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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, July 26, 2017 - How to Handle Burdens

JULY 26TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, July 26, 2017 - How to Handle Burdens

Psalm 55:1-23

In today's reading, David was overwhelmed with the weight of external pressures and internal anguish. Burdens come in a variety of emotional, spiritual, and physical forms, but they all feel heavy and cause weariness. Every one of us can identify with David's desire to "fly away and be at rest" (v. 6).

Some of the loads we carry are not part of God's plan for us. We lug around the guilt that lingers even after confession of sin and also try to function while carrying worry about the future. Then we top it off with a little bitterness and unforgiveness because life has not been fair. These burdens aren't from the Lord, and He won't help you carry what He has told you to release.

Other burdens, however, are entrusted to us by God. He gives us responsibilities, which can weigh us down, and He sometimes allows relational difficulties that tear at our heart. And when such problems and trials are persistent, they can drain our vitality and threaten to overwhelm us.

But remember, every circumstance in life is lovingly sifted through the Lord's fingers before reaching us. From His perspective, those things that are too heavy for us are opportunities for dependence upon Him. God never intends for any of His children to carry a burden without His

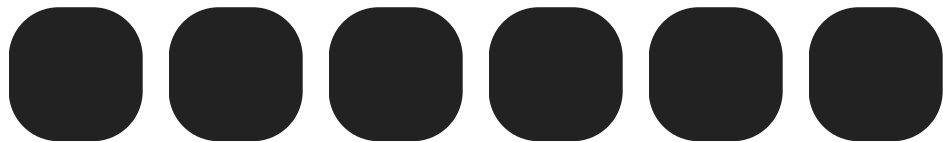
help. He says to give it to Him (v. 22) and promises to sustain us.

Casting your cares upon God means releasing them fully into His control. You will no longer be free to manage and manipulate the situation toward your desired outcome, but the freedom Christ offers will release you from the burden's weight. He'll sustain you with His peace as you trust Him.

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, July 25, 2017 - Can God Use You?

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Luke 10:38-42

Martha welcomed Jesus into her home. Her act of service may seem small compared to works like the apostle Paul's missionary trips and letters. But she and her family provided a place of rest and refreshment for the Savior, which must have been a welcome pause in His life. It's true that Jesus once corrected Martha for placing too much emphasis on the details of hospitality (Luke 10:41); nevertheless, when He visited her home, He no doubt anticipated food and fellowship with people He loved.

God's plan for every believer is made up of a lifetime of small opportunities. No matter what our career or calling may be, we should each seek ways to serve the Lord daily. We do this by ministering—wherever we are—to family members, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

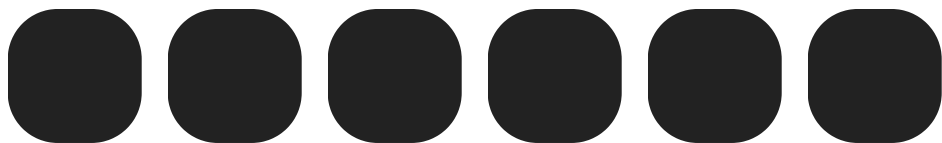
Since the Lord gives His children gifts and talents suitable for fulfilling His purpose, we know that He wants to use us. The question we should be asking is, "Can God use me?" That is, have we made ourselves available to follow Him in any circumstance? The areas of service set aside specifically for us are waiting. No one knows ahead of time exactly what God will require, but we can be sure He will equip us with the right tools for the task.

Are you ready to say, "Yes, God can use me"? If so, then tell the Lord you are available to work for Him in any way He desires. He will respond by placing people and opportunities in your path. Through His strength, you will do more to further the kingdom than you ever imagined—one day and one small act of service at a time.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, July 24, 2017 - Encouraging the Pastor

JULY 24TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, July 24, 2017 - Encouraging the Pastor

2 Timothy 1:1-6

Do you attend church? If so, God has placed a person in your life whose job it is to train you in righteousness and speak the truth, even when you don't want to hear it. You are blessed to have a pastor who loves you and cares about your spiritual well-being. He needs to know you care about him too.

