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# Daily Devotional, Thursday, August 10, 2017 - The Believer's Highest Honor

AUGUST 10TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, August 10, 2017 - The Believer's Highest Honor

## John 12:24-26

I'll never forget the best introduction I've ever received as an invited speaker. The presenter simply said, "It is my great pleasure to introduce to you my brother, Charles Stanley, servant of the Most High God." I couldn't move from my seat for a few moments; I was so struck by this opening that glorified the Lord and identified my proper position.

The Word of God describes believers as ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20), soldiers (2 Tim. 2:3), and saints (Eph. 2:19). But the highest honor that we can receive is to be called servants of the Most High God. From the world's perspective, those who die to self in order to follow the Lord may stand in last place—in reality, however, they are first in His kingdom. (See Matt. 20:16.)

Sadly, service to God is often equated solely with what goes on at church. The preacher serves. The choir serves. The worker in the soup kitchen serves. But the guy pushing papers and the woman cleaning up others' messes tend to be seen as simply doing their jobs. From the Father's vantage point, though, work well done brings as much glory to His name as a song lifted in praise. (See Col. 3:23-24.) So take heart—if you're doing quality work and striving to make an impact on those around you, then you are serving God.

Service to the Lord is not about *what* we do, but rather *how well* we do all that the Lord has given us to accomplish (1 Peter 4:10). A good servant shares both Jesus Christ's attitude of humility and His motivation to reach people with the love of God.

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## Daily Devotional, Wednesday, August 9, 2017 - Prayer on Behalf of the Church

AUGUST 09TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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**Colossians 1:1-12**

Today we meet Epaphras, a man who had a heart for the local church. He was most likely converted to Christ under Paul’s teaching when the gospel was rapidly spreading throughout Asia Minor. Epaphras evangelized his hometown of Colossae and founded a church there—and possibly the churches in Hierapolis and Laodicea as well.

Although very little is written about Epaphras in the New Testament, the letter to the Colossians emphasizes his great love and deep concern for Christ’s church (Col. 4:12-13). At the close of the letter, Paul points out that Epaphras is “always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God” (v. 12).

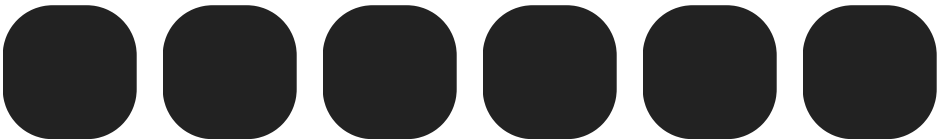
What he was asking for wasn’t greater numbers or bigger offerings but spiritual maturity and the true knowledge of God’s will. At that point in time, Epaphras was in prison with Paul ( Philem. 1:23), and he couldn’t refute the false teachers who’d infiltrated the church at Colossae. But being apart from his congregation didn’t mean he was helpless. Intercession is a powerful ministry. It can alter circumstances, change thinking, and bring God’s truth to light. Epaphras went to his knees to plead for the church, and Paul joined him, which we see in his prayer in Colossians 1:9-14. (See also Col. 1:7)

Is anything weighing on your heart? Do you feel helpless to remedy the situation? If so, follow Epaphras and Paul’s example: Go to the One who knows exactly what to do and has the power to accomplish it. Then rest in Him and let His peace guard your heart and mind.

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## Daily Devotional, Monday, August 7, 2017 - Getting Your Life Back on Course

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AUGUST 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, August 7, 2017 - Getting Your Life Back on Course

### Hebrews 12:1-3

How do you view your life? Is it an exciting challenge filled with contentment and joy? Or does it feel more like a ditch that has you trapped and struggling?

Our Creator gives each person the specific gifts, abilities, and circumstances necessary to live according to His purpose (Heb. 13:21). Sadly, many people drift through life without taking hold of God's terrific plan for them. Instead, they try to manufacture their own pleasure, not realizing that the Almighty's best is where true fulfillment is found.

Unfortunately, there are also many saved individuals who walk with the heavenly Father for a time but then get off track. This happens for a variety of reasons. Some become fainthearted and lose the desire to persevere through challenging circumstances. For others, worldly ideas and goals become distractions—or perhaps certain people influence them to lose focus. Sports, hobbies, or simply busyness can also cause a believer's heart to stray from Christ.

