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Daily Devotional - Being Ready in the Tough Times

NOVEMBER 28TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Being Ready in the Tough Times

1 Peter 1:13-14

The apostle Peter knew hard days lay ahead for his fellow believers. So he reminded them about their security as children of God: They were chosen by Him, born into a living hope, given spiritual protection during this life, and guaranteed eternity in heaven with their Father (1 Pet. 1:1-5). Then, in today's reading, Peter gave them specific ways to prepare for the coming trials. His words, divinely inspired by the Lord, can guide us as well.

His first instruction relates to our mind: What we believe has a direct impact on our response to life's problems. If we trust that God is looking out for us, then we will feel less threatened by hard circumstances. But if we decide we must rely on ourselves, then we are more likely to react poorly to situations beyond our control. A negative attitude—whether from anger, fear, worry, or jealousy—can make a hard time worse. Preparation for the future starts with developing biblical thinking.

A second lesson from Peter is to be “sober in spirit”—in other words, to maintain our balance in the midst of crises (1 Pet. 1:13). That requires resisting quick fixes to problems and refusing to embrace ungodly ideas or philosophies. Our enemy Satan is quick to offer suggestions designed to trip us up or turn us away from God's path. With the Spirit's help, we can learn to stand firm in a crisis and steadfastly follow the Lord.

Our culture is increasingly distancing itself from Jesus Christ and opposing His followers. Are you preparing spiritually for whatever the future may bring?

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Daily Devotional - Prayers of Gratitude

NOVEMBER 24TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Prayers of Gratitude

[Psalms 138](#)

Prayer is the amazing privilege of entering into God's throne room. The Creator and Ruler of the universe actually invites us to communicate with Him. Typically, our prayers consist of petitions, intercession, confession, praise, and thanksgiving.

Which of these five aspects of prayer consumes most of the time you spend talking with the Father? If you're like many believers, you'd have to admit that thanksgiving isn't at the top of the list. And there are several reasons why this could be true.

Whatever fills our minds is also what dominates our prayers. If we feel overwhelmed with problems, petitions naturally become more urgent. When concerns for loved ones are

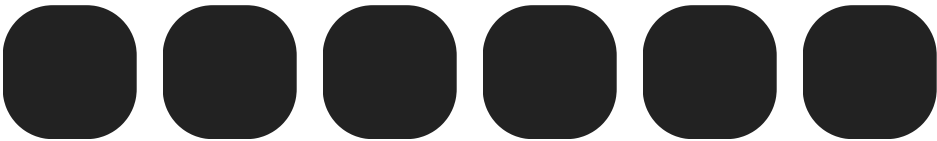
foremost in our mind, then intercession will be our focus. A sense of conviction and regret over sin leads us to concentrate on confession. All these are important and necessary, but we can't let the cares of this earthly life and our own needs prevent us from taking time to center our attention on the Lord.

Now, it's true that after we've seen God work in our life or answer a prayer request, we're filled with gratitude and thank Him repeatedly. But after a while we tend to forget and drift back into our regular thought patterns. Here's the key to keeping gratitude and praise foremost in our prayers: learning to know the Lord more deeply. As we read the Scriptures and discover His glorious nature and mighty works, He'll become our focus, and our prayers will be filled with praise and thanks, not just for what He's done for us but in appreciation of who He is—our good, loving, faithful, and glorious God.

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Daily Devotional - New Birth: Your Part

NOVEMBER 23RD 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

John 3:14-19

After reading the last two devotions, you might be saying, “I want to be born again, so what do I do?” Or perhaps you want to explain the new birth to someone else, but you aren’t sure how to express it. For answers, today’s reading is a good place to start.

So, what is our responsibility in the new birth experience? There’s nothing in John 3 about behavior. Nothing about actions we must take. Instead, we find Jesus affirming that whoever trusts in Him will be saved and will have eternal life. Essentially, what Jesus says is, *You want to be born again? You must place your faith in Me.* This means believing He is exactly who He says He is—the Son of God. It means believing that when Jesus went to the cross, He died for your sins. It means believing He is the Lord and Master of life. And it means yielding yourself completely to Him.

