



[TOP](#)

Manger Full of Toys 2015 This Saturday

DECEMBER 15TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Manger Full of Toys 2015 This Saturday

Dexter, Missouri - Rachel Strickland has a big heart! God had plans for her. With God's blessing and strength she began Manger Full of Toys in 2010 for children who might not have anything to open on Christmas morning.

Luke 6:30 "Give to every man that asks of you." That means if you are in need, you qualify.

This is the 6th year she and her many elf friends have been gathering gently used and new toys for the Manger Full of Toys event. She feels blessed to be able to do such a wonderful thing for children and without God's word it would not be possible.

"If you are in need, you qualify," commented Strickland. "My promise to you is no strings attached."

Every year she gets loads of questions and it's simple! They collect toys, clean them, repair them and set them up just like a retail store. Any parent or guardian of a child can come and receive gifts for their children.

Her goal is that every child should wake up Christmas morning with a toy under the tree.

"That's it. It was never MY plan, but was direction from God and we are BEYOND BLESSED to even be able to help with this and allow God to use us

this way,” continued Strickland.

How do I qualify? If you are caring for a child who is without Christmas gifts then YOU qualify. You don’t qualify for a gift from God you simply receive it.

How do I sign-up? You don’t, just show up on Saturday, December 19th at 9:00 a.m. at the Dexter Chamber of Commerce building at 515 W. Market Street and get in line.

Do I have to bring any paperwork? NO

Do I have to pay for the toys? NO, they are FREE!

Can I donate toys? Absolutely, donate by calling Rachel or Drew at 573-625-9545 or 931-267-4112.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Tuesday Daily Devotional - Unashamed to Share the

Gospel

DECEMBER 15TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tuesday Daily Devotional - Unashamed to Share the Gospel

2 Timothy 1:6-12

The apostle Paul understood the awesome responsibility of being entrusted with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He considered this calling a stewardship for which he would one day give an account to the Lord, and he was willing to suffer for Christ's sake to complete the task. As believers, we have this same obligation to share the gospel with whomever God places in our lives. But we must ask ourselves if we have a similar level of commitment.

Paul felt compelled to tell people about Christ. In fact, he said, "Woe is me if I do not" ([1 Cor. 9:16](#)). No matter how anyone treated him, he wasn't ashamed of the message of Christ. The prophet Jeremiah had a similar experience. He became a laughingstock and was persecuted for delivering the Lord's message of the coming judgment. Yet he discovered that not speaking created a far worse feeling in his heart—like fire shut up in his bones ([Jer. 20:7-9](#)).

We may not want to warn people about God's judgment for fear of driving them away from Him. But in reality, the lost are already far from the Lord and need to hear about His offer of forgiveness. Paul was willing to die to get the message out, yet too often we're not even willing to face a little discomfort to share our faith.

We are surrounded by people who are desperately hungry for something, and they don't even know what. Yet we have the answer—and the responsibility to share it. Never be ashamed of the best news ever offered to mankind. It can change someone's eternal destiny.

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[Go to post](#)



More from ShowMe Times:

[TOP](#)

Monday Daily Devotional - The Reason for Our Boldness

DECEMBER 14TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Monday Daily Devotional - The Reason for Our Boldness

[Philippians 1:19-20](#)

Even though Christians are familiar with the gospel, many are reluctant to share their faith with others because they don't feel capable of explaining it. When we lack confidence in our knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ, fear of negative reactions or possible questions can keep us silent. What if we don't have the answers or end up looking like a fool? It's just too intimidating.

But remember, God has given us the most important message in the world. Since we're confronted by so many unscriptural philosophies and religious deceptions, we need to understand the gospel and be able to present it with confidence and boldness. We can't let fear or ignorance keep us from giving lost people the only message that can change a person's eternal destiny.

