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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, May 10, 2017 - Genuine Awareness

MAY 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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2 Kings 6:15-17

If someone were to ask whether you're aware of God, you would no doubt exclaim, "Of course I am! I go to church, read my Bible, and pray all the time. I'm quite aware of God." Now, let's take it one crucial step further: *Are you aware of God's presence and activity in your daily life?*

This second question makes it a bit more personal, doesn't it? *In my daily life? Right here, all the time?* We would like to have that constant awareness of God's presence, but it is difficult. When hardships and trials strike out of nowhere, we often feel bewildered and wonder why the Lord has left us alone.

During times of difficulty, we might pray even harder and longer. We plead for help but see little result. We cry, "Help *me*! Give *me* strength!" Or perhaps, "*I* believe this" or "*I* can do that." Do you notice the common factor there? The focus is all on *me, me, me, I, I, I*. Even during prayer, we may be aware only of ourselves, leaving the Lord out of the matter entirely.

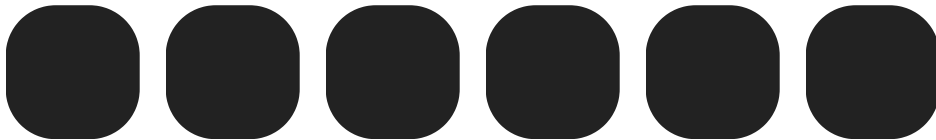
At that point, we may find we're not really talking to the Father at all; we are talking to ourselves. Perhaps we are focusing on the *problem* and actually wishing for the ability to handle it on our own. We can, in effect, become completely blind to how God may be working.

2 Kings 6:15-17 gives us a wonderful picture of what can happen when we remove our self-centered blinders and truly see God's hand at work. Open your eyes. Like Elisha's servant, you may be shocked to discover the help that God has already sent your way.

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, May 9, 2017 - Ending Gossip in Our Life

MAY 09TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Ephesians 4:29-32](#)

Spreading rumors about other people exposes little about their true nature but reveals quite a lot about the speaker's own character. Such behavior shows a willingness to sin

against the Lord by causing harm to someone else. Until a gossiping believer confronts his sin, he can't progress toward becoming the person God wants him to be.

Confession is the first step in dealing with sinful speech. This should be followed by repentance—the pledge to turn away from opportunities to talk about others. A useful scripture for a redeemed gossip to pray daily is [Psalm 141:3](#): “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.”

Next, be on guard against temptation. Believers have a responsibility to set themselves apart from gossip in order to keep their thoughts and words pleasing to God. Being in the presence of one who spreads stories can tempt us to participate. In a situation where rumors are being shared, the best course of action is to speak out against the practice and then leave.

Finally, instead of talking about someone, it's wise to pray for that person. Getting into this habit will help train the mind to replace sinful patterns with God-pleasing ways. The Bible teaches us to encourage and comfort each other, and prayer is a good way to obey that instruction ([1 Thess. 5:11](#), [1 Thess. 5:14](#)).

A gossiping Christian dishonors God's name—and his own. Instead of using words that disparage and injure, choose to speak well of everyone. In so doing, you will bring glory to the Lord.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, May 8, 2017 - The Character of Gossip

MAY 08TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, May 8, 2017 - The Character of Gossip

Romans 1:28-31

God hates gossip. He wants our speech to be pleasing to Him—and He certainly does not consider idle talk or mean-spirited words pleasant ([Col. 3:8](#)). Sadly, gossip is practiced so freely that even some believers participate and try to justify their chatter. But hearsay has no place in a Christian's life.

