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## Daily Devotional - The Spiritual Discipline of Fasting

SEPTEMBER 06TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Daily Devotional - The Spiritual Discipline of Fasting

#### Acts 13:1-3

Fasting has two important components. One is abstention, which eliminates distractions. The other is undivided attention on God, which allows connection with Him on a deeper level.

Daniel was living under captivity in Babylon when he read God's promise to free the Israelites after a certain period of time. He earnestly sought the Lord by means of prayer and fasting ([Dan. 9:2-3](#)). Then through the angel Gabriel, God gave the young man greater understanding of what He had previously pledged.

Scripture contains other examples as well. When King Jehoshaphat learned that a powerful army was on the offensive, he called for all of Judah to come together and fast (2 Chron. 20:1-4). God gave encouragement and strength for the future. Fasting was also part of the early church's preparation for choosing its first missionaries, during which the Holy Spirit directed that Barnabas and Saul be commissioned for the work ([Acts 13:2](#)).

Fasting does not bring us a quicker answer from God or persuade Him to follow our plan. Instead, it prepares us to see our situation through His eyes and to act on what we learn. At times I have sought the Lord to get His assessment of how I am doing. This discipline has helped me gain His perspective on my life and work.

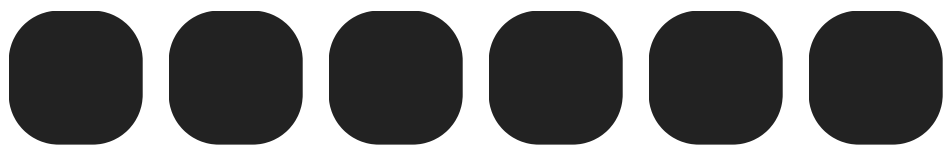
Fasting involves a strong desire to hear from God, a period of time to connect with Him, and a willingness to abstain from food or some activity. If the idea intimidates you,

remember its purpose is preparation so we might draw closer to God and receive His encouragement and direction.

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## Daily Devotional - Grafted into Christ

AUGUST 31ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Grafted into Christ

### [John 15:1-8](#)

A vinedresser plants and tends his vines for the purpose of seeing them produce grapes. God, as our vinedresser, encourages us to bear spiritual fruit. He wants us to have a character like that of Christ—marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control ([Gal. 5:22-23](#)). Our Father wants to ensure that believers will be fruitful; for this reason, they are removed from the dead tree of humanity

and grafted onto the living vine, Jesus Christ.

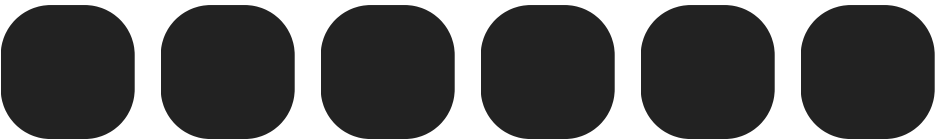
After His baptism, Jesus was “full of the Holy Spirit,” who led Him to the next step ([Luke 4:1](#)). Christ’s life and ministry were the result of the Spirit’s empowerment, and when we become believers, God sends the very same Helper to indwell us. In the language of vineyards, the sap from the vine flows into a grafted branch, giving it life and the capacity to grow the kind of fruit typical of that plant. The branch and the vine become one life. The Living Bible translation says, “Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him” ([Col. 2:7](#)).

Some people run away from the Christian life because they think they cannot do it. And they’re right: They cannot, but the Holy Spirit can. When we are one with Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God lives His life through us. That doesn’t mean we are free from responsibility—the Spirit can do His work only as we wisely choose to yield to Him. When we are obediently following the Lord, our joy and peace are not dependent upon circumstances; the One in whom we are rooted is our joy and peace.

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# Daily Devotional - Where Do You Go for Advice

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AUGUST 29TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - Where Do You Go for Advice

### Timothy 4:4-10

Because thinking shapes beliefs, and beliefs in turn determine our lifestyle, a biblical mindset is vitally important in our sanctification. Each day we choose to let either the world or God's Word shape our thoughts and actions. Although most of us are quick to say we believe the Bible, sometimes our actions do not match our words.

