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Daily Devotional, Monday, July 10, 2017 - Questions in Times of Great Disaster

JULY 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Isaiah 55:8-9

Whenever a great disaster strikes, legitimate questions spring to mind. Why does the Lord let such things happen? Couldn't He have stopped this? Doesn't He care? The magnitude of death and destruction caused by earthquakes, tornadoes, or floods disrupts our everyday thoughts and causes us to seek explanations for suffering.

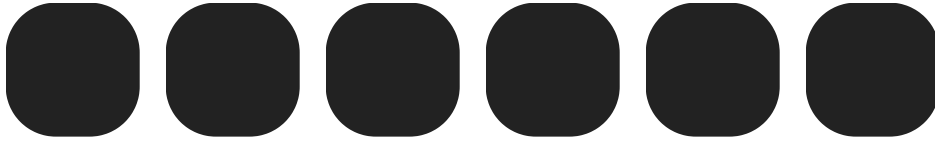
Often the answers people come up with are based on their relationship with God. Those who know nothing of Him have no frame of reference for understanding how He works. Believers, on the other hand, have the Bible to guide them as they wrestle through these issues. But even then, the accuracy of one's perspective is determined by his or her knowledge of God's Word. Those with limited understanding may very well reach inaccurate conclusions.

We must guard against attempts at forcing the Lord to act the way we think He should. If He does something that won't fit into the "box" we've devised for Him, we easily become upset, angry, or confused. God will never stay within the parameters we set for Him. Since we are mortal and sinful, we have a very narrow perspective and understanding of life. But our eternal, sinless, sovereign, and omniscient Creator sees and knows what we cannot perceive.

We want to be sure that our viewpoint of God's role in natural disasters comes from the Bible, not from our own limited perspective. Scripture tells us of the Lord's love, faithfulness, and wisdom. Whenever we cannot understand His ways, faith in His goodness must be our foundation.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, July 7, 2017 - Our Unmet Needs

JULY 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, July 7, 2017 - Our Unmet Needs

Philippians 4:19

God has promised to supply all our needs, yet fulfillment is sometimes slow in coming. What could be the problem? Perhaps we are.

When our Father fails to meet our expectations, we generally look outside ourselves for the reason. But while God's love is unconditional, many of His promises are not. For example, Philippians 4:19 is a "family promise"?it can be claimed only by those who rightly call the Sovereign of the universe "Father." His unlimited resources are not available to men and women who reject salvation through Jesus Christ. Moreover, when we look at the whole framework of Scripture, we see that the Lord makes obedience a condition for fulfilling our needs. (See Psalm 81:10-12.) He will not condone sin by blessing us while we rebel against Him.

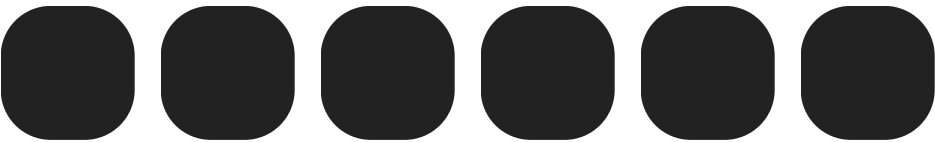
Think of yourself as part of an army at war?which is what you are, in a spiritual sense. A top military priority is to keep the supply line open, as victory is impossible if the soldiers are weaponless, cold, and starving. Our willful disobedience allows Satan to cut our supply line from the Lord. Restoring that connection is a matter of repentance. Those who walk in God's way are protected, provided for, and satisfied (Psalm 81:13-16).

Taking a promise out of its biblical context is very dangerous. And expecting God to keep a conditional pledge when we aren't meeting its requirements is even more unwise. The heavenly Father keeps His word but rightfully expects us to do our part. Thankfully, His expectations of us are not burdensome but reasonable: What He requires is that we simply love, honor, and obey Him.

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, July 6, 2017 - The Basis for Discernment

JULY 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, July 6, 2017 - The Basis for Discernment

Hebrews 4:12-13

Spiritual discernment is the ability to see life from God's perspective. It requires that we know how He thinks and acts. The Bible is His unchanging, infallible revelation of Himself. However, the Lord doesn't simply give us a list of facts about His character and ways. All throughout the pages of Scripture, He illustrates who He is and how He operates.

Although an ancient book, the Bible is in no way obsolete. Its stories may have taken place centuries ago, but its principles and applications are still relevant, offering discernment about situations and guidance for decisions.

