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Monday Daily Devotional - The Faith to Press On

NOVEMBER 09TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Monday Daily Devotional - The Faith to Press On

James 1:2-12

When the difficult times come into your life, what is your response? While it may seem tempting to look for a shortcut out of the discomfort, that's not the kind of attitude God desires from us. Instead, He wants His children to remain submitted to Him, though that may not end the affliction. But it is the Lord's will that we hold our heads high and press on through the pain.

This comes as a shock to many new believers. After placing their faith in

Jesus, they are often surprised when some unexpected hardship appears. However, it's a misconception to expect an easy life once we trust God's Son as Lord. In fact, the Bible assures us of quite the opposite. Jesus Himself declared that if we are found in Him, the world will give us great trouble and heartache ([John 16:33](#)).

In James 1:2, we are instructed to consider our struggles as a source of "pure joy" (NIV). This makes sense only when we see our difficulties through God's eyes, as opportunities for growth. An untested faith is weak and ineffective. Just like our muscles, our faith must be exercised against some resistance. When we face trials with wisdom and endure them with godly perseverance, we will find blessings we never thought possible.

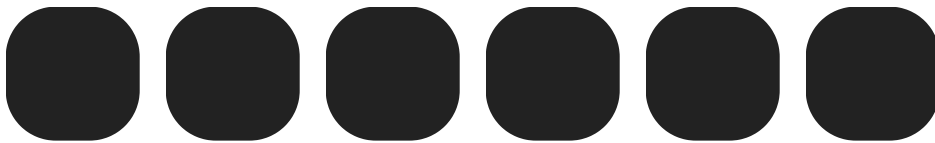
At the end of the struggle, we will see God standing with our reward: the crown of life (James 1:12). To use an example from the world of sports, the "crown of life" is essentially God's gold medal for a job well done. Do you want the Lord's recognition of

your spiritual victory? Then press on through the hardship and discover what lies just beyond the trial.

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Daily Devotional - The Sunday Rush

NOVEMBER 08TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Psalms 100:1-5](#)

For many believers, Sunday morning goes something like this: Beat the alarm clock into submission. Oversleep because Saturday's late-night fun wasn't compatible with Sunday's early-morning responsibilities. Crawl out of bed and hit the shower. Yell upstairs to make sure the kids are up. Run through the house, simultaneously dressing children, letting the pets out, eating a bowl of cereal, and making lunch plans with the in-

laws. Herd the family into the car. Argue with the spouse, who asks, “Why are we always late?” Screech into the church parking lot. Run through the front doors of the sanctuary. Plop down in a pew. Elbow the spouse, who made another crack about being late. Open a hymnal. Sing some songs. Hear a sermon. Leave church to meet the in-laws at the restaurant. Go home and take a nap.

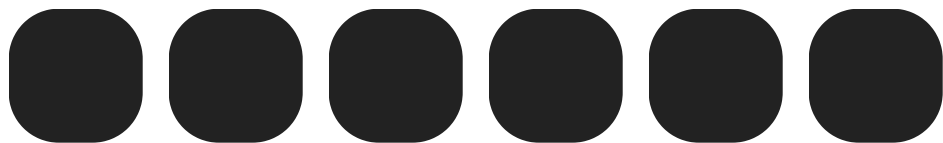
Sound familiar? There’s obviously something wrong with this all-too- common Sunday scenario: Where is the worship? Sure, this family made it to the service, but the time set apart for praise and study of the Word was just something on their list of Sunday activities. It was something they did because they felt they *had* to do it. There was no room for an encounter with God, because the time of worship seemed to be an interruption of their Sunday, not the focus of it.

[Psalm 100:1-5](#) instructs us to “enter...His courts with praise.” Does this describe your entrance into worship each week? Remember, worship is not something you *have* to do; it’s something you *get* to do! So, plan ahead and prepare your heart, mind, and family to meet the King.