Where do you go when you want advice about a big decision or lifestyle choice? Websites, blogs, and the media offer a wealth of information that can be either beneficial or harmful. Coworkers, family, and friends are also readily available sources of counsel, but do they speak with worldly reasoning or godly wisdom? Our only sure resource for true and wise guidance is Scripture. Yet sadly, we do not always seek direction in its pages but instead often rely on human intelligence and personal preferences.

Hebrews 4:12 describes God's Word as "living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword," which pierces into the deepest parts of the soul. Those who refuse to surrender to its penetrating work essentially dethrone God from His rightful place in their life. But those who are willing to be nourished by Scripture, accepting its reproof and correction, will discover the riches of a life of faith.

Letting the Word be your guide requires costly changes in thought, attitude, and behavior. Yet any lifestyle adjustments or disciplines that produce godliness also result in eternal profit. A solid foundation of faith and wisdom starts with going to Scripture for direction.

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## Daily Devotional - God's Tools for Making Us Holy

AUGUST 26TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - God's Tools for Making Us Holy

### [1 Thessalonians 5:23-24](#)

Sanctification is the process God uses to conform believers to the image of His Son. The writers of Scripture used word pictures that speak of the Father's shaping work in the life of His saints. Isaiah, for example, compared the Lord to an artist making pottery: "We are the clay and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand" ([Isa. 64:8](#)). These are some of the tools He utilizes to mold and perfect His creations:

**The Bible.** The psalmist described God's Word as "a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" ([Ps. 119:105](#)). The Holy Spirit illuminates what we read so that we can come under conviction and grow in our faith.

**The Church.** As part of Christ's body, we learn of God's ways from the pastors and teachers who have been called to minister. The Father also calls His children to fellowship together ([Heb. 10:25](#)), in part so He can use them in each other's sanctification process. Not only that, but there are Christians at church who will encourage their brothers and sisters in times of trouble or hold them accountable when they miss the mark.

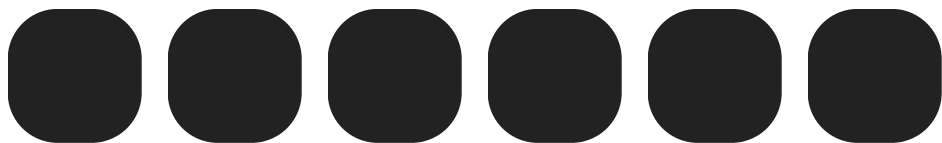
**Suffering.** God freely offers us solace and help during times of difficulty, but He also uses our painful circumstances to shape us. When we submit to Him, we emerge from our struggles looking more Christlike than ever before.

From the moment a person places trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's transforming work of sanctification will be ongoing throughout his or her life. As children of the King, we should long to glorify our Father by faithfully reflecting Him. To do that, we must yield to His tools of sanctification.

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## Daily Devotional - God's Condition for His Full Blessing

AUGUST 23RD 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - God's Condition for His Full Blessing

[Matthew 16:24-27](#)

The Lord wants to give each of us an abundance of blessings. Let's explore what is required so that we may enjoy all that He has planned.

Today's passage clarifies the one necessary condition for receiving His best: surrender. Every aspect of our being—body, soul, and spirit—is to be a living sacrifice. This may sound dreary, but contrary to human logic, true freedom is found only when we fully yield to Christ.

In the Old Testament, sacrifice was very common. To atone for sin, a person could bring a lamb to the altar. The animal was set apart for God's purposes as a holy offering, and through its death, restitution was made.

When we give ourselves as a sacrifice, there is, thankfully, no need for our blood to be shed. Jesus died to atone for all of our sin. So out of love and gratitude, every aspect of our life should be dedicated to Him.

What does a surrendered life entail? Most importantly, it involves complete commitment to Christ, unaltered by the world's influence. Our desires and old ways of functioning are no longer driving forces. Instead, God's Spirit guides us, and His will is the goal. Yielding to Him means following His way in attitude, words, thoughts, and deeds—and doing so unapologetically, unwaveringly, and fearlessly.

You have a choice: Either be content with less than God's best, or give yourself fully to Him. Complete surrender is not an easy road; it means dying to your desires and selfishness. But remember that the Lord is willing and able to do more than we can even imagine ([Eph. 3:20](#)).

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