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Daily Devotional, Thursday, April 20, 2017 - Seeking Guidance: The Pattern

APRIL 20TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Matthew 7:7-8

As we've seen, there is a pattern to seeking God's guidance. The first step—cleansing—is actually important throughout the entire process. In fact, all but one of the remaining steps have no particular order and can fit together in many ways.

The exception is surrender. The Lord cannot share His plans for our life until we are committed to following Him no matter what. He certainly knows whether we are seeking direction in order to obey or merely to consider what He suggests. Therefore, surrender must precede even our prayers for guidance. First John 5:14-15 says that the Lord hears and grants our petitions when we ask according to His will. It's possible to make requests that are not of God, but believers who yield themselves will find their way to the right request and the best possible answer.

Most of the time, God guides believers to an answer through His Word, which is why I encourage people to meditate upon it ([Psalm 1:2-3](#)). Our reading can take us to the very passage that deals with our situation or reveals a principle that applies. Sometimes God speaks a crystal-clear message to a person's heart that nobody else would glean from those particular verses. The key is to believe that the Lord is going to guide you, and to live out that faith ([Mark 11:24](#)).

The process of seeking guidance is often slow, so we must wait. Running ahead or manipulating circumstances can be a costly mistake. Our omniscient, sovereign God acts

on behalf of those who wait for Him ([Isa. 64:4](#)). Those who seek direction will receive—that's a promise ([Matt. 7:7-8](#)).

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, April 19, 2017 - Seeking Guidance: The First Step

APRIL 19TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[1 John 1:8-10](#)

By forsaking the worldly way, believers have chosen a narrow path ([Matt. 7:13](#)). However, we're not wandering blindly on it. The Holy Spirit is our guide. He directs our steps toward new opportunities and offers discernment so we can make wise decisions

that keep us on course for God's will.

It is the nature of this journey that we have to stop often and seek guidance. God is pleased to respond to earnest requests for direction, as He wants to keep His followers in the center of His will. But I've discovered that many Christians wonder how to pursue divine guidance.

Seeking God's direction involves a pattern that begins with cleansing—in other words, the first place to look is at ourselves. Ask, "Father, do You see anything in my life that might interfere with my understanding what You are saying?" Sin shuts down the guidance process: It impedes the power flowing from the Holy Spirit and thereby clouds our judgment.

The Bible teaches that God cleanses unrighteousness when we confess our sins ([1 John 1:9](#)). It also contains a clear warning for those who refuse to relinquish a rebellious habit or attitude—the Lord doesn't hear their cries ([Psalm 66:18](#)). As He reveals problem areas, we should lay them before the cross.

Cleansing is actually woven into the entire process of gaining divine guidance. The Lord brings sin to our attention as we're equipped to deal with it. So on the way to receiving His clear direction, we may revisit this first step often and in that way can continually experience a time of rich spiritual growth and renewal.

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, April 18, 2017 - Sent to Serve

APRIL 18TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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John 17:18

Too often, people fall into a wrong belief that they have no real purpose in life. They get up, go to work, come home, and zone out in front of the TV. Then it's time to go to sleep and start all over. Where in this routine are they making time to fulfill their true purpose?

This isn't the model Jesus set for us. When we look at the life of Christ, we can clearly see that His coming was no accident and His time was not wasted. He lived His life on target. Scripture shows without a doubt that Jesus came to accomplish a goal.

Many times in the Gospels, Jesus refers to having been sent by the Father. That word implies focus and intent. Our Savior didn't stumble upon the earthly scene. His coming was not an accident or a happy coincidence. The idea is not that Jesus just appeared; He was sent into the world for a clear purpose.