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Daily Devotional - The Key to the Good Things in Life

NOVEMBER 06TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Key to the Good Things in Life

Ezra 8:22

Perhaps the title of today's devotion sounds like that of a self-help book promising fame, wealth, and prestige if you'll follow 10 easy steps. But when you consider how the culture defines the good things in life, you'll realize that God's definition doesn't quite match the world's—truly good things are achieved only by seeking Him. When we make God our top priority, we can expect His blessings of. . .

An intimate love relationship. Those who earnestly seek God learn to know Him deeply and experience an amazing sense of oneness with Him. Then He's no longer a distant deity but He becomes a close friend. As your commitment grows, you'll experience a love that transcends any human relationship.

Satisfaction. Only the Lord can fill the empty place in every heart. All earthly pursuits of pleasure or purpose fade in comparison to the satisfaction found in His presence.

Joy. When seeking the Lord is your priority, you'll find a new joy that circumstances cannot steal, since it's based in your relationship with Christ. Suffering and difficulties won't devastate you, because you'll trust Him and see the situation from His perspective.

God's help. As today's verse explains, the Lord's hand of favor is upon those who seek Him. In fact, He delights in coming to their aid and providing for their needs.

Are these the kind of good things you're experiencing, or have worldly values sidetracked you? Your thoughts reveal your true priorities. If you can go all day without thinking of the Lord, you're not earnestly seeking Him. But when He's the delight of your life, you won't be able to forget Him.

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Daily Devotional - Running the Race of Faith

NOVEMBER 05TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Running the Race of Faith

Hebrews 12:1-3

The runners in a marathon must all follow a clearly marked course. Suppose one of the athletes decides to pick his own path. He keeps to the 26.2-mile race standard and sets his finish line in the same spot as the official one, but he runs through neighborhoods with fewer hills and across less crowded parks. His plan seems excellent to him, but when he crosses the finish line, there will be no medal or ribbon waiting.

That would certainly be a silly thing to do. Yet believers fall into this very trap when they decide the course for their lives instead of running the race God sets. By submitting to His will—doing what He says and going where He leads—we remain on the right path. But the moment we revert to our old habits and start making decisions based on our own wisdom, we go far afield.

Whether believers run the race God's way or their way, the finish line is the same—namely, heaven. However, the difference is what we have to show for all the energy expended getting there. No one wants to look back and realize, *I didn't really accomplish anything of value*. Regardless of how grand a legacy someone leaves, the only truly lasting and worthwhile deeds are those done for the Lord in the power of His Spirit.

Thankfully, no matter how far off course we veer, the Holy Spirit is still present. He reminds us of the right path—as well as the power available to get back on it and persevere. Your route is set; your choice clear. Run the race set before you and finish well.

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Daily Devotional - The Courage to Obey

NOVEMBER 04TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Courage to Obey

Joshua 1:1-9

Most people would be pleased to accept the honor of leading a nation. Perhaps Joshua felt that way, too. But there's no doubt that he was very aware that leading the Israelites out of the wilderness would be a daunting task and responsibility. Yet he was determined to obey God no matter what.

The Hebrew people were a difficult bunch. Not only did they grumble about food, water, safety, and rules; they also questioned Moses' leadership and, almost as soon as his back was turned, rebelled against God. Now Joshua—a man they once threatened to stone ([Num. 14:10](#))—was poised to lead these wayward desert nomads safely home. His was a God-sized task indeed.

Ultimately, however, Joshua took up the mantle of leadership with courage. Any uncertainty was replaced by boldness and resolve. He placed his faith in God, the One who had never let the people down. Joshua fully expected the Lord to be true to His word again and deliver them to the Promised Land.

I don't know what challenge you are facing, but I do know that God will enable you to tackle it bravely, calmly, and victoriously. Whether you are a woman in a painful marriage, a family man contemplating a return to school, or a person in the clutches of a dreaded disease, God says to you, "Be strong and courageous" (Josh. 1:9).

Joshua's courage was based upon years of seeing God's faithfulness. Whether you've been a Christian for five minutes or 50 years, you can have the same confidence. The Bible promises that the Lord is sufficient to meet your needs and see you safely through your journey until you reach heaven ([Phil. 4:19](#)).

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