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Daily Devotional - When Storms Come

APRIL 06TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - When Storms Come

[Matthew 14:22-33](#)

Storms are inevitable. In nature, powerful tempests leave a changed landscape behind them. Similarly, challenging circumstances can alter the direction of our life.

When difficulties arise, do you say to the Lord, “I am doing what You asked, so why is this happening?” Such thinking assumes that being in the center of God’s will exempts us from problems. In Matthew 14, we learn that Jesus instructed the disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the opposite shore. While they were obeying Him, high winds and waves developed. The truth is, storms can arise even when we are exactly where God wants us to be ([John 16:33](#)).

Another question we sometimes ask is, “Father, what have I done wrong?” Many of us automatically assume that we are a large part of the problem. God does use trials to correct us, but not all situations come from our mistakes. He may allow troubles to perfect us—that is, to mature us and grow us into Christ’s likeness. That was the case with the disciples. Jesus knew what lay ahead for them, and He desired to make them fit for the work He was calling them to do. The lashing winds created an environment conducive to learning key lessons for future ministry.

God uses all different ways to train and equip us, because He wants us to become strong, vital servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Realize that nothing can happen to a child of God unless He allows it. Instead of keeping our heads bent low against the struggles of life, let’s look up to the Lord and seek His purposes in our challenges.

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Daily Devotional - Knowing God Through Jesus

APRIL 05TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Daily Devotional - Knowing God Through Jesus](#)

[Micah 6:6-8](#)

There's a simple message from God that is repeated over and over throughout Scripture—He delights far more in our efforts to know Him than in any gift we might offer Him. God created us with a deep desire to be known, so it shouldn't be difficult for us to understand that seeking Him expresses our love better than words ever could.

We begin to take advantage of our great privilege to personally know God when we receive His free gift of new life through Jesus Christ. From that moment on, we are filled with His Holy Spirit. Jesus, our Mediator, spanned the gap of sin that separated God and man. Through His death on the cross, He made it possible for us, as unrighteous as we were, to become children of the Lord of Hosts, whose holiness overwhelmed Isaiah ([Isa.](#)

6:1-7). It is impossible to truly know God apart from knowing Jesus.

If our focus is exclusively on our own personal concerns, we will learn very little about the Lord. To further take hold of the privilege Jesus has afforded us—that of knowing the Father—we must be interested in what interests Him. By looking carefully for His way of doing things, we can come to understand what He deems important. We know that God has great concern for people who are walking in darkness as well as for those who are sick, suffering, and dying and have no one to help them. In order to take full advantage of our privilege of knowing Him more deeply, we must share His heart for the world and daily be involved with what He is doing all around us.

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Daily Devotional - The Privilege of Knowing

APRIL 04TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Daily Devotional - The Privilege of Knowing](#)

Philippians 3:7-11

While we meet a tremendous number of people in our lifetime, we sometimes feel particularly privileged to know certain individuals, such as a godly role model, a childhood hero, or someone who was there to help in our time of need. Still, as wonderful as it is to have these distinctive people in our lives, the greatest privilege of all is to know God. Even knowing the most exceptional people can never bring us the joy and contentment for which we yearn. And yet, we frequently chase after worldly acceptance because we forget the treasure of truly knowing the living God.

Oftentimes people get saved and remain satisfied with this first step—knowing a few facts about God is enough for them. If they are asked, “Do you know God?” most will say that they do. But there’s a vast difference between knowing facts *about* God and personally relating *to* Him. Believers should continually be growing closer to the Father—always learning more about who He is and what He considers important.

When people go through life depending on themselves, they never really *know* God—He will reveal Himself to a heart that is honest and transparent, not to one that’s full of pride and arrogance. It is in our brokenness and helplessness that we discover who the Lord is.

Do you have a genuine hunger in your heart to know God? If so, ask Him, “Who are You? What are You like?” Then open yourself to Him, not for His sake—He already knows you perfectly—but for your own sake. By spending time with Him, you’ll discover you are privileged indeed.

