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Daily Devotional, Friday, 28, 2017 - Walking with Christ

JULY 28TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, 28, 2017 - Walking with Christ

Colossians 1:10-12

The pathway of faith has divine purpose, and we're to obey the Lord, no matter what. But even when God's direction is perplexing, we can count on the fact that He is good.

Walking obediently with Christ doesn't guarantee an easy life, which is obvious when we consider Paul. He encountered all kinds of hardships, including shipwreck, persecution, and beatings (2 Corinthians 11:23-27). Keep in mind, though, that nothing can touch a child of God without the Father's loving permission. He uses difficulty to strengthen and correct believers—and eventually as a tool in achieving His plan. Also remember that the Lord protects His followers in their suffering, just as He kept the apostle safe in situations that seemed impossible to overcome.

Adversity can tempt us to ignore the Holy Spirit's guidance. But we will ultimately regret such a decision, as God doesn't spare us from the consequences of our sin. However, He never lets go of His children, whom He will continue to protect and guide throughout life.

Walking in obedience and trust is the only way to true peace. As Paul sat in an uncomfortable Roman prison where his life was in danger, he encouraged believers not to worry but to trust the Lord and pray with gratitude (Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:6). Doing so leads to experiencing His perfect

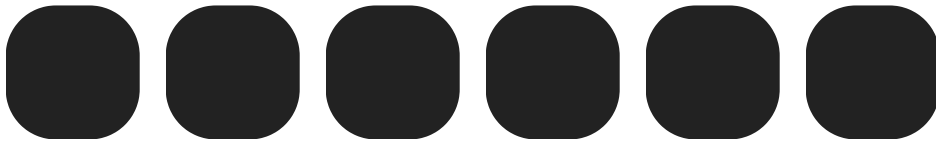
peace.

The only wise way to live is to believe in almighty God and follow wherever He leads. That is the road to contentment, fulfillment, protection, and peace. Are you journeying on the pathway of faith? Or is something holding you back from all God intended for your life?

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, July 27th - Take My Yoke

JULY 27TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, July 27th - Take My Yoke

Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus invites all burdened individuals to come to Him for rest, yet so often we misunderstand what He is offering. When stresses and problems weigh us down, the most natural response is to ask God for relief: “Lord, I can’t carry this anymore. I’m going to leave it here with You.” Having dumped the burden like a bag of garbage, we walk away but remain unchanged inside.

God doesn’t operate that way. Christ’s invitation is to join Him in the yoke so you can walk and work together. He doesn’t want just your burden; He wants *you*. The yoke of Christ is a symbol of discipleship, characterized by submission and obedience to Him. God’s goal isn’t simply to give relief by removing a weighty trial or affliction; He longs to draw you to Himself in a close and trusting relationship. Those who take Him up on His offer will turn from their old ways and be transformed.

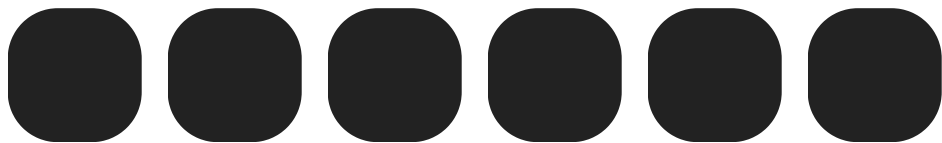
The process of lightening the load begins with learning to know and understand the Lord. The burden is not necessarily removed, but our thoughts and responses are changed as we begin to love Him, trust Him, believe His promises, and rely on His power. Then, as the weight of the affliction shifts from our shoulders to His, we will discover relief, although the situation may remain unchanged.

Being yoked with Christ results in rest for your soul. Life’s pressures may not lessen, but if you are intimately linked with Jesus, your soul is free from churning anxiety, and His peace is ruling in your heart. You have nothing to lose—except your weariness—and much to gain

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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?

JULY 25TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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

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.

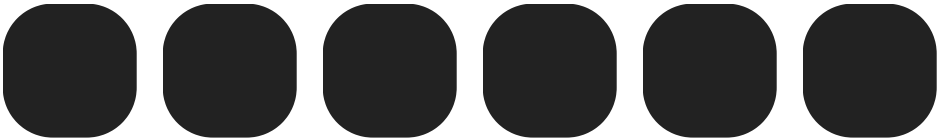
Since the Lord gives His children gifts and talents suitable for fulfilling His purpose, we know that He wants to use us. The question we should be asking is, “Can God use me?” That is, have we made ourselves available to follow Him in any circumstance? The areas of service set aside specifically for 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.

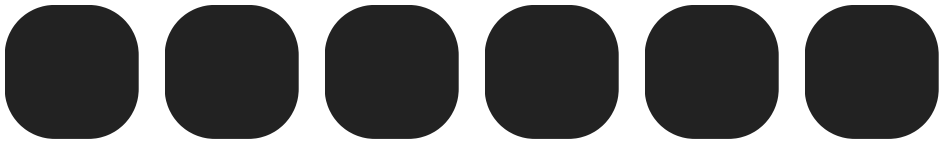
3. Affirm the call of God on his life. Work with your pastor; respond to him in a way that shows you understand he's been called to minister and therefore has God's hand upon him. And when you experience the Lord working through him, let him know.

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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