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Daily Devotional - A Man After God's Heart

JANUARY 02ND 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - A Man After God's Heart

Acts 13:13-22

Have you ever visited a cemetery and seen a gravestone with a poignant epitaph of the person buried there? It's not uncommon to see descriptions like "Devoted Mother" or "Beloved Friend" on these markers. In the distant future, what would you want someone to read etched on your tombstone? What epitaph would summarize the best part of your life?

In the book of Acts, we discover how history remembered mighty King David. In a sermon to a primarily Jewish group, the apostle Paul referred to David, who was well known to the audience. Remembering all of the king's great accomplishments during his reign, how did Paul choose to describe him? He declared that David was the one person whom God called "a man after His own heart." (See Acts 13:22; 1 Samuel 13:14.)

What does it mean to be a person after God's own heart? For David, it required an intimate relationship with his Father (Ps. 63:1, Ps. 6-8). This entails much more than simply a regular routine of rote prayers and church attendance. Rather, such intimacy is founded upon an intense yearning to grow as close to the loving Father as possible (Ps. 42:1).

What would it take for you to be described as a man or woman after God's own heart? What activities, thoughts, or behaviors would need to be removed from your life? What would need to be added? Ask God for His help in making these adjustments—and for the commitment to make

this epitaph the goal of your life.

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Daily Devotional - The Greater Purpose of Blessings

JANUARY 01ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Greater Purpose of Blessings

Psalms 67

It is God's nature to bless. However, we need to understand that His purpose is greater than we may realize. His ultimate goal encompasses far more than simply making us happy, peaceful,

protected, and prosperous. In fact, it's never the Lord's intention for His blessings to end with us. Rather, He wants them to flow out to others as part of His plan for the whole earth.

As we see in today's psalm, the Lord blesses us so that His salvation, His ways, and His justice may be known by every nation and people group around the globe (Ps. 67:3-4, Ps. 67:7). He's always acting with this larger picture in mind—even while working personally in each believer's life.

Knowing this should fill us with an awesome yet humbling sense of significance. Every Christian has a part in helping others know and understand the one true God. Each blessing that benefits us personally is also intended to help further His plans for the kingdom. On the other hand, we sometimes may not receive things we want because they don't contribute to God's higher purpose. But if we fit our requests into the Lord's greater plans, we position ourselves to be used mightily by Him.

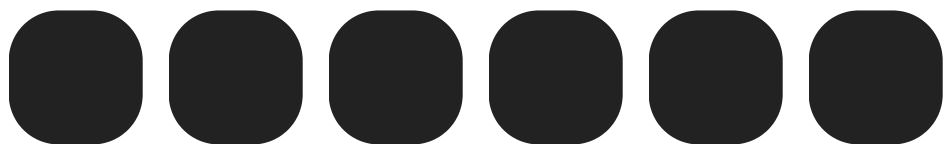
When your Father blesses you, He's not only doing something *for* you; He's also doing something *in* and *through* you to affect the lives of others. Don't let the pleasures and comforts of His blessings blind you to their intended purpose. Ask the Lord how to use His kindnesses as a way to point people to Him.

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Daily Devotional - the Key to Financial Blessing

DECEMBER 29TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - the Key to Financial Blessing

Malachi 3:7-12

All of us struggle when there's a discrepancy between what our minds know to be true and what we feel in our emotions. One area that believers typically find difficult is finances.

Understanding what the Bible says about money, do we choose truth or do we allow our ever-changing feelings to dictate our actions? Believers find it easy to give God one penny out of a dime or one dollar out of 10, but when the numbers grow bigger—100 out of a 1,000 or a 1,000 from 10,000—we often balk. However, we can't expect the Lord to bless us financially if we're not supporting His work.

Scripture speaks about giving a whole tithe—one-tenth of our earnings or 10 percent of whatever we produce, according to Deuteronomy 14:22. We should also note that we're to give God the first portion of our income, not what's left over at the end of the month.

God's tithe goes into His storehouse—the church. From there, what's offered can be channeled into the Lord's work throughout the world. Imagine how many great ministries and outreaches would close if money dried up. Sharing the gospel is both a spiritual and financial responsibility.

When we refuse to give our portion, we block the flow of God's blessing in our own lives. Often we decide to offer less than a tithe because we don't trust His provision. Our Father has promised us protection and plenty if we follow His mandates. Give the Lord His due and see what great blessings He provides.

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Wednesday Daily Devotional - Who Is This Jesus?

DECEMBER 23RD 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Wednesday Daily Devotional - Who Is This Jesus?

Matthew 16:13-16

Throughout history, no one has made a greater impact on this world than Jesus Christ, yet many people simply don't understand who He is. Some believe His life began in a manger in the ancient town of Bethlehem, but in reality, He existed long before that (John 8:58). As a member of the Trinity, Jesus is the eternal Son of God, which means He has no beginning or end (John 1:1). His birth in Bethlehem was merely His physical entrance into the world He created.

Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, who came to earth to carry out the mission given to Him by His Father. At one point, He asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15). This is the question each of us must answer. There is no middle ground when it comes to deciding who Jesus is, because He claimed that He was the only way to the Father (John 14:6). Either He is the Son of God, or He's a fraud.

In Matthew 16:16, when Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus told Him that the Father had revealed this truth to him (Matt. 16:17). We, too, need the Lord's

help to comprehend who Jesus is. The best way to understand Him is to examine His birth, life, and ministry as recorded in Scripture.

Simply learning what the Bible says about Jesus is not enough. Once you've heard who He is and what He came to do, you must respond. What will you do with Jesus? To hear the truth and reject it leads to spiritual death, but those who believe and accept Christ receive eternal life.

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Tuesday Daily Devotional - In the School of Faith

DECEMBER 22ND 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tuesday Daily Devotional - In the School of Faith

Matthew 16:6-12

Jesus spent time developing His disciples' faith because He knew it was essential for the tasks ahead of them. For over three years, they attended a school of faith, with Jesus as their instructor and the Scripture as the textbook. Sometimes Christ used verbal instructions, but many of the lessons were taught through demonstrations. He healed the sick, cast out demons, fed thousands, and calmed the sea. Their training even included tests revealing if they truly believed Jesus was the Messiah.

At times, the disciples' understanding was slow or faltering, but Christ never gave up on them. He reproved them when they exhibited a lack of trust (Mark 4:40) but also commended signs of progress (Matt. 16:15-17). His objective was to firmly establish their faith so He could accomplish His work in and through them. Right before His ascension, He commanded His men to spread the gospel of salvation to the remotest parts of the earth. Without faith, they would have failed.

The Lord has the same goal for us—increase our faith so we can do the work He's planned for us. If our faith is great, He'll entrust us with challenges and achieve amazing things through us. But small faith limits God's activity in a believer's life. He uses us only to the degree that we trust Him.

Faith building is essential in a believer's life, and God has two primary means of doing this. Scripture tells us what to believe about Him, and tests place us in difficult situations that stretch us to believe and rely on God instead of our own understanding.

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