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Daily Devotional - The Price of Prayerlessness

MARCH 28TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Price of Prayerlessness

Isaiah 40:28-31

The heavenly Father wants His children to talk with Him. Jesus gave an invitation to speak with God about anything. He said that if you have a need, ask; if you seek answers, you will find them; if you want opportunities to open up in your life, knock and He will respond ([Matt. 7:7-8](#)). Even so, there are believers who do not bother communicating with the Lord, except in emergencies.

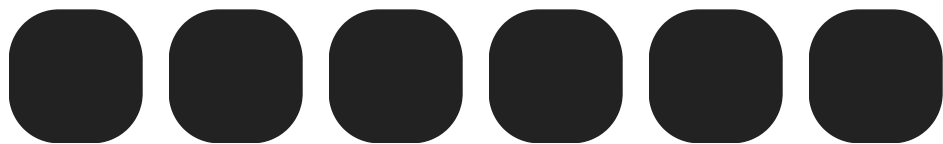
Forsaking prayer is costly to a person's well-being. Those who will not make time every day for God are on a slippery slope. They slide through weariness, discouragement, and doubt, only to land in a testimony-damaging situation. Today we will focus on the first phase—weariness. Tomorrow we will examine the rest of the descent.

Certain situations take an emotional, physical, and spiritual toll—we call these *burdens*. Such low points can wear us out if we try to endure them alone. But God does not intend for that weight to fall on our shoulders. In fact, the Bible commands that those loads be cast upon Jesus Christ ([Ps. 55:22](#)). “Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden,” cries David in [Psalm 68:19](#). Remember, He is doing all the work to straighten out your circumstances anyway. So there's no point in *both* Him and you carrying that weight.

Hauling all our worries and cares around is wearying because we are not built for such loads. In God's design, His strength fills the believer to capacity. Picture Jesus' shoulders just above your own—with Him bearing your problems. The burden does not disappear, but it feels blessedly lighter when you hand it over to the Lord.

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Daily Devotional - Living Expectantly

MARCH 26TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Daily Devotional - Living Expectantly](#)

[Mark 14:42-46](#)

After the crucifixion, a wealthy Jewish leader named Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate if he could have Jesus' body to bury it. Surely Joseph grasped the huge risk in requesting Rome's permission to provide proper burial for a criminal convicted of treason. Undoubtedly he realized that his reputation and status in the religious community would be endangered.

What gave Joseph, a secret follower of Jesus, the courage to come forward while the Lord's closest friends stepped back in fear? Was it because Joseph had been living expectantly, on the lookout for God? (See [Mark 15:43 MSG](#).)

Christ's sacrifice changes everything—both our forever destiny and our daily life—allowing us to live with a sense of boundless hope and resolute anticipation. Yet sometimes I wonder, *How often do I ignore, overlook, fail or refuse to recognize God's presence? Am I truly on the lookout for Him? How expectantly am I living, between "the already but not yet"?*

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Christ's sacrifice changes everything—allowing us to live with a sense of boundless hope and resolute anticipation.

These are important questions, today and every day of my life. Because *where Jesus appears* and *how Jesus thinks* and *what Jesus says* oftentimes aren't what I expect. And I'm not alone. Consider Joseph of Arimathea, Peter and John, and the women who discovered the empty tomb. Despite Jesus' guarantee, they did not anticipate His death. And after He was buried, what did they expect? Their shock and disbelief when He reappeared provide the answer.

Years ago I received a letter from a friend struggling between the already but not yet. "All I can do," he wrote, "is live each moment as it comes and be aware of God in it." His conclusion: "I want to let struggle, grief, and hurt exist side by side with joy, peace, and hope."

It may not be easy to live expectantly between present and future realities, but I believe it's the best approach. A mom grieving the death of her son explained, "I'm discovering how grief and hope dance together, often exchanging the lead. Yet without Christ's sacrifice, there would be no hope—and what a cruel dance that would be."

Now, that's living expectantly!

by Fil Anderson

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