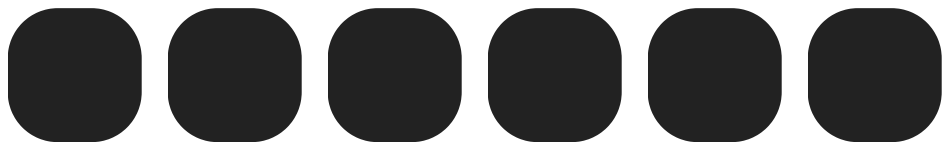
The new birth describes something that takes place in our inner person—a radical change whereby our spirit is altered. As soon as we place faith in Jesus, we’re indwelt by the Holy Spirit. From that moment on, as we cooperate with the Spirit of God living within us, our conduct will begin to change because a new person is in charge.

If you’re willing to pray and ask Jesus to bring about the new birth experience in your life, you can depend on His promise that He will never turn away anyone who comes to Him. (See [John 6:37](#).) He has never said no to anyone who desires to be born again. That’s His gift to everyone who is willing to believe.

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Daily Devotional - New Birth: God's Part

NOVEMBER 22ND 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - New Birth: God's Part

[John 3:9-13](#)

Ever since the original transgression of Adam and Eve in Genesis, all of mankind has been born with a sinful nature, and our sin creates a chasm separating us from our holy, perfect God. To be able to commune with Him, we must be born again, which is the way we receive a new nature, a new spirit, and a new eternal destiny.

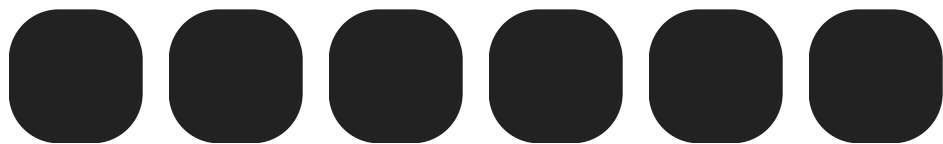
Spiritual rebirth is a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit—He doesn't simply freshen up our old nature but instead brings about a radical transformation, creating a brand-new spirit and life. As [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a *new creature*" (emphasis added). As a result, believers can worship, praise, and serve the living God out of genuine love and devotion to Him.

God's part in this rebirth involves forgiving us of our sins, and to do that, He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross as our substitute. In that way, Jesus paid our sin debt in full. He is our sacrifice—that is, He is the one who suffered vicariously on our behalf.

Our Savior's substitutionary atonement is the means by which a holy and righteous God forgives sin and makes us holy like Himself. Our cleansing doesn't come from being religious, or even from confession of sin and repentance. Rather, it comes from the blood that Jesus shed on the cross at Calvary. When we believe that He died to pay the penalty we owed and then accept His sacrifice on our behalf, we are forgiven of our sins and God wipes them away ([Eph. 1:7](#)).

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Daily Devotional - New Birth: Why?

NOVEMBER 21ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - New Birth: Why?

[John 3:1-8](#)

The most horrible mistake people can make is also the one they can never correct—namely, living without God, only to die later and face the Savior whom they rejected. Choosing to live in denial about who Jesus Christ is does not change the reality of what will happen one day. God has gone to great lengths to put His truth into written form and protect it down through the ages so we could spend eternity with Him. It is foolishness to ignore His words.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee and teacher, might have made this mistake, had he followed the thinking of his colleagues. He was a member of the Sanhedrin—the ruling council that tried to discern false teaching and make sure God’s law was upheld. Realizing the signs Jesus performed were beyond the ability of a mere man, Nicodemus came at night to ask

questions. The Lord simply said that “unless one is born again” he could not see the kingdom of God ([John 3:3](#)). This must have come as a surprise to the Pharisee, who had been confident of his own religion and morality.

Are you like Nicodemus? In other words, does comparing yourself with others make you feel pretty good? Do you, like some people, believe good deeds and religious behavior can earn you a place in heaven? No matter how much you wish this to be true, the Bible teaches otherwise: We’ve all come into the world with a sinful nature, and our sin has separated us from God. Simply being good doesn’t bridge that gap or change the fact that “the wages of sin is death” ([Rom. 3:23](#); [Rom. 6:23](#)). There’s only one way to salvation—through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ([John 14:6](#)).

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