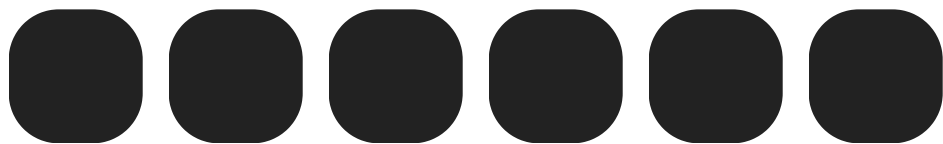
Romans 1 contains one of the Bible's lists of sins. The book's author—the apostle Paul—is reminding believers that God has revealed Himself to all mankind. Those who reject Him and chase after idols are turned over to their evil worship and the immoral practices that go with serving self ([Romans 1:24-25](#)). Gossip appears in the middle of the list; God despises it because malicious talk destroys lives whether the stories are true or false. The person who is targeted by the rumor often loses the respect of those who listen to it. Hurt feelings may not be the only negative effect; a job or relationship could be lost as well.

Those spreading tales also face destructive consequences. People who refuse to control the tongue reveal evil motives or, at the very least, a lack of discipline. As a result, believers and unbelievers alike will often avoid such untrustworthy individuals. For a Christian who spreads rumors, there's potential for even worse damage. Not only can the credibility of one's witness be compromised, but fellowship with the Lord might also be harmed—animosity toward another person and intimacy with God can't coexist in the same heart.

Gossip achieves no good in anyone's life, which is why the Lord warns against it. Instead, our words should build up, comfort, and encourage others.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, May 5, 2017 - Choosing Love Over Rights

MAY 05TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, May 5, 2017 - Choosing Love Over Rights

[Matthew 5:38-48](#)

We talk a lot about rights these days. Yet the attention given to human entitlements hasn't brought about corporate or personal freedom. Instead, most people are prisoners of jealousy (*You have greater rights than I do!*), greed (*I deserve more!*), or bitterness (*My rights have been violated!*).

In lieu of focusing on what is due them, Christians should follow Christ's command to love enemies and forgive persecutors ([Matt. 5:44](#)). Believers lay down their rights so they can take up the cause of a holy kingdom. That doesn't mean we let people trample on us. Rather, we offer a proper response according to biblical principles. In short, we should be

more concerned about showing God’s love to those who wrong us than insisting on privileges we assume are rightfully ours.

Perhaps you’re thinking that I don’t know how you’ve been mistreated. Indeed I don’t. But I do know how Jesus reacted to terrible abuse. He was betrayed by His friends, persecuted by His people, condemned by His peers, and crucified for our sins. Yet He said, “Father, forgive them” ([Luke 23:34](#)).

Before assuming that Jesus’ capacity for forgiveness and love is out of reach for mere human beings, remember: His Spirit dwells in believers. We can choose to give away our rights and let God’s love work through us.

[Luke 6:29](#) says to turn the other cheek and give up more than is asked because expressing love outweighs exerting our rights. You can’t lose when you show others the boundless care of the Lord. You gain His blessing, and what’s more, someone could be saved because of your example.

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, May 4, 2017 - The Power of Love

MAY 04TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 Corinthians 13:4-6

Today's verses teach that love "does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth" (1 [Corinthians 13:6](#)). This means believers aren't to dwell on the harm others cause and write them off as hopeless, despicable criminals. Love enables us to hate the evil unjustly visited upon the innocent while valuing the one who committed the act. More simply, we hate the sin but love the sinner.

In spite of everything that seems apparent about someone who's been driven to sinful actions, God has created him or her with the potential to be made into something good. Outwardly, it may seem as if a difficult upbringing, poor treatment, or negative influence has corrupted a person's morality and worldview beyond repair. For such individuals, the capacity to love and rise above circumstances can get buried so deep that it may seem nonexistent.

God still considers the most evil and corrupt person worth saving. How do I know this is true? Because in [John 3:16](#)—one of the very first verses we teach children—He said that whoever believes in God's Son will have eternal life. Many of us are guilty of thinking we deserve His love because we look good compared to those we deem unlovable. But God doesn't work that way. He loves every single person, no matter how awful his or her sin may be.

God doesn't want anyone to mistreat others; such sinful action will bring repercussions or discipline. But the Lord does extend His care, mercy, and salvation to anybody who wants it. He keeps no record of wrongs. He loves without conditions. And He wants us to love in the same way.

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