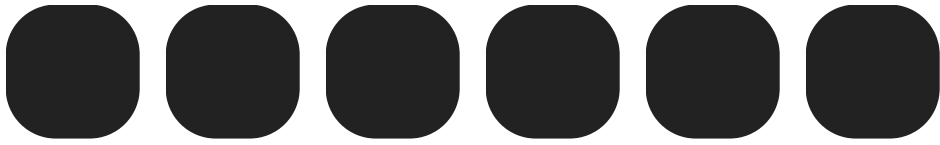
And what was that purpose? [Matthew 20:28](#) reveals that Jesus came not to conquer, but to serve. His life reveals a clear mission, and everything He does in the Gospels points back to His purpose: to reveal the Father, die for sin, save the lost, and provide abundant life.

No matter where He was, who He was with, or what He was doing, the Lord was always mindful of the reason for His coming. What's more, just as Jesus was sent by the Father, so we are sent by Christ—to carry His message of hope throughout the world. Is this purpose evident in your daily routine? Pray for clarity and focus as you serve the Lord today.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, April 17, 2017 The Secret of Being an Overcomer

APRIL 17TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Paul learned the secret of being an overcomer: Maintain God's perspective on the ups and downs of life, and access His power. The apostle was firmly convinced that having the person of the Holy Spirit living *in* him meant that God's power was available *to* him.

We, too, can learn to be at peace while the storms of life rage around us. The first step is to believe that the power of God is within us through the presence of His Spirit. We then must accept that God's priority for us is transformation into Christ's image, and not necessarily comfortable circumstances. Diligently seeking to maintain Jesus' perspective on trials ([John 16:33](#)) is also important. Until we settle such matters of faith, true contentment will evade us.

Having embraced these truths, we can learn to use the divine power of the risen Christ. The key lies in submitting our will to His. Then, instead of reacting to life based on our own weaknesses and desires, we will switch to responding on the basis of God's will and

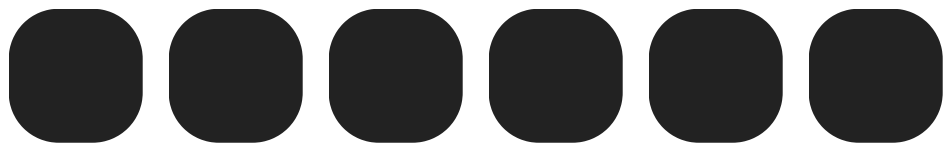
the fact that we belong to Christ. We will be able to consciously surrender ourselves to the Lord and His pattern for living. Yielding control to the Holy Spirit allows God's will to be done and enables us to accept it. When we can say, "Lord, whatever You choose to send will be all right with me," then we will experience the inner peace promised to us. (See [John 14:27](#).)

Divine perspective, surrender, and firm faith—these are the ingredients for the victorious life. Now you know the secret, too.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, April 14, 2017 - What Really Happened at Calvary

APRIL 14TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Hebrews 10:10-14

If asked what took place on Good Friday, many people could list the events of Calvary. Some might explain that Christ was nailed to the cross, Roman soldiers gambled for His garments, and darkness covered the land. Others would mention the crown of thorns, an earthquake, and Jesus' mother watching with what must have been heartbreak and horror.

But no matter how many visible details one could mention, far more was going on than the eye could see: At the cross, sin was judged.

In giving His very first command in the garden of Eden, God warned that disobedience carried the death penalty ([Gen. 2:17](#)). So from the start, His judgment of sin was prophesied, and later it was also pictured in the elaborate sacrificial system He established. Under this system, each transgression required an animal's blood to be sprinkled on the altar. The severity of the penalty—payment of a life—was a graphic way for our holy God to communicate how offensive and grievous sin actually is. It was also a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God, who would come to take away the sin of the world ([John 1:29](#)).

Jesus Christ was, on the cross, what that lamb was on the altar—but with a significant difference: Under the old covenant, every time sin was committed, another animal had to die. Jesus, however, willingly offered Himself once for all to atone for the sin of the entire world ([Heb. 7:27](#)).

Refusing to personally accept Christ's substitutionary atonement leaves a person with the responsibility of paying his or her own sin debt. Won't you thank the Savior for your amazing free gift—or receive it from Him now?

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