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Daily Devotional, Thursday, June 29, 2017 - The Power Within

JUNE 29TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, June 29, 2017 - The Power Within

Ephesians 3:14-21

Bertha Smith, a missionary to China, once pronounced some of the most discouraging words I'd ever heard: "Charles, I want to tell you that you're as good as you'll ever be. You're as good as you've ever been, and you won't ever be any better than you are."

I had grown up believing a falsehood?that believers were to pour effort into turning their flesh around and doing right all the time. Thankfully, Bertha wasn't finished. "God never intended for you to get better, because you can't improve flesh," she said. "But the Holy Spirit, who is living inside you, will enable and live through you."

She was right. My flesh hasn't changed one bit. But as the Holy Spirit releases His supernatural power in my life, I find myself going beyond what is inherent to the nature of man. And the indwelling Spirit intends to do the same with every follower of God.

Although the works of the Holy Spirit are many, four are basic to the life of faith: The Spirit illumines the mind, enabling believers to understand the things of God; He energizes physical bodies to serve the Lord; He enables the will to follow through on doing what is right; and He quickens emotions to feel and express the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

Bertha Smith passed on an important truth to me: Flesh is insufficient. Only the Holy Spirit living inside us has the strength and wisdom to live out the Christian life victoriously. That's why God gave us His Spirit, through whom we reap all the benefits of a righteous and godly life.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, June 28, 2017 - The Privilege Corrupted

JUNE 28TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, June 28, 2017 - The Privilege Corrupted

Romans 1:21-32

God has revealed Himself to mankind and provided all that is necessary for a relationship with Him. Yet many people foolishly refuse His offer.

By choosing to live without God, a person will spiral downward into sin and a skewed view of the truth. As ignorance overpowers the capacity for intelligent understanding, an ever-darkening heart develops. The individual hungers for something to fill his emptiness but fails to recognize that only the Lord can satisfy his longing.

Desiring to fill his spiritual void, the person will look for an idol to worship. It won't be a statue of wood or gold, but rather something on which to focus his affections. "Idols" occupy a person's passion, time, and energy; in today's world, they often take the form of money, prominence, and relationships. The "worshipper" begins to indulge in earthly pleasures and desires, yet nothing can satisfy the emptiness. Eventually, as Romans 1:28 makes clear, the Lord will turn such a person over to a depraved mind?one that can no longer make right judgments.

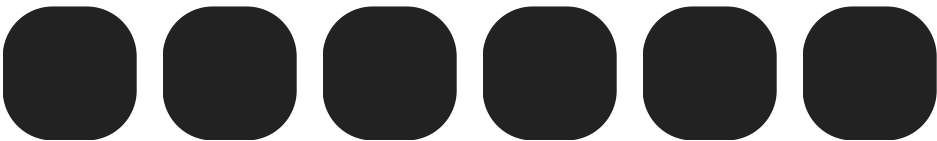
Remember, the heavenly Father desires a relationship with us. He even gave His own Son to make this possible. It is man who rejects Him and begins the journey toward godlessness and emptiness.

Look around. Notice the manifold evidence that points to a holy, loving God who desires an intimate friendship with you. Don't put off accepting His offer of relationship?the consequences of rejection are far too dangerous, and the benefits of saying yes are beyond what you can imagine (Eph. 3:20).

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, June 27, 2017 - The Privilege of Knowing God

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Psalm 19:1-6

There is no greater privilege than knowing God?and no greater tragedy than failing to develop a relationship with Him. Yet many people live their entire life apart from Jesus, and therefore, when they die, they are separated from Him eternally.

While on earth, both the righteous and unrighteous enjoy benefits of divine blessing (Matt. 5:45), so those who choose to live without Christ probably have no clue how dreadful a godless eternity will be. Some people seem to ignore the Bible's warnings about "outer darkness," "weeping," and "gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30). Or perhaps they've simply never heard the good news of salvation. Yet Romans 1:18-20tells why such an excuse won't hold up: Creation offers so much evidence of God that man is held accountable for unbelief. Consider nature's design, beauty, and order?these things don't just evolve.

