



[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Monday, June 5, 2017 - The Father's Good Gifts

JUNE 05TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Matthew 7:7-11

One of God's most generous assurances to His children is found in today's reading from Matthew 7. Not only are we granted permission to come to the Father with our requests, but He also promises to answer our prayers. However, you may be thinking, *If this is true, why hasn't He given me what I asked for?*

The key to understanding this passage is found in verses 9–11: “What man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ... If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” Think in terms of parenting. A child may want the latest video game, but his parent knows that a different gift would be better for him. In the same way, the God who made us is more keenly aware of our needs than we are ([Matt. 6:8](#)).

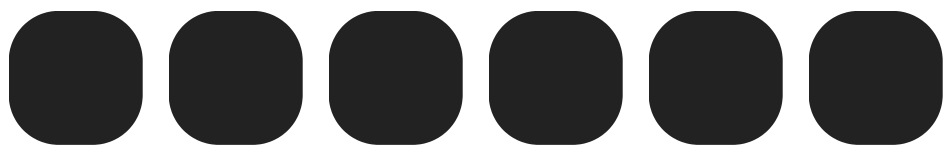
Because of spiritual immaturity or the limitations of our humanity, we may ask for what we perceive as good and necessary, when it isn't truly in our best interest. But our Father gives what He knows is more beneficial. The qualities of Christlike character are among His best gifts, but these develop through trials and testing. We may feel He's given us a snake instead of a fish, but the problem is with our lack of understanding, not with the Lord's goodness.

When it seems that the Lord isn't answering your requests, remember that He's a loving Father, and consider what good gifts He is giving instead. Although it may take years to gain a godly perspective, in time you'll say, "Lord, You were right. Thank You for giving me exactly what I needed."

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Friday, June 2, 2017 - Our Keeper

JUNE 02ND 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, June 2, 2017 - Our Keeper

[Psalm 121:3-8](#)

Yesterday we learned that God is our protector. Today's verses from Psalm 121 also portray Him as our keeper.

“He who keeps you will not slumber” (v. 3). Many young children are fearful in the dark. If they awaken when everyone else is sleeping, they might feel alone and scared. Our Caretaker needs no sleep; He is always alert and attentive to our cries, even when our feelings seem to tell us otherwise.

“The Lord is your keeper ... He will keep your soul” (vv. 5, 7). When parents have to leave their children for a while, they choose a trusted person to put in charge. We often say that this individual is “keeping” the kids. The babysitter is expected to protect and provide for the children. How much more invested and capable is our heavenly Father! Besides preserving us physically and spiritually, He restrains us from wrong thoughts, harmful words, and inappropriate actions. His Holy Spirit gives warnings to keep us from evil, and He also provides guidance so we’ll grow in godliness.

“The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever” (v. 8). God is sovereign. He is with us always—protecting, pointing the way, and teaching us. He accompanies and leads even in the small tasks that seem insignificant.

When we grow up, many of us feel sadness and a little fear as we leave the safety of our parents’ home. But we never leave the precious love and care of our heavenly Father. God is our keeper, and He cares for us better than any earthly mom or dad ever could.

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[Go to post](#)



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Daily Devotional, Thursday, June 1, 2017 - Our Protector

JUNE 01ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, June 1, 2017 - Our Protector

Psalm 121:1-3

Psalm 121 describes the safety that is found in the Lord. Today and tomorrow, let's look at several verses to better understand our security.

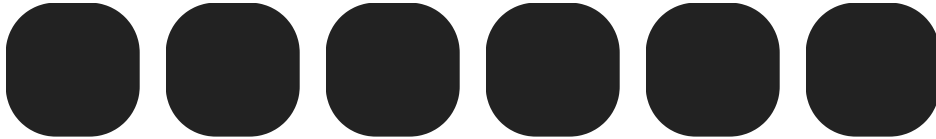
“I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord” (vv. 1-2). When this psalm was written, robbers dwelled in the mountains, waiting for innocent travelers to become their unsuspecting victims. Not only that, but wild animals also posed a threat. Needless to say, journeying on these remote hilly roads must have caused anxiety and fear.

