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Daily Devotional - Understanding Your Call

OCTOBER 14TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Understanding Your Call

Mark 8:34-35

I like to use the word believer when talking about God's children, as it specifically refers to those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. That is a much smaller population than those who label themselves "Christian." But did you know that even fewer people could rightly be called "followers"? These are the people who passionately pursue the Lord's will in all things.

Are you a believer or a follower? Trusting in Jesus Christ is fundamental, but doing so is the first step, not the culmination, of a person's faith. Our primary purpose is to take a life-long journey following in the Lord's footsteps, honoring Him with our actions and speech, and always increasing in biblical wisdom.

A follower's life is summed up in the phrase *complete obedience*. In fact, Jesus defined true Christians as those who prove their love for Him by keeping His word ([John 14:23](#)). When it comes to obeying God, there are really only two responses—"I will" or "I won't." It's tempting to say, "I will, but ..." as some of Jesus' would-be disciples did, but that's a roundabout way of saying no. Followers remain faithful to the Lord's plan whether doing so is easy or hard. Not only that, but they proclaim Him in both blessing and calamity, and go even when they don't like where He leads.

Followers pursue the Lord because they know that the reward is a deeper, more passionate relationship with Him. They are not just waiting to spend eternity with God in heaven. They realize that eternity begins now, as they accompany Him on the righteous path He

has set before them.

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Daily Devotional - Faith Barriers

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[Exodus 3:10-22](#), [Exodus 4:1-17](#)

God enables us to carry out His plan for our life. When we fall short of accomplishing the goals He has set for us, it is not because He in some way failed to provide the necessary equipping. Instead, failure is usually the result of an obstacle within our heart—an attitude that short-circuits our faith. As a result, the flow of God’s power is hindered, and we cannot become the person He desires us to be.

Moses is a dramatic illustration of the disruptive potential of faith barriers. Called to one of the greatest missions in all of Scripture, the future leader responded with excuses for why he should not obey.

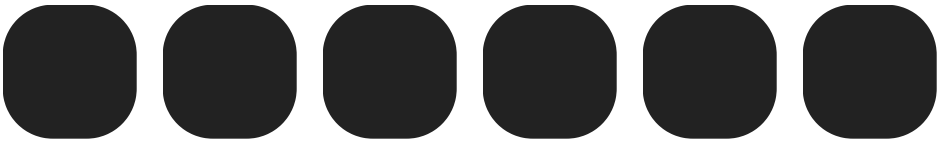
Excuses for disobedience haven't changed much since Moses' encounter with the burning bush. He tried to hide behind the same faith barriers that believers cite today: poor self-image ([Ex. 3:11-12](#)), ignorance about God ([Ex. 3:13-21](#)), self-doubt ([Ex. 4:1-9](#)), feelings of inadequacy ([Ex 4:10-11](#)), and fear of failure ([Ex. 4:12-13](#)). Each time he protested that the Lord had asked the wrong person—a slow-tongued shepherd of slavery lineage, who murdered a man and became a fugitive—God responded with a firm, persuasive rebuttal.

The theme of God's answers is something all believers need to understand, just as Moses finally did—namely, that when we are called to serve, our strength, skill, and wisdom do not matter. Rather, it is the Lord who does the work through us. He doesn't seek out the most qualified person for a particular job but instead calls men and women who are willing to surrender themselves to Him. When His strength works through their weakness, it is obvious that only God could have achieved the result.

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Daily Devotional - The Message of the Cross

OCTOBER 12TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Message of the Cross

John 19:1-27

Rome used the cross as a brutal method for executing criminals. Through Jesus' sacrificial act, its message became one of hope and life for those who believe in Him.

The cross meant various things to different people in the gospel account. To Pilate, Judea's governor, it was the place where an innocent man had died. The Pharisees and Sadducees, on the other hand, saw the cross as the way to eliminate a problem—it meant that the radical rabbi was finished, and their position and authority were no longer threatened.

