



[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, June 14, 2017 - Only Obedience Will Do

JUNE 14TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 Samuel 15:1-35

The most obvious way to step out of God's will is to commit deliberate sin. In fact, this is so apparent that you might wonder why I'm pointing it out. The reason is that I often hear believers try to justify partial obedience.

King Saul tried to justify ignoring the Lord's instructions. After God ordered the Israelites to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all their holdings, they spared the choicest beasts as well as the leader, Agag. Pleased with himself, Saul announced that he had done as commanded. But when Samuel questioned him further, Saul tried to blame the people ([1 Samuel 15:15](#)). A king's subjects, however, cannot act in so brazen a manner without his knowledge and permission.

Saul didn't stop there. He argued that the animals had been saved so they could be sacrificed to the Lord. He must have sounded quite righteous to his own ears. But Samuel was not fooled. He called Saul's action by its proper name—insubordination (v. 23).

Our reason for partial obedience may sound logical, but that doesn't change the fact that we're still in rebellion. Excuses and justifications won't sway God in the slightest. He doesn't alter His will to accommodate human desires or common sense. Instead, He looks for and takes delight in a faithful follower.

Are you trying to rationalize a decision or behavior? Perhaps you've offered reasons for pursuing a certain path. Or maybe you tried bargaining with God. I assure you He isn't moved by any arguments. Remember: Partial obedience is disobedience in His eyes. And no sin is worth being outside His will.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, June 13, 2017 - Getting Out of Step

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[1 Samuel 13:5-14](#)

Saul had everything going for him. Besides being the son of a highly respected man, he had good looks and a nice physique ([1 Samuel 9:1-2](#)). Since God chose him to lead Israel at a time when the nation had some formidable enemies, we can surmise that he was also a courageous and charismatic leader. Even the prophet Samuel was impressed and spoke admiringly at Saul's coronation: "Surely there is no one like him among all the people" ([1 Samuel 10:24](#)).

But despite Saul's many positive attributes, he tragically spent much of his reign out of step with God. The king's errors in judgment were mostly due to an inflated sense of self-importance. One blunder would set off a sin-filled chain reaction, as we see in his desperate quest to kill David (chapters 18-26).

The Lord hates arrogance. When people think more highly of themselves than they should ([Rom. 12:3](#)), they stop relying upon divine guidance in making decisions. Terrible consequences result from such wrong thinking. For example, the king thought so much of himself that he ignored the law and offered a pre-battle sacrifice in Samuel's place. Because Saul refused to submit himself to God's command, the Lord handed the kingdom over to a man who would ([1 Samuel 16:13-14](#)).

Pride always drives a person away from God's path. With each misstep, an arrogant man or woman wanders farther into a spiritual wilderness. Nothing of lasting value can be found in such a desolate place. But the Lord will gladly welcome back the wayward. Blessing and joy await those who walk in step with Him.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Monday, June 12, 2017 - God Has a Purpose for Storms

JUNE 12TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, June 12, 2017 - God Has a Purpose for Storms

Psalm 119:71

Perhaps you've seen a TV show in which a distracted person is about to step in front of a moving vehicle. Then suddenly another character races onto the scene, tackling him to prevent a catastrophe. Stunned and indignant, the near-victim fumes and swats at his rescuer—that is, until realizing he has just been saved from a far worse outcome. What at first seemed like a bad thing turns out to be very good.

Storms in our life can at times serve a similar purpose. It's easy to get so caught up in the daily grind or preoccupied with chasing a goal that we miss the good that the Lord has in mind to give us. When we're this focused on our own desires, we also become more vulnerable to making choices that don't align with His Word.

But wanting the best for His children, our heavenly Father will go to great lengths to make sure we are positioned for His blessing in our life. That's when we may suddenly find ourselves in the middle of a storm—where life was once sunny, we are now faced with turmoil or even pain. Disappointment like that can catch us off guard and make us wonder, *Why is God letting this happen to me?* It just may be that He's trying to protect us and draw us closer to Him.

Though the Lord sometimes allows storms in the form of problems and hardships, His goal isn't ever to hurt you. If you're going through a trial right now, God may be trying to draw your attention back to Him. It is possible He's disrupting your plans so He can implement His.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Friday, June 9, 2017 - Living Out Our Faith

JUNE 09TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, June 9, 2017 - Living Out Our Faith

[1 Peter 1:6-9](#)

True faith is based upon Scripture and embraces its eternal principles. Genuine belief trusts that God is who He says He is and that He'll do everything He has promised.

Such faith is worth sharing with others, and this can be done in several ways. For one thing, we can verbally explain our beliefs. But we can also model a godly lifestyle, which is frequently an even more effective method of influencing people for Christ.

Once during high school, I went to see my grandfather and visited with him for a week. We spent a lot of time talking—he listened carefully to me and then spoke about the ways God had worked in various situations over the years. At the end of that week, I went home

thinking, *God, if You will do that with my grandfather, what will You do in my own life?* My faith grew stronger because of those days with him.

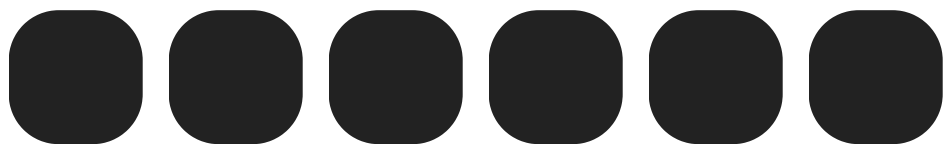
I was also profoundly influenced by the many times I heard my mother pray. When circumstances were hard, she would kneel by the bed with me and speak to our heavenly Father. In those quiet moments, I learned that we can trust God when things look hard or even impossible. I also discovered that God is faithful.

Consistency and perseverance are two other important facets of the faith we pass down. Children look to see if we mean what we say and if we will still rely on God when trouble comes. We can use our trials to demonstrate how a godly person responds. As we live out our faith in a visible way, we will be handing down something far more valuable than gold or silver.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, June 7, 2017 - Single-Minded Focus

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2 Timothy 2:4-5

“No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life” (2 Tim. 2:4). The word for “entangle,” which also occurs in [2 Peter 2:20](#), means to be so wrapped up in something that movement is hindered. This is the term the Greeks would have used to describe a rabbit ensnared in a thorn patch.

Peter’s letter admonished followers not to return to past sins, but Paul was emphasizing a different lesson: He was warning Timothy against allowing essential daily pursuits to supersede a commitment to Christ. Paul himself at times worked as a tentmaker while carrying on with ministry; however, he realized there was potential for an occupation to become all-consuming, to the detriment of a person’s spiritual life.

Growing and managing wealth, providing for one’s family, and taking advantage of leisure time are important activities. In fact, God encourages all of them. However, these blessings are not to become distractions that draw believers away from church or regular prayer and Bible study. Nor are we to compartmentalize our life into “Christian ministry” and “regular work/play.” We are Christ’s soldiers, no matter where we are or what we are doing—there is no such thing as a part-time warrior.

It’s important for believers not to draw artificial boundary lines between the secular and the sacred. Everything God gives—from vocation and wealth to leisure activities—is to be used for His glory. By keeping priorities straight and activities in balance, you can prevent hobbies and interests from becoming a snare.

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