay. Some hold acquaintances at arm's length to avoid obligation. But believers are saved to stand together in love and encourage one another ([John 13:34](#); [1 Thess. 5:11](#)). Doing so brings blessing, even when there's a cost.

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## Daily Devotional - Responding to Conflict

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Daily Devotional - Responding to Conflict

### [Matthew 18:21-35](#)

Conflict is part of life. It may originate from misunderstandings, a difference of opinion, or deep convictions. But oftentimes, discord stems from envy, pride, or hunger for power.

No one can control another person's response to conflict; we're accountable only for how we handle it. Sadly, many people have unhealthy reactions to disagreement. Some ignore the issue or pretend it doesn't exist. Others place blame while defending themselves.

These negative responses often indicate one of three underlying scenarios. First, past hurts can leave a person emotionally insecure and unable to handle criticism. Second, a perfectionist sets such high benchmarks that he can never live up to his own standards—then it's hard to acknowledge mistakes. Finally, pride makes it hard for some to admit when they're wrong or to ask forgiveness.

Unless we respond correctly to conflict, we limit our potential to grow, because we aren't learning what the Lord is teaching. Also, we can develop an unforgiving spirit, which leads to bitterness and resentment. Eventually, such an attitude can destroy relationships.

There is also a positive way to handle conflict. [Luke 23:34](#) reveals how our Savior responded when He was wrongly accused, unfairly judged, and killed for something He didn't do. Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

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## Daily Devotional - Confronting Conflict

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### [Galatians 2:11-16](#)

The Scriptures record many instances of conflict between nations, among friends, and in families. Today we see the same types of problems. While fighting, people can say harsh and even unfair words. Their accusations create turmoil and emotional pain. What we believe will determine the way we respond to such difficulties.

God's Word proclaims His sovereignty over nature ([Ps. 135:6](#)), government ([Job 12:23](#)), and mankind ([Acts 17:25](#)). Nothing in heaven or on earth is hidden from Him or outside of His control. So, how does this help us in a conflict? First, our Father knows when people verbally attack us, and He has promised to protect us. Nothing can touch His children apart from His permissive will. Second, He has the power to work the painful times we endure into something beneficial ([Rom. 8:28](#)). We can have hope because His will cannot be thwarted, even in bad circumstances. Finally, we are His beloved children. He is a loving Father who understands what we are going through and always remains by our side. As His sons and daughters, we are not on our own.

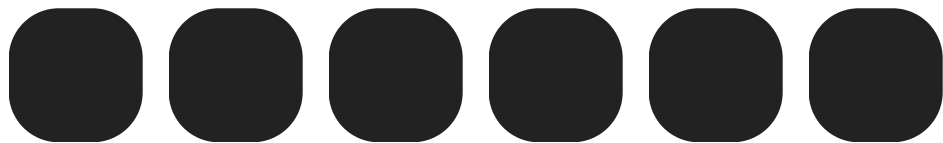
When we believe in the Lord's sovereign rule, our perspective on hard times changes. Instead of responding with fear, anger, or resentment, we will turn to Him in prayer and ask for guidance.

Conflict is inevitable. When we, or something we have done, is the source of the turmoil, we are to apologize. If others are at fault, we may have to confront them the way Paul did with Peter. But we are also called to forgive without exception. As Christ's ambassadors, the way we respond really matters.

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