When Judas Iscariot heard that Jesus was condemned to die, he became greatly distressed. I believe the betrayer had thought his actions would force Jesus to declare His kingdom, with Judas taking a high position in the new government. Instead, his error in judgment crushed any personal ambition.

In that culture, the cross represented shameful crime. Knowing the perfection of her son's life and His identity as the Son of God, Mary must have been certain it was undeserved. She also no doubt saw it as fulfillment of prophecy: When Jesus was just days old, Simeon had prophesied that a sword would one day pierce Mary's soul. (See [Luke 2:34-35](#).) The cross brought that about.

To Jesus' disciples, the crucifixion was the time when their beloved friend and Messiah died. Their close relationship with Jesus seemed to end, as did their dream of being freed from Roman jurisdiction.

What response would you give to the question, "What does the cross mean to you?" Is it the place where a good man lost his life, a troublemaker was eliminated, or the Son of God died to save you?

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Daily Devotional - the Meaning of the Cross

OCTOBER 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - the Meaning of the Cross

[Matthew 27:11-26](#)

The cross—the symbol of Christianity—has great meaning to God. First of all, through Jesus’ death, the Father proclaimed the value of every single human being: He offers forgiveness and eternal life to anyone who places faith in Jesus (Rom. 6:23). Second, it meant a great cost. Holy God separated Himself from His beloved Son while Jesus bore the weight of mankind’s sin. (See [Matt. 27:46](#).) Third, the redemption of man was accomplished. Jesus’ shed blood purchased us from slavery to sin and reconciled us to God ([1 Peter 1:18-19](#)).

What’s more, divine justice was carried out on the cross. Scripture tells us that death is the debt owed for sin ([Ezek. 18:20](#)). However, God requires an unblemished sacrifice (Deut. 17:1). We could not adequately pay our own penalty because we would only die in

our sin. For holy God to forgive us, a sufficient substitute had to be found—one who qualified to pay for our disobedience. Jesus, the only one who was without sin, willingly took our place and assumed responsibility for our debt. All our iniquity—past, present, and future—was placed on Christ, and God’s judgment upon us was carried out against Him.

The meaning of the cross was experienced firsthand by Barabbas, the notorious prisoner who was condemned to die. God’s innocent Son was substituted for him, giving the criminal freedom. Like Barabbas, we’ve had our death sentence commuted, and, though unworthy, we have been set free in Jesus. Today, the cross continues to offer life and freedom to the undeserving.

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Daily Devotional - Overcoming Trials

OCTOBER 10TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Hebrews 11:23-29

Moses had some tough times in his long life. He fled from a murder charge, spent years in the desert, stood toe-to-toe with a king who scorned him, led a grumbling nation through 40 years of hardship, and saw those same people run hot and cold in their allegiance. Yet once Moses learned the secret to dealing with trials, he faced them courageously.

Even though he returned to Egypt with an unmistakable call from the Lord ([Ex. 3:10](#)), appearing before Pharaoh must nonetheless have been intimidating. And Moses had to plead with the man *repeatedly* for the release of the Israelites. Pharaoh was not fazed by locusts, convinced by boils, or softened by water turning into blood. In fact, he made life even harder for the slaves by forcing them to find their own brickmaking materials. In turn, the Hebrews heaped ingratitude on their leader.

In spite of all the opposition, Moses kept returning to the palace until he had achieved God's purpose—the release of His people. [Hebrews 11:27](#) tells us that as the former prince led the exodus from Egypt, “he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.” With a stack of trials behind and despite a hint of more to come in leading this unruly people, Moses moved forward, aware that he was walking in the Lord's presence.

God had pledged to be with Moses every step of the way ([Ex. 3:12](#)). The Israelite leader fixed his focus on that promise and the One who made it. He had the wisdom to trust that I Am ([Ex. 3:14](#))—the eternal sovereign of the universe—would guard his way and bring him victory over trials.

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