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# Daily Devotional - A Caring Church

MAY 04TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - A Caring Church

## Luke 10:25-37

Do you realize that for believers, many types of needs should be met without going outside the church? We are meant to be a self-sustaining body. After several decades in ministry, I have seen only one way for the church to function as it should: Christians must commit to give of themselves on behalf of others.

For example, a man determines to pray and struggle alongside a hurting brother until a burdensome situation is resolved or peace returns. Or a woman makes herself available to answer a new Christian's questions about the weekly sermon—the two ladies search the Bible and fill their minds with Scripture. And there are countless other ways to serve, such as driving an elderly member to the service, teaching a Sunday school class, or visiting a weary single mom and listening to her concerns.

Before you become overwhelmed by the variety of needs in your church, let me remind you that loving each other is meant to be a body-wide effort. One person cannot meet every need. But suppose you commit to serving a small group of folks whom God brings into your sphere of influence. If, in order to care for them, you surrender self-focused preferences about resources and time, the Lord will bless you with more joy and contentment than you've ever known.

To serve others before serving yourself is to practice authentic Christianity. I'm certain that if believers commit to meeting as many needs as the Lord brings to their attention, then a lethargic church can be transformed, becoming a true body of believers who

function together for the glory of God.

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## Daily Devotional - Troubled? Try Praise!

MAY 03RD 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Daily Devotional - Troubled? Try Praise!](#)

### **Psalms 34**

A lot of negative emotions accompany hardship: frustration, despair, fear, and doubt. People ruled by these feelings will often make poor choices. This is why I recommend that you decide now to respond to troubled times the way the psalmist did: with a heart of praise. Even in the darkest hours, worshipping God fills the heart with joy and the mind with peace. A believer who is filled in this way can wisely keep a commitment to obey the Lord no matter what.

Worshipping the Lord enlarges our vision. By doing so, we begin to see how He is at work in the world, perhaps in ways and places we've never noticed before. More particularly, we see what God is doing in our situation and detect areas where He requires obedience from us.

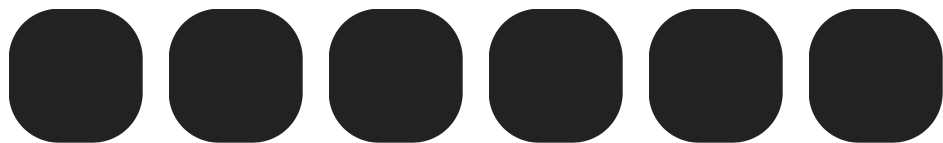
Our human tendency is to plot a course through a situation toward the easiest solution. But believers who strike out on their own do not mature in their faith. Moreover, they miss out on the blessings of following the Lord's plan. Stopping to praise can keep us from taking the easy way out and direct us to the right path—namely, the way of God's will. Taking a step forward in faith can be frightening. However, we can confidently take a risk, knowing our omniscient, omnipotent God has His children's best interest in mind ([Isa. 64:4](#); [Jer. 29:11](#)).

It's hard to despair while honoring the Lord for His love and strength. We can dispel doubt by recalling His past faithfulness to us—and ease frustration by committing our future plans to Him. Praise is not the obvious reaction to hardship, but it is the wisest response.

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# Daily Devotional - Peace in Troubled Times

MAY 02ND 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Peace in Troubled Times

## 2 Chronicles 20:1-25

Faced with His nation's certain demise, King Jehoshaphat responded with worship. Read his prayer in today's passage, and you may find it difficult to separate the petition from the praise. Going deeper than familiar expressions like "hallelujah" and "praise the Lord," he celebrates God's personhood and extols His virtues.

Furthermore, the king led the people in glorifying God for their past redemption. As they focused on the Lord (instead of the incoming armies), the Israelites recalled anew how their heavenly Father had intervened, sometimes dramatically. This was exactly what God had told them to do—to instruct their children about His ways so they could daily honor Him. (See [Deut. 6:7](#).) Doing so builds courage and strengthens faith.

