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Daily Devotional - Monday, January 16, 2017 - Testing Builds Endurance

JANUARY 16TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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James 1:2-4

“Why would a loving heavenly Father allow His children to go through terrible trials and experience sorrow?” We can understand the reason that this is a common question—it can be baffling when the all-powerful God of love seems to stand by silently while painful things happen to His followers. Where is He during personal tragedies, natural disasters, financial crises, and other times of heartache?

The Word of God is the only place we can find the real answer. Even so, today’s reading can be hard to understand or accept. One might read James’s exhortation to be joyful in the face of trials and think, *Count me out!* Difficulties and joy just don’t seem to go together—that is, unless we understand God’s perspective of what life is about.

When James spoke of joy, he wasn’t referring to a cheery, frivolous feeling. Rather, he was talking about an inner sense of calmness, peace, and confidence in the Lord. He wasn’t telling us to feel happy about our trials but to know, as we go through them, that God is up to something good in our life. Our attitude during the struggle will determine what shape we’re in when we come out on the other side.

When our faith gets tested, the end result is endurance; being aware of this gives us hope and strength. What’s more, the Bible promises God will use trials for our good, so we don’t need to be afraid or anxious.

God's desire is to bless you, not destroy you. Adversity can make someone feel like a victim, but as followers of Christ, we can choose to be victors!

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Daily, Devotional - Friday, January 13, 2017 - When God Does Not Heal

JANUARY 13TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Proverbs 3:3-6](#)

If God is all-powerful, why do we witness so few miraculous healings? There are many reasons for this. Sometimes we do not ask Him. Other times, we might ask but with wrong motives or a lack of faith. And then there is the reason that we do not like to hear:

God may choose not to heal.

Beware of theology that promises healing to anyone who asks. This is not biblical. The problem is not inability; God is able to heal anyone and anything. And be careful if someone claims the lingering illness is the result of sin. This may be true, but often our heavenly Father, in His great love and unfathomable wisdom, allows our ailments to persist.

Consider Paul, who asked the Lord three times to remove his “thorn.” (See [2 Corinthians 12:7-8](#).) Yet it remained. We can learn from his response—he did not question God’s authority, nor did he complain. Instead, recognizing that divine strength would show through his weakness, Paul trusted God.

We, too, can believe that God will work all things for good in His children’s lives ([Romans 8:28](#)). In fact, character growth usually occurs in times of suffering, loss, or hurt. While adversity is uncomfortable, we can feel hope and joy in what our Father is accomplishing through painful times.

Ultimately, God brings glory to Himself and good to His children. There are instances when this involves miraculous healing, but He often refines us by allowing the hardship. As with silver and gold, impurities are usually removed from hearts in the fiery furnace of life’s struggles. Trust God’s plan and rest in His love.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, January 12, 2017 - Help for Our Healing

JANUARY 12TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, January 12, 2017 - Help for Our Healing

James 5:13-20

God cares about our physical well-being. After all, He made our bodies as a temple for His Spirit. And while He is able to heal sickness, His original intention was not for His perfect creation to experience disease.

But in this sinful world, ungodly choices at times lead to illness ([John 5:14](#)). So when we're afflicted, it's wise to ask God to search our heart and reveal anything He wants us to address ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)). Since sin can act like a blockage to prayer ([Psalm 66:18](#)), confessing any known wrongdoing is also a good idea.

Most of the time, though, health problems are just part of our human condition—a symptom of mankind's fallen state rather than evidence of personal sin. The truth is, disease affects just about everyone at some point. So how does God want us to respond?

Certain situations, of course, require prompt medical attention, but even in a crisis, our Father wants us to be aware of His presence and to stay in communication with Him ([1 Thess. 5:17](#)). Developing a pattern of prayerfulness *before* an emergency occurs is the best way to prepare for the unexpected.

The Bible's instructions also include praying for one another and calling the elders of the church to come and pray, anointing the afflicted person with oil in Jesus' name. (See [James 5:14](#).)

Our Father is able to heal even the most deadly disease, but He sometimes chooses to allow the condition to remain. When requesting restored health, we should ask with faith and trust—faith in God's ability but trust in His perfect will, whether that means healing or suffering-induced growth.

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Daily Devotional - Why We Fail

JANUARY 11TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Why We Fail

[Judges 16](#)

Unless weaknesses are addressed, they have potential to cause destruction. Vulnerabilities can either drive us closer to God or blind us to His love, as two Old Testament stories demonstrate. Joseph and Samson faced similar temptations but responded very differently. Day after day, Potiphar's wife tried to entice Joseph, yet he rejected her advances ([Gen. 39:7-9](#)). Samson, on the other hand, willingly gave in to Delilah ([Judg. 16:15-17](#)).

Samson had been consecrated to God, and the Holy Spirit was moving in his life ([Judg. 13:24-25](#)). Nevertheless, he chose the path of self-indulgence. Too proud to admit

weakness, he lived in denial, which led to a lack of discipline and left the door open for Satan. Because Samson rationalized his weakness, it soon began to dominate his life. Listening to the lies of the devil and wicked people, he exchanged God's blessing and supernatural strength for irresponsible sexual involvement. And in the end, what did he have? Absolutely nothing.

Given the slightest chance, sin will infiltrate your life and affect every aspect, including your faith, job, and relationships. Nothing is off limits. If you're thinking, *I don't have any weaknesses with the potential to destroy my life*, then Satan has already blinded you to a spiritual reality in your midst.

You have the choice to face temptation as Joseph did—or as Samson did. In times of weakness, do you depend on God, obey Him, and seek strength to overcome? Or do you make excuses and turn from His leading? How different Samson's life would have been if he'd chosen a better response.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, January 10, 2017 - Uncontrolled Weakness

JANUARY 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, January 10, 2017 - Uncontrolled Weakness

Judges 14

The book of Judges tells of Samson, a man so strong he could kill a lion with his bare hands ([Judg. 14:5-6](#)). He possessed physical strength unequaled by any human being. But this could not compensate for his inner weakness.

All of us have areas of weakness. God wants these character flaws to teach us how totally dependent we are upon Him. When we handle them properly, they drive us into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord. But uncontrolled weakness wreaks havoc in a person's life.

Samson's Achilles' heel was uncontrolled lust. Although he was raised in a godly home and had a clear calling in life, he gave in to his desires and deliberately violated the truth he knew so well. Despite Nazirite laws forbidding involvement with foreigners, Samson pursued a Philistine woman ([Judg. 14:2](#)). Later, he met the enticing Delilah, and even though her motives were blatantly treacherous, he gave himself over—heart, mind, and spirit—to sexual indulgence. He was in such bondage to the sin that he ultimately allowed it to dictate his actions, even at the cost of his life.

Before he died, Samson lost everything: his strength, eyesight, and honor. The man who once led his country mightily became a slave to his enemies ([Judg. 16:18-25](#)).

What are your weaknesses? Personality flaws can be a powerful motivation for good or ill, depending on your response. A proclivity for sin can ruin your life—as it did Samson's—or drive you to utter dependence on God. The outcome is up to you.

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