Many churchgoers neglect to encourage the pastor, but being aware of his needs is an important part of belonging to the body of Christ. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul models the way we're to encourage those who minister.

1. Tell your pastor you appreciate him. There's nothing more uplifting to a person's heart than to know someone else cares. Words are certainly valuable, but actions can speak even more loudly. So intentionally seek ways to demonstrate your love for your minister.

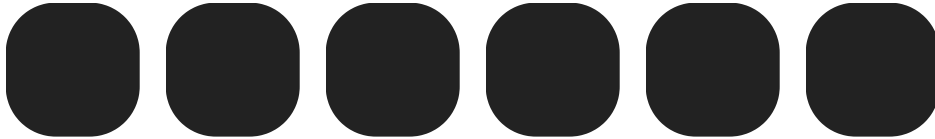
2. Express confidence in the pastor. Let him know you recognize the sincerity of his faith and appreciate his commitment to speak scriptural truths into your life.

3. Affirm the call of God on his life. Work with your pastor; respond to him in a way that shows you understand he's been called to minister and therefore has God's hand upon him. And when you experience the Lord working through him, let him know.

Above all, pray for your pastor. Don't assume that others in the church are praying or that a spiritual leader doesn't need intercession. The opposite is true. The devil would like to thwart effective ministering, but you can help to defend your shepherd as he tends the flock.

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Daily Devotional, Sunday, July 23, 2017 - The Blessings of Wisdom

JULY 23RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Proverbs 3:1-4

The world claims there are many paths to a successful, rewarding life: education, wealth, public recognition, or even service. But in the end, true fulfillment comes from the Lord and following His wisdom.

Proverbs says that when we choose to align our heart with God's truth, we will "find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man" (3:4). Not only will we have protection, clear guidance, and intimacy with the Father, but we'll also receive divine power to walk circumspectly before Him.

Wisdom—understanding God’s perspective on situations and responding accordingly—brings us the strength to stand firm in our faith and choose His way. It also helps us to calmly accept the hardships in our life. Our sovereign God knows the extent of our difficulties. Out of His love for us, He never gives us more than we can handle and uses even our darkest hours for His good purposes. Wise people are convinced this is true; they enjoy supernatural peace and will live in the Lord’s favor (Prov. 8:34-35; Phil. 4:7).

God wants to prosper His people in spiritual as well as material ways. For that reason, His first priority is to increase our understanding of Him. Then as we align our heart with His wisdom and will, we can apply His principles not just to our finances but to every facet of life.

The Lord stands ready to pour out His choicest blessings—power, divine favor, spiritual prosperity, and supernatural peace—on those who draw near to Him and submit to His plan.

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Daily Devotional, Saturday, July 22, 2017 - The Benefits of Wisdom

JULY 22ND 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Saturday, July 22, 2017 - The Benefits of Wisdom

Proverbs 3:13-18

Human wisdom is meaningless in the Lord's eyes. The truth is, God's "foolishness" is wiser than man's understanding. (See 1 Cor. 1:25.) While it may feel risky to set aside our own reasoning to seek after the Lord's, the benefits of walking in His wisdom are great.

The first blessing is greater knowledge of God. The Lord is personally involved in every facet of our lives. The better we know His character, the more we will understand His viewpoint, recognize where He is working, and be able to respond properly to life's circumstances.

A second way we profit is by receiving clear guidance. God sees everything—His perspective is eternal, and every decision of His is right. He knows exactly what is needed to accomplish His will in our life and what it will take to resolve problems in a godly way, making us more like Christ.

A third benefit is divine protection. As Proverbs 28:26 tells us, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered." We are not to rely upon our emotions, which are easily influenced by ungodliness. Nor can we trust the world's opinions. Wisdom's protection comes when we have a discerning spirit—one that is sensitive to the Lord's purpose and will for our life. With it, we gain insight into the unseen and the unspoken because nothing is hidden from the Spirit of God.

Knowing God, clear guidance, divine protection—human wisdom can't provide any of these. They come only from the heavenly Father, and He offers them freely to all who believe.

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