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## Daily Devotional, Monday, August 31, 2017 - An Ordinary Person

JULY 31ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Daily Devotional, Monday, August 31, 2017 - An Ordinary Person

#### Matthew 4:18-20

The apostle Peter was an ordinary person who lived in an extraordinary time. His was the generation during which Jesus Christ lived on the earth, died for the salvation of mankind, and rose again.

It was through his brother Andrew that Peter (who was originally called Simon) met the Lord (John 1:40-42). When Jesus invited him to become a disciple, he immediately left his fishing trade and placed himself under Christ's authority (Matt. 4:20). He became a passionate follower who consistently demonstrated an eagerness to be near the Savior and in the middle of whatever was going on. Whether meeting Jesus on the water during a storm (Matt. 14:27-29) or speaking to Him during His transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-5), Peter was devoted to his Master's service.

In the beginning, the former fisherman was quick to speak and to act, and this impulsiveness created many problems for him. For example, when Jesus was talking about His imminent suffering and death, Peter objected, as if he knew better than the Lord. Christ's rebuke was swift and direct (Matt. 16:21-23). The apostle, however, learned from his mistakes. He's a good example of how we should let go of personal desires, wholeheartedly embrace Jesus' way, and walk closely with Him (Mark 8:34).

The Lord chooses unexceptional people like Peter, you, and me to build His kingdom. He asks His followers to love Him above all else and fully commit to obeying Him. When we do, He will accomplish more through us than we could ever imagine.

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## Daily Devotional, Saturday, July 29, 2017 - Overcoming the Faith Barrier

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Daily Devotional, Saturday, July 29, 2017 - Overcoming the Faith Barrier

**Exodus 3:10-17**

God called Moses to do a great work for Him that would also bless the Israelites. Moses' response to this awesome invitation was to offer excuses for why he couldn't obey. This kind of attitude—which I call a “faith barrier”—can thwart us spiritually.

In Moses' life, we see areas of weakness that can create such a faith barrier:

**Poor self-image.** When God gave the command to go to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses' immediate response was to say, “Who am I?” (Ex. 3:11). Perhaps he was thinking of his occupation as a lowly shepherd living in Midian. Maybe he was referring to his upbringing and separation from his birth family (Ex. 2:1-4). Or he might have been recalling his past, when he killed an Egyptian and had to flee (Ex. 2:12). Whatever Moses' objection was, the Lord answered with a wonderful promise: “I will be with you” (3:12).

**Ignorance of God's greatness.** In order to carry out God's plan, we need to believe fully in the One who has called us. When Moses questioned his assignment again, the Lord answered by revealing Himself as the great I AM and the One who had promised to rescue the Israelites (vv. 14-17). By trusting in the character and promises of almighty God, Moses would be able to carry out this seemingly impossible assignment.

Faith barriers hinder the flow of divine power in our life, slow spiritual growth, and prevent us from fully carrying out the Father's will. We must remember who He is and where power comes from. We know that our heavenly Father is sovereign over all, and His Spirit empowers us to follow through in obedience.

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

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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.

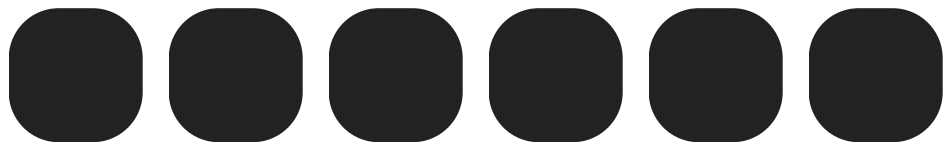
The process of lightening the load begins with learning to know and understand the Lord. The burden is not necessarily removed, but our thoughts and responses are changed as we begin to love Him, trust Him, believe His promises, and rely on His power. Then, as the weight of the affliction shifts from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

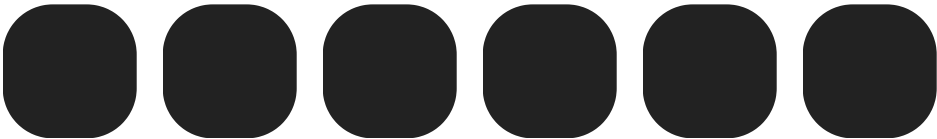
Other burdens, however, are entrusted to us by God. He gives us responsibilities, which can weigh us down, and He sometimes allows relational difficulties that tear at our heart. And when such problems and trials are persistent, they can drain our vitality and threaten to overwhelm us.

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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