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Daily Devotional - Encouragement in Tough Times

OCTOBER 09TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Encouragement in Tough Times

Judges 7:8-25

Yesterday, we read about how God shrank Gideon's army down from 32,000 men to just 300 before an extremely important battle. Let's see what happened next.

Of course, Gideon was feeling anxious. He was about to attack an enemy camp of more than 130,000 trained soldiers, and he was going to do it with just a handful of men. In this terrifying moment, God gave Gideon what he needed most: encouragement.

God woke Gideon in the middle of the night and strategically positioned him to overhear an enemy soldier recounting a frightful dream—a vision of Israelite victory! This unlikely circumstance assured Gideon that the Lord was at work. God graciously used that incident to demonstrate His sensitivity to one man's faintheartedness. And He still does so for us today.

Consider the power of a friend's encouraging words. Think about how meaningful it is when an unexpected blessing seems to fall from heaven right at your darkest moment. Ponder the impact of reading a reassuring verse when you most need it. These are not "happy accidents"—rather, they are precious confidence builders from God.

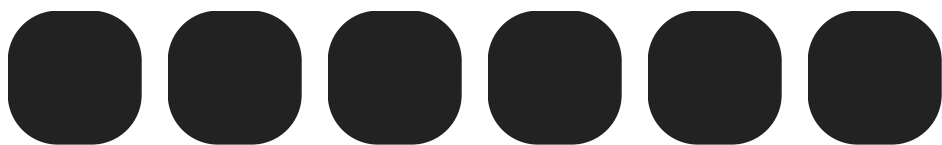
Our challenge is simply to remember the times in the past when our loving Father has encouraged us. Standing on the evidence of His faithfulness, we can boldly face the future, knowing that we are not alone.

As inhabitants of a fallen world, we will face seemingly insurmountable obstacles. But as children of God, we are never beyond reach of the Lord's empowering encouragement.

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Daily Devotional - When the Odds are Against You

OCTOBER 08TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - When the Odds are Against You

[Judges 7:1-7](#)

Have you ever felt backed into a corner, with the odds stacked against you? In situations like that, Christians too often refuse to acknowledge an important truth. That is, they fail to recognize that God may actually be orchestrating their challenging circumstances.

You may think, *No way. God protects me from such things. The world and Satan are doing this to me.* Perhaps. Yet maybe, just maybe, God is trying to tell you something—and He first needs to get your attention.

Time and again in Scripture, we see that the Lord uses difficulties to build our faith. It's easy to trust Him when things go our way. However, God often removes comforts and false securities from our lives to remind us that He is the true source of our strength.

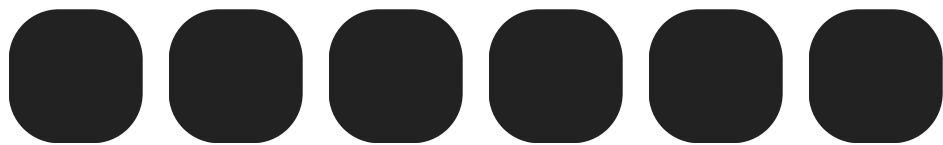
Consider today's passage, in which Gideon was ready to lead a powerful militia of 32,000 men into battle against the enemy. However, the Lord stepped into the situation two different times, whittling the Israelite army down to less than one percent of its original size. We may have replied, "What? It's impossible to defeat enemy forces with just 300 men!" That's probably true; 300 men alone couldn't do it. But the Lord could.

When the odds are not in your favor, don't think that God has abandoned you. Your money, your success, and even people you thought were friends may disappear, but those wouldn't win the battle anyway. Stand your ground and stay focused on the Lord. With everything else stripped away, you'll be amazed at what your heavenly Father will achieve.

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Daily Devotional - Responding to God's Holiness

OCTOBER 07TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Responding to God's Holiness

Isaiah 6:1-8

A stunning sunset, a rainbow, the first blooms of spring, and many other displays of nature will elicit strong reactions. In a similar way, God's holiness is so magnificent that it causes people to respond in various ways.

Isaiah had a vision of the Lord's moral purity and holiness. When he saw God seated on a throne in all His glorious splendor, the prophet cried out, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" ([Isa. 6:5](#)). A glimpse of divine perfection caused Isaiah to recognize the depths of his own sinful condition and to acknowledge the holiness of God. Peter had a similar reaction when he was in the presence of the Savior. After the Lord miraculously filled the fishing nets to overflowing, the disciple "fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!'" ([Luke 5:8](#)). However, the religious leaders of the day had a different attitude. The more they heard Jesus' preaching and saw His work, the angrier they became.

