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Daily Devotional, Thursday, April 27, 2017 - God's Purpose for Intimacy

APRIL 27TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Psalm 103

For most of my life, I believed that the heavenly Father and I shared a relationship for my benefit. However, His primary purpose for creating intimacy with believers is to reveal Himself.

In a truly loving relationship, each person wants to continually know more about the other. As believers, we are sometimes guilty of taking a more self-interested approach and forget that God is the rightful center of attention. When that is the case, we may head to church or into quiet time looking for something to inspire us, motivate us, or help us.

Part of the problem is that we would like to practice our faith in the safest way possible. Bible study, prayer, and church are relatively easy, compared to stepping out in faith or enduring persecution. But to know God intimately is not a purely intellectual pursuit. A truth about the Lord is not really ours until He works it into our daily experience.

Our Father wants His children to understand how He operates. The only way to gain such knowledge is by allowing God to unveil Himself in our life. This means we must be willing to go through difficulty and pain as well as happiness and peace. A man can read that the Holy Spirit is the believer's Comforter, but he does not know this truth until he has need of solace.

The Christian life is not about feeling good and deriving the greatest personal benefit from our connection to God. Rather, the Lord builds an intimate relationship with each of His followers. In this way, He can reveal more about Himself—truth by truth—as a believer needs that knowledge. What a privilege!

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, April 26, 2017 - Intimacy With God

APRIL 26TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Romans 8:14-17](#)

Suppose I asked you to characterize your relationship with God. Would you say He is like a friend whom you meet occasionally for coffee? Or is He at the opposite end of the spectrum—a valued member of your household who is included in every aspect of daily life? Most likely, the nature of your bond falls somewhere in between.

Whatever the state of your relationship with the Lord, be assured that He wants something closer and more meaningful. God desires a connection so deep and strong that words like *friendship* and *fellowship* cannot fully describe it. He created us for intimacy.

Of all the creatures on earth, human beings are the only ones made in God’s image. Like Him, we can think, reason, feel, and make choices, though we do none of these things as fully or perfectly as He does. The attributes that separate people from the rest of creation equip us to relate to the Lord in a unique way.

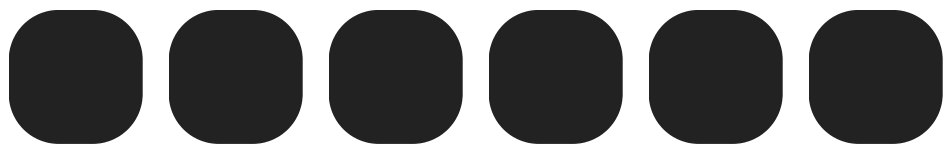
Jesus called His followers “friends” ([John 15:15](#)), and Paul wrote that believers are sons of God ([Gal. 4:7](#)). Those are not distant, impersonal relationships! When we spend time with the Lord, we grow as close to Him as a beloved child to a father.

Some believers have the mistaken idea that *doing* something “Christian” is the way to make God happy. But the way to please our Father is by *being* Christian. He wants us to live in such a way that others see He is our Father and best friend.

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, April 25, 2017 - The Enemy of Security

APRIL 25TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 John 5:1-9

Sin can shake our faith in eternal security. God promised that anyone who believes Jesus Christ died on the cross for his or her sin will live forever in heaven ([John 6:40](#)). But because unconfessed sin creates a barrier between the Lord and the believer, it short-circuits faith and assurance.

When a believer confesses wrongdoing, the Father forgives and cleanses His child (1 John 1:9). But by failing to admit to sin, a Christian will experience estrangement from God. He or she may feel unworthy of the Father's love and can even struggle with a sense of rejection. Ask people in this situation if they are certain about their eternal future, and you'll probably hear, "I used to be." Sometimes they will go so far as to tell me that they are no longer saved—but that is impossible. While we can lose our assurance, we can never lose our salvation or our place in heaven.

Too often, people mistake the Lord's chastening hand for confirmation of their lost condition. "God wouldn't put me through this if I were saved," they'll say. Actually, the opposite is true. The heavenly Father disciplines those He loves, so correction is proof that we are His children ([Heb. 12:6-7](#)). Chastisement is His way of guiding the wayward believer back into fellowship with Him.

Jesus is our advocate before God. Like ancient Israel's high priests who offered blood sacrifices, He atoned for our sins by His own death on the cross. We can't sin our way out of His grace. The minute we confess our wrongdoing, estrangement dissipates and assurance comes flooding back into our hearts.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, April 24, 2017 - What is Your True Purpose?

APRIL 24TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[1 Samuel 16:6-13](#)

What do you live for each day? A pay raise? Retirement? Then perhaps you've discovered the reality that basing aspirations on getting ahead in this world typically ends in disappointment. People with a misguided sense of direction often wonder why they feel unfulfilled.

Maybe you've already achieved a goal of saving for the future or moving up the corporate ladder. You give to charity and volunteer at church, but somehow still feel a sense of insignificance or aimlessness. If so, there is a truth you need to hear: God gives each of us life for a very specific reason—namely, to serve Him. Nobody finds inner peace without reconciling this fact. Our society teaches us that pleasure, prosperity, position, and

popularity will make us happy. But living in the service of self always leaves an emptiness no earthly reward can fill.

Besides, worldly philosophy won't stand the test of time. Few of us are going to live even 100 years. So whatever we'll become in this life, we are in the process of becoming that right now. Consider David: He was anointed king long before actually assuming the role (1 Sam. 16:12). He spent many years serving the purpose of God in insignificant places while developing into a great man. As his story shows, discovering God's purpose for your life is the surest path to success.

Our Father's purpose for us comes from His heart of love—which is perfect. None of us can know the things He has in store for us, but we can trust His plan. Surrender to Him and say, “Not my will, Lord, but Yours be done.”

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, April 20, 2017 - Seeking

Guidance: The Pattern

APRIL 20TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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

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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