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Daily Devotional - Monday, March 13, 2017 - The Purification of Our Faith

MARCH 13TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Hebrews 11:32-40

Although most of us would love to have the heroic faith of the men and women mentioned in Hebrews 11, few of us are willing to go through the process God uses to develop this kind of trust. We love reading about the great victories and accomplishments of those who relied upon the Lord, but we cringe at the descriptions in verses 36-38. Though none of us want to go through horrible situations, God uses adversity to purify our faith.

Picture the Lord as a master sculptor standing before a block of marble—that slab is you! Envisioning the hidden work of art within the rock, He lovingly and carefully chips away at everything that does not fit the masterpiece He's creating.

One of the first areas the Lord deals with is your character. His goal is to shape you into the image of His Son, and there are some traits and attitudes that must be chipped away in order for Him to accomplish the task. His chisel lays bare roots of sin and selfishness.

When anything or anyone becomes more important to us than the Lord, we have an idol in our life. To protect us, God sometimes uses adversity to strip away everything we have relied upon so that we will cling only to Him.

The chisel hurts—it sometimes feels as if God is taking away everything we hold dear. Unless you understand His goal and believe He’s working for your good, you’ll think He’s cruel. But if you trust Him and yield to His shaping tool of adversity, your faith will be purified and strengthened through affliction.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, March 10, 2017 - The Effectiveness of Prayer

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[James 5:16-18](#)

When you face a problem, is prayer your first response, or do you spring into action mode? God works powerfully through prayer, yet too often we look at it as a last resort: After we are at the end of our rope, then we start praying.

Using the example of Elijah, James reminds us what the effective prayer of a righteous person can accomplish. In today's passage, the subject is healing, but that's not the only prayer God will answer. Every aspect of life can be impacted by the power of prayer.

Temptation. Jesus told His disciples, "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation" ([Mark 14:38](#)).

Praise. After being beaten and thrown into prison, Paul and Silas prayed and praised God, even in the midst of their pain ([Acts 16:25](#)).

Spiritual Warfare. Paul teaches us to access God's power by "pray[ing] without ceasing" ([1 Thess. 5:17](#)).

Anxiety. We aren't at the mercy of fear if we pray about everything ([Phil. 4:6](#)).

Transformation. When we pray according to God's desires, He transforms our mind, attitudes, character, and actions ([Col. 1:9-12](#)).

Witness. Through prayer, we ask that the Lord open doors for us to spread His Word ([2 Thess. 3:1](#)).

Protection. God is faithful to answer requests that He strengthen and protect us from the evil one ([2 Thess. 3:2-3](#)).

The next time you face a challenging situation, remember that prayer is more powerful than all your self-efforts. Pray, and watch God work.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 8, 2017 - Living by Faith

MARCH 08TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 8, 2017 - Living by Faith

[Genesis 15:6](#)

Abraham is one of the people in the Old Testament who have had a great impact on my spiritual walk. In his life, I see the necessity of living by faith.

Separation is oftentimes a part of our development as Christians. Before we can take on something new, the Lord may ask us to let go of something we already have. In [Genesis 12:1-3](#), God told Abraham he was going on a journey that would require leaving his country, his people, and his father's household. Obedience meant saying goodbye to relationships and things dear to him. The only family members who traveled with him were his wife and nephew; the life he knew in his homeland was left behind. But this godly man did not hesitate. His strong faith enabled him to say yes to what the Lord commanded.

Moving ahead in the midst of uncertainty can be another aspect of following the Lord. Abraham was told to travel without knowing his destination. Try to imagine explaining to friends that you're moving away but have no idea where you are going. This lack of detail did not stop Abraham. Unwavering trust in his heavenly Father enabled him to answer the divine call wholeheartedly—even though specific details were lacking. Abraham was

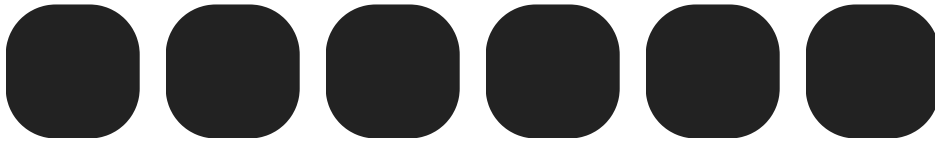
spiritually ready to answer affirmatively when God called.

Following God requires living by faith. That means: trusting the Holy Spirit to guide us when we don't see how all the pieces fit together ([John 16:13](#)); believing that God always works for our good and His glory ([Rom. 8:28](#)); and desiring to please our Father. Will you be ready when He calls?

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, March 7, 2017 - Overcoming Distractions

MARCH 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, March 7, 2017 - Overcoming Distractions

[Nehemiah 6:15-16](#)

As we saw yesterday, distractions have potential to get us off track. Gossip. Criticism. Financial pressure. Poor health. Conflict. Desires. Praise from others. Any of these can cause us to turn away from God's perfect plan. But Scripture gives us a role model to emulate ([Neh. 4:1-23](#), [Neh. 5:1-19](#), [Neh. 6:1-16](#)). Nehemiah shows us the value of:

Single-mindedness. Nehemiah feared the Lord and conscientiously applied himself to His work. He didn't have a divided mind. By setting our attention solely on God's plan, our minds will stay fixed, regardless of the difficulties.

Obedience. The Lord wants to show us His favor; His blessing is always upon us when we are obedient to Him. This knowledge should bring us confidence in hard times, just as it did for Nehemiah.

Accountability. The king wanted progress reports on what Nehemiah was accomplishing. One day we will stand before Jesus, our King, and give an account for how we used our resources and gifts ([1 Corinthians 3:12-15](#)).

Consistency in our prayer life. When the Israelites were ridiculed, they were helpless to stop their opponents' taunts. So Nehemiah prayed, and the people received strength to continue. As the plotting worsened, Nehemiah and his fellow workers cried out to God, who not only provided His people with discernment but also frustrated the enemies' plans.

Nehemiah completed the ambitious project in just 52 days. When we follow his example, God can accomplish great things in and through us. Which of the above points from Nehemiah's life can help you overcome whatever is distracting you?

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Daily Devotional - Monday, March 6, 2017 - Dealing with Distractions

MARCH 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, March 6, 2017 - Dealing with Distractions

[Nehemiah 1:1-11](#)

When Nehemiah was cupbearer to the king, his heart was deeply stirred over the plight of the Israelites back home and the condition of their city. With the king's permission, he set out to rebuild Jerusalem. He encountered numerous obstacles but refused to let them distract him from the task.

From his example, we learn the importance of:

Being in the center of God's will. When Nehemiah cried out in prayer about his people and homeland ([Neh. 1:4-11](#)), the Lord showed him exactly what to do. Then God caused the king to be favorably disposed toward the request and to provide everything needed. Knowing we are right where God wants us will give us confidence to move through trials without being sidetracked.

Remembering what the goal is. Nehemiah knew that the Lord's priority for him was to rebuild the city. God has also planned things for us to do, and His work is always of great value. We are not to underestimate our part, no matter how small it seems to us.

Accomplishing each task. Following every crisis, Nehemiah returned to the task at hand. By keeping the Lord's goal in mind, we'll be able to stay in our God-appointed place, carry out each step, and remain on course.

Accurately identifying our distractions. Those who seek to interrupt our work, divert our attention, or attack us personally are not from God. With the Father’s help, Nehemiah recognized whom to heed and whom to ignore.

Think about people and situations that are likely to distract you. Being aware of their potential to get you off track can help you stay focused.

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