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Daily Devotional - Thursday, February 9, 2017 - The Cost of Running From God

FEBRUARY 09TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, February 9, 2017 - The Cost of Running From God

[Jonah 4:9-11](#)

You would think a life-threatening sea storm and a few days in a fish's belly would shake some sense into a person. Yet that wasn't the case with Jonah. The final paragraphs of his story reveal a vengeful prophet who ostensibly obeyed the Lord but allowed his heart to remain on the run.

Jonah paid a financial price for running from God—his ticket to Tarshish ([Jonah 1:3](#)). And any Sunday school student can tell you the physical consequences he endured. But when those events were long past, Jonah still grappled with the spiritual cost of his flight. His peace and joy were gone. In their place was bitterness so strong that he begged God for the relief that death would bring.

As believers, we cannot disobey the Lord without paying a price. Certainly our spiritual life weakens. The skills and abilities God has bestowed on us will atrophy from lack of use while we waste time fleeing. And our actions could also have negative consequences in other areas, such as our family, finances, and health.

Perhaps you have a habit, a plan, or a current course of action that you know defies God's will. Have you considered the cost? Though Satan may try to convince you otherwise, there are consequences for wrongdoing. The Lord is holy and righteous, and allowing people to get away with sin is simply incompatible with those attributes. What's more, the

price for following your own will is high. Just look at how miserable Jonah was because of the choices he made. The reward for obeying God is much more pleasing.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, February 8, 2017 - Rekindling the Fire

FEBRUARY 08TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, February 8, 2017 - Rekindling the Fire

[Luke 10:27](#)

The Lord created us to live passionately for Him. In that way, we enjoy the blessings of an intimate relationship with our Creator. But there are other benefits as well. Just as the warmth and beauty of flames draw people toward a fireplace, God uses our passion to

draw others to Himself.

So, not just for our sake but also for the sake of others, we must be careful not to let our fervor for God fade. Thankfully, the indwelling Holy Spirit nudges believers who start to head in the wrong direction. If you sense this to be the case, you can take several steps to realign yourself with Him.

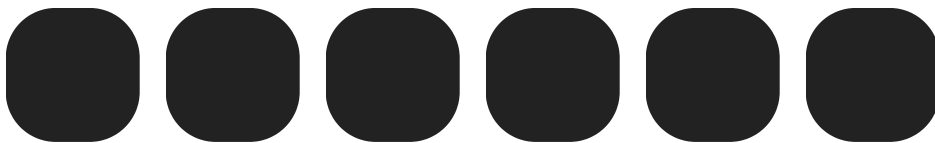
First, evaluate where you are spiritually—ask God whether your fire has grown cold. Second, acknowledge any distance you have allowed to separate you from your heavenly Father, and repent. Third, refocus your attention on Jesus; meditate on how He teaches His followers to live. Spend quality time in Scripture daily, asking the Lord to speak to you through His Word. Pray, not by using fancy language but by crying out earnestly and seeking God’s face. Fourth, rely upon the Holy Spirit to guide you back to an intimate and exciting relationship with the Father. Finally, love and serve God by worshipping Him and reaching out to others.

What occupies the majority of your time and attention? Do your thoughts and conversation tend to revolve around worldly topics or the things of God? If your fire for the Lord has dwindled, take the necessary steps today to renew your passion. Living closely with Him is well worth the effort and discipline.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, February 7, 2017 - When Spiritual Passion Diminishes

FEBRUARY 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, February 7, 2017 - When Spiritual Passion Diminishes

2 Timothy 1:1-11

Do you feel yourself growing cold toward the Lord? As His children, we can never lose our salvation, but it is possible for our spiritual passion to cool.

Today's passage reveals that even Timothy experienced a decrease in his excitement for God. That's why Paul wrote to him, encouraging the young pastor at Ephesus to fan the flame of his faith.

Spiritual "cooling" can happen to any Christian. Oftentimes it starts when tragedy or disappointment diverts our attention. Instead of crying out to the Lord and finding shelter in Him, we gradually cease reading the Bible. The Word of God is like wood in a fireplace: The flames can be kept alive only when there are logs to burn. As less time is spent in Scripture, other aspects of our relationship with God are affected. Church attendance diminishes, giving becomes sporadic, and prayer—which seems increasingly stale—is used only for emergencies.

At this point, we may find ourselves unwilling to stand up for what we once deemed important. The temptation to compromise can lead to guilt and defensiveness about how we're living. Finally, the joy, contentment, and peace of God are replaced by worry, doubt, and fear.

A believer who allows himself to drift will miss out on the comfort and fulfillment of a close, vibrant relationship with the Lord. Think back. Is your excitement about the things of God stronger now than ever before? Or has it diminished over time? If your fire needs stoking, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, February 6, 2017 - The Passion to Serve Him

FEBRUARY 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, February 6, 2017 - The Passion to Serve Him

[2 Corinthians 11:22-31](#)

In today's passage, Paul's description of his suffering is remarkable in two ways. First of all, he had obviously faced considerable torment for his faith. Second, he refused to whine or seek pity—if this was the price for passionately serving Christ, Paul was willing to pay. In our own faith walk, we can learn from the apostle's commitment.

We serve according to God's will, not our own. On the road to Damascus, Jesus said to Paul, "It will be told you what you must do" ([Acts 9:6](#)). We are to seek the Lord's direction and timing instead of choosing the ministry that seems best to us. Committing to do whatever He asks requires courage, but anything less amounts to putting limitations on our obedience.

We serve according to our gifts, not our talents. A spiritual gift is the special endowment God gives us to serve where He calls. Talents may be useful in His work, but His gifts equip us for success. Natural skill wasn't what made Paul a powerful preacher. In fact, he spoke of the uselessness of his abilities and pedigree in comparison with knowing and serving Christ ([Phil. 3:4-9](#)).

We are to serve with a focus on God, not on the work. Paul excelled at remaining Christ-centered, but this is where many people fall short. We get caught up in scheduling, responsibility, and accolades, which can make us lose sight of the true purpose: reaching the needy and those who need Christ.

Doing “church work” can stroke the ego but drain the body. If we keep focused and serve out of our gifts, service will be satisfying, even when it is hard or painful.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, February 3, 2017, -

Service is Not an Option

FEBRUARY 03RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, February 3, 2017, - Service is Not an Option

Titus 2:11-15

Who is a servant of God? Ask average churchgoers that question, and they will most likely point to their pastor or some Christian celebrity. They almost certainly will not say, “We are God’s servants.” The church has a mixed-up idea that believers are separated into servants—that is, individuals in full-time ministry—and laypeople. The Bible contains no such distinction. Instead, Paul reminds the Ephesians that believers are saved so that they might serve ([Ephesians 2:10](#)).

If there were no other reason to serve God besides gratitude for salvation, that would be cause enough. We are rescued from torment and given eternal life with the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence. Our service is but a small acknowledgment of the Father sending His Son to be sacrificed in payment of the sin debt we owed. We have no right to withhold our gifts or time.

Many people, believers included, serve the big “I.” What satisfies and pleases “I”? What is convenient for “I”? What makes “I” happy and prosperous? When a pastor appeals for help, most of his parishioners are sure he is speaking to someone else because “I” has insufficient training or a busy schedule. Here is a harsh reality: If “I” is our master, we are committing “I”-dolatry. Anything given first place over God—including selfish desires—is an idol.

Service isn’t an option. God calls us to be servants so we can invest our lives in an eternally valuable purpose: the salvation of unbelievers and their subsequent discipleship for His glory. Our job may seem insignificant or our limitations great, but we are vessels of Christ with a role in the kingdom.

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