We are Christ's ambassadors to a hurting world, and we must always act with love toward others. But sometimes those who are not abiding in Christ will experience what I call "holy heat." People who have rejected Jesus may act as if we are trying to force them to believe in Him. And Christians living in rebellion toward God may become uncomfortable around those who abide in Jesus; they may even ignore the advice of believers who have loved and advised them for years.

God wants us to live out our faith in love, regardless of others' reactions. Has your faith permeated the many areas of your life?

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Daily Devotional - The Holiness of God

OCTOBER 06TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Holiness of God

Revelation 4:1-11

God is without sin. There's no evil in His thoughts, motives, or actions. Because of His holy character, He is against all iniquity. He truly loves the sinner, but He despises sin.

The heavenly Father's holiness is revealed not only in His moral purity, but also in His separateness from all evil. Because of His righteous character, He cannot tolerate or ignore sin. His justice requires that wrongdoing be paid for, and the only acceptable payment is death ([Rom. 6:23](#)).

Only faith in Jesus Christ bridges the gap between holy God and sinful man. The Son of God, having lived a perfect life, died to pay our sin debt in full and provide a way for each of us to have a relationship with righteous God. The heavenly Father, having accepted Jesus' payment for sin, invites all people to become His children.

First, we must acknowledge we cannot pay for our own sins. Then we must confess our wrongdoing and ask Him to pardon us, based on the fact that Christ fully paid the penalty for our sins after suffering God's wrath, condemnation, and judgment in our place. God

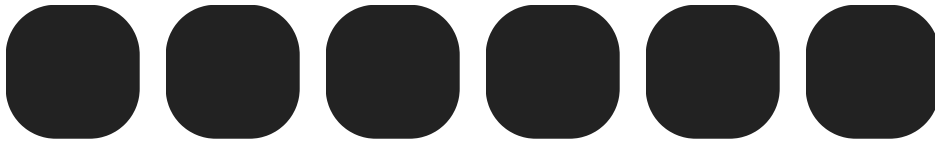
justifies us the moment we receive Jesus as our personal Savior—the Judge of all humanity declares we are no longer guilty. He accepts the transfer of our guilt to His Son, who stood as our substitute.

Pardoned of all our sin. Clothed in Jesus' righteousness. Made a child of holy God. These are the free gifts the Father gives us once we have accepted Jesus as our Savior through faith in Him. When we give Him our lives, He gives us His. Can you think of a better trade off?

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Daily Devotion - What is the Church?

OCTOBER 05TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotion - What is the Church?

[Colossians 1:18](#)

When most people hear the word “church,” the first thing they think of is a certain type of building. But let’s see what Christ said about the church so we can more fully understand its biblical meaning.

In [Matthew 16:18](#), Jesus proclaimed, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (KJV). He obviously had in mind something much greater than a mere architectural structure. In fact, He was referring to the whole body of Christ, which is comprised of all believers worldwide—everyone who has trusted Jesus as personal Savior and is a child of the heavenly Father. The church began on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came and anointed a group of Jesus’ followers ([Acts 2](#)). It will continue until an event referred to as the rapture of the church, when every believer in Christ will be caught up to meet Him in the sky ([1 Thess. 4:17](#)).

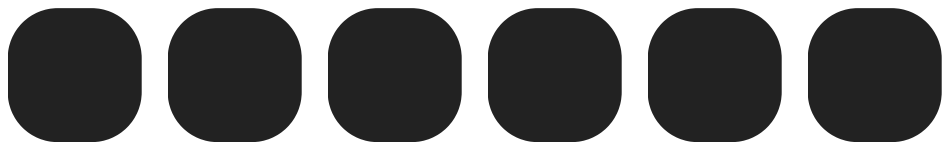
The church is not merely a place for social action or fellowship, though these are important aspects of its ministry. Rather, the church is the entire body of Christ, both corporately and individually filled and enabled by the Holy Spirit to carry out the task designated by Jesus Himself. In other words, the purpose of the church is to bring people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and to make disciples, instructing them and growing them up in the things of God ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)).

Our responsibility is to obey. Have you asked yourself what role you should be playing in the ministry of the church?

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