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Daily Devotional - Friday, February 10, 2017 - No Excuses

FEBRUARY 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, February 10, 2017 - No Excuses

Jonah 1:1-17

Jonah fled toward Tarshish to escape God's plan. The prophet mistakenly thought that ignoring a divine command would cause the Lord to withdraw or change it. Instead, God repeatedly and dramatically intervened in Jonah's life until the man submitted.

Jonah believed he had good reason to be reluctant. The Ninevites were a bloodthirsty people determined to conquer Israel. So walking across the city while crying, "Nineveh will be overthrown" was a frightening prospect. And, as the prophet later revealed, he worried that God would spare the city if the people repented ([Jonah 4:2](#)). Jonah wanted them destroyed! Therefore, his reasons for fleeing seemed right in his own eyes. But God was not deterred.

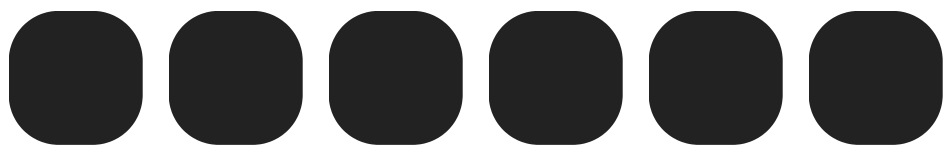
There's simply no adequate justification for rebellion. It's not uncommon for people running from God's will to use this six-word phrase: "I know what God says, but ..." I can tell you with absolute certainty that everything on the other side of "but" is a waste of time. The Lord isn't interested in excuses or selfish ambitions. He desires only obedience. He has reasons for asking a believer to take a specific action, and His purposes are always good. Consider the amazing benefit to Jonah and his countrymen if their enemy Nineveh became an ally that worshipped the same God.

The Lord doesn't change His plan to suit our purpose. Rather, He'll use events, people, and the prompting of the Holy Spirit to move us into the center of His will. For your own benefit, go willingly. You may not like the task God assigns, but if He wants it done, then it must be worthwhile.

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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.

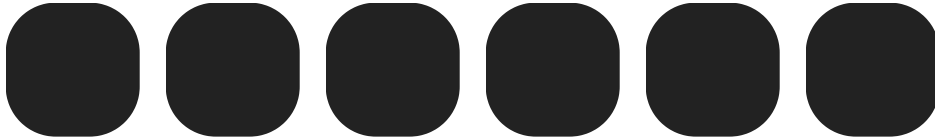
So, not just for our sake but also for the sake of others, we must be careful not to let our fervor for God fade. Thankfully, the indwelling Holy Spirit nudges believers who start to head in the wrong direction. If you sense this to be the case, you can take several steps to realign yourself with Him.

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.

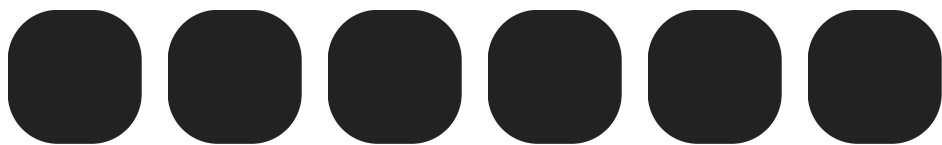
At this point, we may find ourselves unwilling to stand up for what we once deemed important. The temptation to compromise can lead to guilt and defensiveness about how we're living. Finally, the joy, contentment, and peace of God are replaced by worry, doubt, and fear.

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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