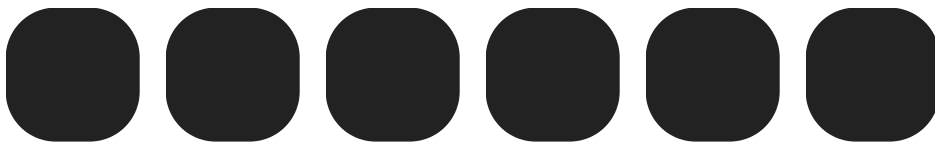
God's Word?which Ephesians 6:17 refers to as "the sword of the Spirit"? is active and piercing, like a surgeon's scalpel. The words don't simply sit on the page; rather, they penetrate our heart and judge our thoughts and motives. This convicting quality is why some Christians avoid reading the Bible. They prefer to live on a surface level but never understand why they react to situations the way they do. If we don't want to keep making the same mistakes, it's essential that we become discerning about ourselves. The way to do that is by approaching the Word of God with an open spirit. Then God will bring to light our hidden motives and unrecognized sins.

Spiritual discernment involves seeing not just circumstances but also ourselves from God's perspective. Have you learned to embrace the piercing sword of Scripture, or have you avoided doing so because it makes you uncomfortable? Remember, whenever the Lord uses a surgical knife, His purpose is always to make us healthier.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, July 5, 2017 - Seek Spiritual Discernment

JULY 05TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, July 5, 2017 - Seek Spiritual Discernment

Proverbs 2:1-7

At one time or another, everyone feels confused, uncertain, or misled. When that happens, we can live victoriously and confidently only by possessing spiritual discernment?the ability to see life from God's perspective. We need His help to distinguish between right and wrong, good and best, truth and error.

Each day we make many decisions?some trivial, others critical. The Lord doesn't want us to form judgments based on mere appearance or human reasoning. But the world is so full of deceptive information that we, on our own, couldn't know what to believe. And so God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us see the reality of each situation as He does.

We can fully trust the Lord with our relationships as well. Since He knows every person's heart, the only way we can wisely interact with others is to be sensitive to the leading of God's Spirit within us.

Although the Father gives each of His children the capacity for spiritual discernment, many Christians are unaware of it. They stumble through life, doing the best they can, but fail to use this wonderful provision. Others may not think they need it. They make choices according to their own knowledge and reasoning, never giving the Lord a second thought. Unless we cooperate with God in the development of His gift of discernment, it will lie dormant within us.

A discerning spirit begins with a humble, teachable attitude. If you've been handling decisions, situations, and relationships through your own wisdom, confess this to God. Then ask for His perspective and search His Word for direction. Your wisdom will grow, and discernment will protect you.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, June 30, 2017 - Releasing the Holy Spirit's Power

JUNE 30TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, June 30, 2017 - Releasing the Holy Spirit's Power

Romans 8:26-27

God's Spirit indwells believers at salvation, which means His power is available from that moment (Eph. 1:13). God created a simple way for us to access that strength every single day.

First, we must accept the truth that in and of ourselves, we are powerless to live out God's will. No matter how capable we may be, our own strength and wisdom are insufficient. Sometimes Christians become prideful about the good they have done or the number of years they've been saved. Imagine how much more we could serve the Lord if we would humbly get out of God's way and let Him work through us.

Second, we surrender our entire life to the guidance and governing of the Holy Spirit. In other words, we choose to conduct our spiritual walk—as well as our vocation, finances, family, and relationships—as God desires. His Spirit is not going to release supernatural power into a life that is continuing in rebellion.

Third, we exercise faith, which means demonstrating belief and trust in the Lord. Faith is the "switch" that releases the Spirit's power. It's like saying, "I believe You've got a plan, God, so I'm going to trust You to give

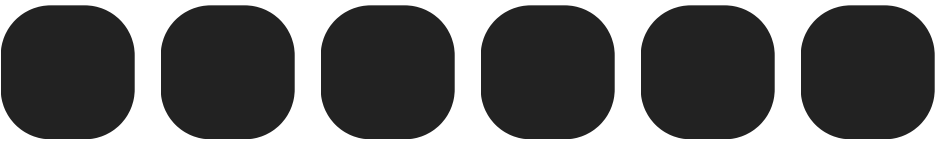
me what I need in order to do Your will." Then He will move heaven and earth to provide for your need, whatever it may be.

Merely memorizing and reviewing the steps isn't enough. Instead, commit to these principles as a way of life. Get used to thinking, *I can't but God can? I'll submit to His will because His plans are for my good and His glory.* That's the kind of life that overflows with the Holy Spirit's power.

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