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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, February 14, 2017 - Showing Agape Love

FEBRUARY 14TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Divine love empowers us to respond calmly to difficulties, demonstrate patience in seasons of waiting, and sacrifice without complaint. We offer God's love when we can:

Forgive others. The son wasted his money in riotous living and discovered both the empty promises and destructive quality of sin. Upon the boy's return, his father forgave him completely. Love made it possible to wipe away the past (Ps. 103:12).

Act generously. The son, having just fed pigs, arrived at his father's estate with few expectations. The forgiving dad greeted him most warmly and dressed him in the finest garments. Godly love, which keeps no record of wrongs, enabled the father to show generosity.

Serve joyfully. What a celebration the father had upon the prodigal's return! His joy in his lost son's homecoming overflowed to others. Love expresses itself in willing service.

Restore those who fall. The one who both abandoned his father and squandered his inheritance was again given full rights as a son.

When we mess up, our heavenly Father patiently waits for us to turn back to Him. He accepts our repentance, rejoices in our return, and restores intimacy with Him. The elder brother in this parable missed the point because of his self-righteous attitude ([1 John 1:8](#)).

He didn't recognize his mistakes or the many times his father had shown him love and forgiveness.

God calls us to a lifestyle of agape love. To whom could you extend the divine love that forgives, restores, and serves with generosity and joy?

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Daily Devotional - Monday, February 13, 2017 - The Power of Love

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[Luke 15:11-32](#)

In Jesus' day, three Greek words were used to express "love"—*eros* (physical intimacy), *philia* (friendship), and *agape* (fruit produced by the Holy Spirit, as listed in [Galatians 5:22-23](#)). Our heavenly Father cares for us with agape love, and to bring us into a right relationship with Him, He sacrificed His Son ([1 John 4:10](#)).

The parable of the prodigal son gives us a good example of this type of love. Agape is evident in our life when we:

Respond calmly to difficulties. To the son's untimely demand for his share of the inheritance, the father didn't reply with angry words about ungrateful children. Though the prodigal's attitude must have caused pain, the man held his tongue and did not retaliate. In calmness, he could think more clearly and chose to love ([1 Corinthians 13:4-5](#)).

Sacrifice without complaint. Though he knew his son was committed to a ruinous course, the father quietly fulfilled the request. In doing so, he chose the way of love, directing his efforts towards preserving their relationship.

Wait patiently. Out of deep affection, the father let his son leave and stay away. What heartache the man must have felt! Yet he remained hopeful and waited for the young man to recognize that sin cannot deliver what it has promised. This patient response is possible only through the power of agape love (1 Corinthians 13:4).

The Holy Spirit's work in our life empowers us to show selfless and sacrificial devotion to the development of another person. In that way, we become people who respond calmly, patiently, and without complaint. Which kind of emotion do you offer to others—human or divine?

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

FEBRUARY 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[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

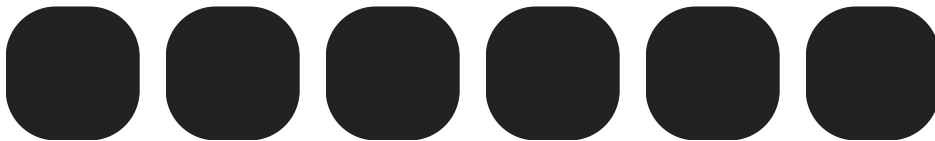
became an ally that worshipped the same God.

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.

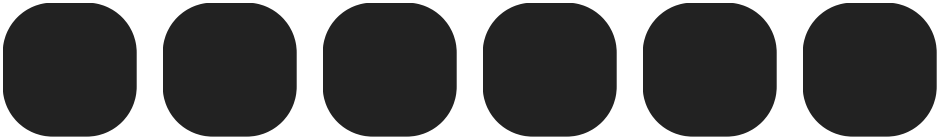
So, not just for our sake but also for the sake of others, we must be careful not to let our fervor for God fade. Thankfully, the indwelling Holy Spirit nudges believers who start to head in the wrong direction. If you sense this to be the case, you can take several steps to realign yourself with Him.

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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