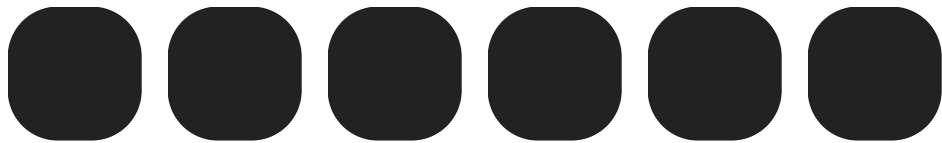
The people's praise paved the way for their complete and total dependence upon the Lord. The odds of the small Israelite army beating the united force of three enemies were slim. However, in their worshipful state of mind, the people could admit their weakness and await divine intervention. God gave them an outrageous solution to the problem: to do nothing. Even so, Israel was spiritually prepared to go against human reason and obey His commands. God loves it when we throw ourselves upon His mercy, because then His power can be released in its fullness.

God is also willing to lead you to victory in troubled times. The Israelites' story is recorded in His Word so that all believers may apply its principles to their life. Bend your heart and mind toward the Lord, and He will enlarge your vision of who He is and what He can do on your behalf.

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## Daily Devotional - Megaphones for Christ

APRIL 30TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Megaphones for Christ

### **1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

Have you ever attended a professional sports event? Thousands upon thousands of people scream and cheer loudly, as if their shouts were actually *willing* their side to victory. People certainly get excited about their favorite sports teams.

How many believers do you know who put that same passion and intensity into their faith? How often do *you* proclaim the saving truth of Jesus Christ as loudly as a football fan proclaims his or her allegiance?

In his letter to the church at Thessalonica, the apostle Paul rejoices in the young congregation's passion for telling the world about Christ. Because the city was a busy seaport, he knew that the church there had the ear of the entire world. Travelers would hear the gospel and then take it back and share it with their own communities.

Paul praised the Thessalonians because “the word of the Lord ... sounded forth” from them ([1 Thess. 1:8](#)). Our heavenly Father wants the same to be true of His children today. Before there were any microphones or loudspeakers, a long, curved device known as a

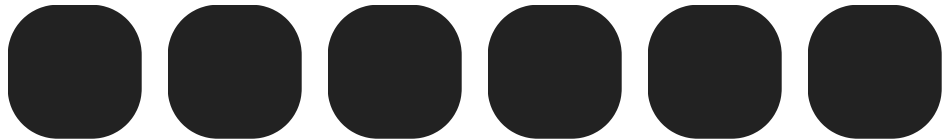
sounding board was used to amplify a public speaker’s voice. We can think of the Thessalonians as living amplifiers who proclaimed Jesus Christ to the world. And we should emulate them.

If you’re a “fan” of Jesus, then you have the responsibility of sharing with the world who He is and what He has done for you. Shout it from the rooftops! Fill entire stadiums with the thunder of your praise! Don’t just show the people around you who your favorite sports team is. Make sure they know who your Savior is as well.

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## Daily Devotional - A Special Purpose

APRIL 29TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Psalms 150](#)

The Lord has made us a special people in order that we may fulfill a special purpose. [Isaiah 43:21](#) says, “The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise.” An integral part of worshipping the Lord is proclaiming His greatness.

To praise our Father is to applaud Him for who He is and what He has done in our life. This involves the release of our emotions, which frees us to express our unrestrained adoration for the Lord. When someone loves another person, the most natural response is to speak highly about the cherished one. In the same way, those who love Christ find that praise for Him comes easily to their lips.

Praising the Lord is good for us. In our self-centered society, people are primarily interested in getting their own needs met. Sadly, this same attitude has infiltrated some churches. But the Lord doesn't want us to come to church concerned only about ourselves. Praise lifts our eyes to Jesus Christ and fills our hearts with the contentment that eludes us when we focus exclusively on our own needs and problems.

Praise and worship are usually associated with church services, but they should characterize us wherever we are. Some of the most intimate and precious experiences of worship can happen when we're alone with the Father.

If you find that your praise lacks vitality, tell the Lord you want to learn to extol Him with your whole heart. The focus of worship is the key. Remember how God has cared for you, and look for daily evidence of His hand on your life. Then tell Him how great He is.

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