The apostle Paul welcomed every opportunity to tell people about Christ, because he focused on the gospel's life-changing power rather than the possible negative reactions. Often, the reason we're ashamed to talk about our faith is that we're concerned about ourselves. If we look at the hurting people around us, express a genuine interest in them, and ask God to open a door for us to share our faith with them, He will answer that

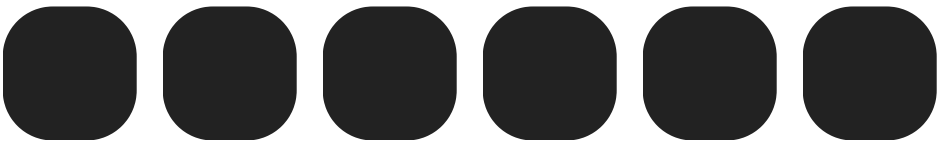
prayer.

We tend to be motivated by temporal activities that eventually fade away. But souls are forever, and people need to know the Savior. Look for opportunities to reach out to those around you—notice their expressions; ask how they’re doing. When their need stirs your heart, you’ll be eager to offer them the gospel.

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<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/uvej/Monday-Daily-Devotional--The-Reason-for-Our-Boldness>

[Go to post](#)



More from ShowMe Times:

[TOP](#)

Friday Daily Devotional - Brokenness: The Protest

DECEMBER 11TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Friday Daily Devotional - Brokenness: The Protest

[Jonah 1](#)

The children’s story about Jonah and the big fish presents the prophet in a rather rosy light: After three days in the fish’s belly, he relents and goes merrily on to Nineveh. End of story. The narrative in the Bible has the same components (storm, big fish, repentant Ninevites) but the context is totally different. From the moment Jonah chose to flee from God’s plan until the end of the book, his heart was rebelling against God.

The inhabitants of Nineveh were Assyrians, a people known for their aggression and cruelty to others. Since they were the sworn enemies of Israel, Jonah had good reason to despise them. But God loved the Ninevites and desired their repentance. The task of ministering to them carried an additional purpose: breaking Jonah’s unloving spirit—an attitude so strong that he preferred to die rather than see the enemy saved ([Jonah 4:3](#)).

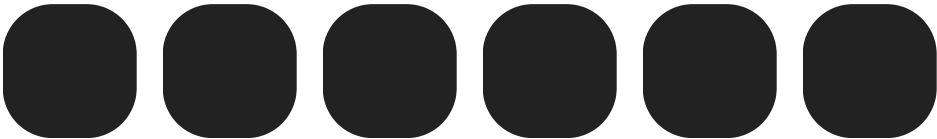
God longed to mold the prophet’s character to reflect His own—He wanted a willing, loving servant. But Jonah resisted at each and every turn. Pride and hatred drove him ever deeper into rebellion and away from the Lord. The Lord wasn’t fooled; He knew Jonah’s heart remained hard, even after the people repented. While the Ninevites rejoiced over deliverance, their minister stewed in his bitterness. Emotional and mental anguish were high prices to pay for resistance.

What keeps you from serving the Lord fully? You likely know the area of your life that He is trying to break. Though the process may be painful, it’s done for your good and His glory. Give in to Him.

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<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/uve5/Friday-Daily-Devotional--Brokenness-The-Protest>

Go to post



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[TOP](#)

Thursday Daily Devotional - Experiencing God's Goodness

DECEMBER 10TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Thursday Daily Devotional - Experiencing God's Goodness

Psalms 31:19-24

When life is pleasant, we find praising God easy because His kindness is abundantly evident. However, we may have difficulty recognizing pain and trouble as an expression of His loving care as well. In difficult times, we need to trust today's scripture, which tell us that the Lord has stored up goodness for those who take refuge in Him.

If you believe that God is good only when your circumstances are enjoyable, then you misunderstand His nature and have become numb to the expression of His benevolence toward you. Those who've learned to know His character and trust His ways can see evidence of His goodness in all situations.

I haven't always felt that the Lord was being good. While I was growing up, my goal was to be obedient so that He wouldn't do anything bad to me. The difficult and painful situations in my life hindered my understanding of His goodness. As I look back, I can now see His love and wisdom in using those trials to shape my character.

Today, when God does something I don't like, I pour out my heart to Him. After seeking His perspective and listening to Him, I'm filled with gratitude and trust in His character. Then I'm willing to accept the Father's wise choice for my life.

We live under the umbrella of God's goodness. When circumstances and emotions tell you otherwise, rely on what you know. Throughout the day, look for signs of His loving care for you. As your perspective changes, you will see the signs of His goodness everywhere you turn.

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