Furthermore, God reveals Himself in the human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). Even societies with no access to Scripture forbid ungodly behaviors like rape, murder, and theft. And as if all that weren't enough, we also have God's revelation of Himself through both His Word and the incarnation of Jesus (John 14:7-9). Christ, who was fully God, became fully man. His life perfectly demonstrates the heavenly Father's character and heart.

Can you recognize evidence of the Almighty in creation and in the "law" written on your conscience? Do you seek to know Him better through His Word and the example of Christ? The Lord desires a relationship with you and is calling. Answer with a seeking heart, and watch for God to show up.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, June 26, 2017 - The Motivational Power of Grace

JUNE 26TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, June 26, 2017 - The Motivational Power of Grace

Romans 6:1-4

Some Christians have a hard time with the doctrine of grace because they think it's a license to sin. It just seems too easy to believe in Jesus and then do as you please. Shouldn't believers still be required to live a certain way in order to please the Lord? The problem with this reasoning is that it mixes legalism with grace by saying, "Sure, we are saved by grace, but after salvation, you'd better follow the rules to *stay* in God's favor." Such thinking cuts the heart out of grace and poisons the message of hope.

What we need to realize is that grace is a greater motivator than law. When you have to perform in order to please the Lord, guilt is your constant companion because you can never be good enough. Every time you fail to live up to your own expectations, you may question whether He loves you—or maybe even whether you're really saved. God doesn't want us to live in bondage to performance. We've already received His acceptance, and there is nothing more we can add to it.

Grace not only sets us free from guilt but also motivates us to obey and serve the Lord out of love and gratitude for everything He has done for us. Instead of feeling burned out in our service, we will have a burning passion for Him.

Are you working harder and harder to please God? If so, you're probably worn out. When you truly learn to understand and live in His grace, you'll be energized because obedience and service will be a natural result of His overflowing love. Instead of guilt, you'll have joy and gratitude.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, June 23, 2017 - God is Present in Dark Times

JUNE 23RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, June 23, 2017 - God is Present in Dark Times

[Genesis 39:1-23](#)

In this day of instant news, we regularly see images of calamity in our world. And on a personal level, we experience seasons of hardship as well. The same is true of friends and family who encounter job layoffs, marital troubles, difficulties with children, and other challenges.

As Christians, we have a heavenly Father who has promised to be with us in our struggles. We can rely on Him—He knows what will happen before we do; nothing is hidden from His sight ([Heb. 4:13](#)). He sees in the darkness of troubled times as clearly as He does in the daylight ([Psalm 139:11-12](#)). Through His Spirit, He offers us the comfort, strength, and wisdom to persevere.

The story of Joseph illustrates this truth. After being rejected and sold into slavery by his brothers, he was falsely accused by his master’s wife and imprisoned. But in the midst of those terrible times, the young Hebrew man experienced God’s presence and favor.

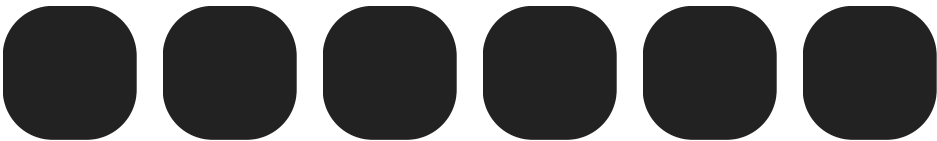
I doubt Joseph comprehended the Lord’s intentions during his slavery and imprisonment. But later on, as second-in-command to Pharaoh, he understood God’s purpose in allowing those difficult years. In the end, Joseph testified to what he knew to be true. His brothers had meant to harm him, but God used all the hardship to accomplish His good plan ([Gen. 45:4-8](#); [Gen. 50:20](#)).

When troubles hit, remember what is true and take heart. The indwelling Holy Spirit has the resources to provide what we need, equip us for the journey, and sustain us with His presence throughout the dark days. Nothing can stop the purposes of our Lord from being carried out ([Isa. 14:27](#)).

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