Our lives can be like mountainous territory. Do you look to the future and wonder what dangers lurk? The Lord is our helper; He alone is able to protect us, regardless of what lies ahead. Friends and relatives can offer limited assistance, but God knows everything and has all the power necessary to rescue us.

“He will not allow your foot to slip” (v. 3). God has provided everything we need in order to avoid sin. The Holy Spirit directs and empowers us; the Word lights our path so we do not slip. Yet at times, we choose to sin. Almighty God could stop us from disobeying, but He doesn't interfere with our free will. Instead, He upholds us, enabling us to walk in His way.

These opening verses focus on the Lord's ability to protect us in treacherous times. Whether trouble originates with others, external circumstances, or our own sin, we can find ourselves in danger and afraid. Thankfully, we have a loving Father who leads us to safety.

[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, May 31, 2017 - The Blessing of Loving Others

MAY 31ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, May 31, 2017 - The Blessing of Loving Others

[1 Peter 1:22](#)

If we responded simply from natural impulses, we'd probably be nice when people were kind. At other times, though, we would likely be vengeful, angry, or hurtful.

Yet Jesus clearly teaches us to love even when those around us seem unlovable. And He lived out what He taught: Christ loved us enough to die for us while we were still sinners ([Rom. 5:8](#)). Surely, out of gratitude for what He did, and with His strength, we—His followers—can love others ([1 John 3:14](#)).

While it's hard to respond to unkindness with love, such godly behavior can lead to great blessing in our life. First, the Father is pleased. This realization should bring His children joy, peace, and a sense of accomplishment. Next, believers ought to feel excitement and

anticipation to watch how God will move in the relationship. Finally, there will be an awareness that the Holy Spirit is working from within, enabling divine love to flow through yielded human lives.

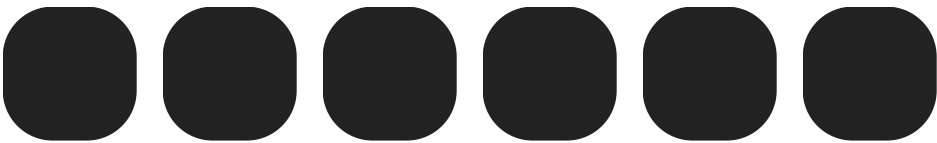
[John 13:35](#) tells of an important benefit: Jesus said, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Since unconditional godly love is uncommon in our world, people will notice.

Treating others as we want to be treated is what builds the deep, satisfying connections that all people desire. Without significant relationships, life lacks meaning—regardless of how many possessions or acquaintances we have. So think about the people you come in contact with throughout the week. Are you treating them the way that Jesus modeled?

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, May 30, 2017 - How to Love Others

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, May 30, 2017 - How to Love Others

Matthew 22:35-40

Jesus told His disciples, “In everything ... treat people the same way you want them to treat you” ([Matt. 7:12](#)). Most of us refer to this code of conduct as the Golden Rule.

In theory, we’d probably agree that this is a good foundation for a healthy relationship. Yet it’s tough to live up to such a standard. If we made a list of the ways we hope to be treated and compared it with our own behavior, we’d likely fall short.

And of course, it’s easy to love when others treat us well. But how do we respond when their behavior is hurtful or unpleasant? The truth is, Jesus meant for us to love others all the time, not just when they’re lovable. Regardless of their attitude toward us, we are to think about the relationship qualities we value—like loyalty, trust, encouragement, forgiveness, acceptance, and protection—and let these flow from us in the other person’s direction.

Unfortunately, our society breeds selfishness, greed, and pride, which are enemies of the love Jesus commanded. But when we care for others in the way the Lord prescribes, relationships can thrive and deepen.

Treating others with this kind of love isn’t natural or easy, especially when people are unkind. In fact, loving as Jesus commanded is impossible on our own. But when we trust Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit empowers us and lives His life through us.

Take time to list the ways you hope others will treat you. Then ask, *Is that how I treat people?* Pray for God to reveal one area where He will help you apply the Golden Rule.

[Go to post](#)



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