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Daily Devotional - Wed, Jan 4, 2017 - A Lifetime of Second Chances

JANUARY 04TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wed, Jan 4, 2017 - A Lifetime of Second Chances

Romans 5:1-6

Paul used a beautiful phrase to describe the believer's position in Christ: "We have obtained our introduction by faith into this *grace in which we stand ...*" ([Rom. 5:2](#), emphasis added). This is no puddle of mercy that barely wets the toes, but rather a mighty ocean. The Lord's kindness wraps around us without regard for our past mistakes and failures.

God's grace is an essential concept for believers to understand. He freely offers His favor to mankind because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross purchased forgiveness and salvation for anyone who believes. However, many people think they are enjoying God's kindness when what they are really trying to do is earn it. If we have to purchase, merit, or work for grace, then it is not a gift (Eph. 2:8-9). The Lord is very clear that works cannot save us—in fact, He compares our good deeds to filthy rags ([Isa. 64:6](#)).

On the other hand, God's grace is not license to be lazy; Christians are called upon to serve the Lord every day. From the outside, it is usually impossible to distinguish between works and service in someone else's life. But God knows the motivation of every heart. He is pleased by the things we do to show Him our love and to express appreciation for His countless blessings. Such actions bring glory to His name.

Keep in mind that serving God in order to earn His favor or ensure that He continues blessing you amounts to thwarting grace. You can do nothing to deserve the Lord's kindness! He pours it upon believers freely, so the only thing you can "do" is receive it.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, January 3, 2017 - Setting Goals for Fruitful Living

JANUARY 03RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, January 3, 2017 - Setting Goals for Fruitful Living

[2 Samuel 7:18-22](#)

In the 70s, I experienced a turning point in my walk with Christ. It started with 2 Samuel 7, which inspired me to follow in King David's footsteps. He spent time alone with God,

offering praise and thanksgiving. He also listened as the Lord revealed truth and offered insight about the future. Because of what he learned, David was able to set goals and stay aligned with them.

Desiring that kind of solitude, I spent several days alone in a camper at Georgia’s Stone Mountain Park. Most of the time I remained silent, listening intently for God’s voice. I asked Him to speak to me regarding my future, and He answered. Using a journal, I recorded the goals He inspired. The things He communicated so impacted my choices and so greatly blessed me that I continued the discipline every couple of months.

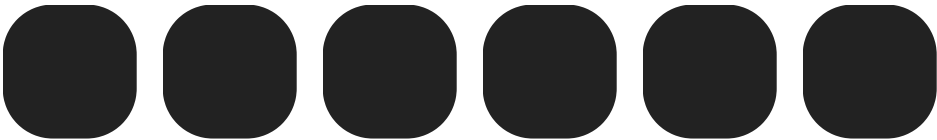
Let’s discuss how to establish aims in this manner. First, come before the throne of almighty God with a repentant heart, praise, and thanksgiving. Then, ask Him for direction in areas such as spiritual life, career, and family. In silence, wait patiently and attentively—as you read and meditate upon God’s Word, He will speak. Most often, His guidance is experienced as a prodding or conviction in the heart. When that happens, be sure to write down what you’re learning so you can review it later.

In order to stay on the path God intends for our life, we should plan times to stop, ask, and listen for guidance. The world throws confusing messages at us all day long, and we need to check our course frequently. These conversations with the Lord are vital for a thriving life of godly impact.

LAST UPDATED ON JANUARY 03RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Daily Devotional - January 2, 2017 - Setting Goals for Fruitful Living

JANUARY 02ND 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - January 2, 2017 - Setting Goals for Fruitful Living

2 Samuel 7:18-22

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Friday, December 23, 2016 Daily Devotional - Indifference to Christmas

DECEMBER 23RD 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Friday, December 23, 2016 Daily Devotional - Indifference to Christmas

Matthew 2:1-6

Each year, there's a predictable variety of responses to the celebrations and traditions of the holiday season. During the next few days, we will examine three reactions to Christmas. Although 2,000 years have passed since Christ was born, His birth still elicits similar attitudes.

One common response is indifference. Even if they are filled with the holiday spirit and celebrate Christmas with gifts, dinners, decorations, and parties, some people remain totally indifferent to Jesus. He doesn't even cross their minds because they've lost sight of the reason for Christmas.

In the story of the magi's search for the newborn King of the Jews, we see a surprising indifference on the part of the religious leaders. The entourage from the East caused quite a stir in Jerusalem. It wasn't every day that impressive visitors arrived with such a shocking and exciting announcement. Yet when King Herod asked the scribes and chief priests where the Messiah was to be born, they simply told him the answer but made no attempt to go to Bethlehem themselves. Their lives were already filled with their religious duties, and they had no time or interest in anything that might disrupt their positions of prominence and authority.

Sometimes it's easy to let the activities and pressures of Christmas push Jesus out of our thoughts. After all the shopping is finished, the gifts are wrapped, and the food is prepared, we might rush off to a Christmas Eve service. But even then, we often feel distracted. Though it may take deliberate refocusing, this year let's intentionally make Jesus the priority of Christmas.

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Thursday, December 22, 2016 Daily Devotional - Free to Enjoy God

DECEMBER 22ND 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Thursday, December 22, 2016 Daily Devotional - Free to Enjoy God

Psalm 37:3-5

The gospel writers spoke about children coming to Jesus, giving the impression that the young were very comfortable around Him ([Matt. 18:2-3](#); [Matt. 19:13-14](#)). Some probably climbed onto His lap, while others perhaps sat at His feet. We can picture them asking Him lots of questions, begging to hear more parables, and whispering secrets in His ear. It isn't surprising that they would gather around Jesus; children can usually sense when an adult loves them deeply.

Contrast this snapshot of the Savior's welcoming, loving nature with the picture some Christians have of God—they see Him as a judgmental taskmaster who motivates by intimidation. While it's true that we are to obey the Lord's commands, we're also to delight in Him, just as we would enjoy the company of a close friend.

Do you think of God as a stern overlord who weighs good actions against bad? If so, you'll have trouble considering Him a friend. Christians who envision a harsh God devote much time and energy to proving their salvation is deserved. How much better to have a biblically accurate view—namely, that God, while sovereign over the universe, balances authority with love. He wants us to relax and enjoy spending time with Him.

Taking pleasure in the Lord requires that we understand His attitude toward us: Our Father loves us passionately. He sees past our faults and mistakes to the precious child He created. In fact, He loves us so much that He sent Jesus Christ to save us and enable us to be with Him in heaven eternally. We have no greater friend!

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