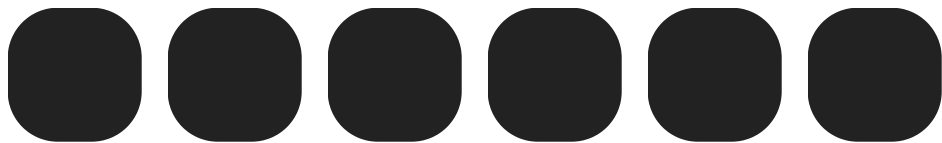
No matter what the cause, any life separated from the only true anchor—Jesus—is in danger. God offers believers a full life in Him. But the Bible teaches that Christians will not thrive if they live apart from God's Word, His principles, and an ever-deepening relationship with Him (John 10:10; John 14:6).

Are you walking closely with Jesus? Or have the cares of life entangled you? Pray for wisdom as you consider these questions. And if anything besides God holds first place in your heart, ask Him to help you surrender it to Him. Then commit to pray, read the Word, and obey.

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## Daily Devotional, Saturday, August 5, 2017 - Our God is Able

AUGUST 05TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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**Ephesians 3:20-21**

Jesus knew firsthand what it meant to have limited financial resources, to have those closest to Him question His actions, and to be rejected by those He sought to serve (Matt. 8:20; Mark 3:21 ; John 6:66). However, He never allowed such circumstances to control His emotions or dictate His actions. Instead, He chose to trust that the Father was able to carry out His Word.

We are called to follow Christ's example and believe that God is able to do what He has said. For example, the Bible promises eternal salvation for everyone who requests forgiveness in Jesus' name (Heb. 7:25). The Son satisfied His Father's justice by dying on the cross for all of mankind's sins—from white lies to vile acts. God will pardon everyone who has genuine faith in Jesus, and He makes each believer a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Regardless of the trouble we have caused or the mistakes we have made, He invites us to draw near in faith and receive the gift of everlasting life.

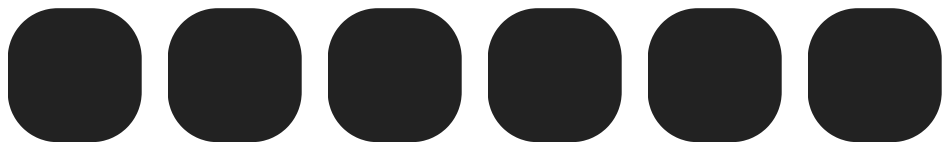
Having saved us, God says He will establish us in truth (Rom. 16:25); after giving us a firm foundation in Christ, He builds us up in righteousness. Through the ministry of His Spirit and the Word, we start to see things as the Father does and learn what pleases Him (Rom. 12:2).

By believing that God keeps His promises, we will become stronger in our faith and more at peace. Hardships that once would have thrown us off course will lose their power to shake us. Hope will replace discouragement, and trust will overcome doubt. Each time trouble comes, focus your attention on your loving heavenly Father and His ability to care for you.

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# Daily Devotional, Friday, August 4, 2017 - Made for Praise

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AUGUST 04TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, August 4, 2017 - Made for Praise

## **Psalm 100:1-5**

Think about the husband who doesn't communicate with his wife unless he wants her to do something for him. If the only time he interacts with her is when he has a need, then the wife is not being loved; she's being used.

But don't we often treat God the same way? We lift prayer request after prayer request and yet fail to give Him admiration and praise. How frequently do we attempt to use the Lord to fulfill our selfish desires?

1 Peter 2:9 says God's people should "proclaim [His] excellencies." Our concerns are of great importance to Him, but He also wants us to come to Him with a worshipful heart, not an attitude of self-centeredness.

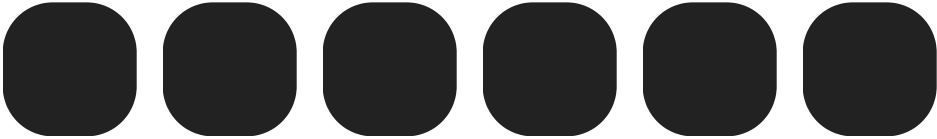
You may ask, "What's the point of praise?" When you begin to extol the Lord, your focus shifts to Him. Then you'll begin to recall the ways in which He has impacted your life. As Psalm 105:5 says, "Remember His wonders which He has done."

Praising the heavenly Father is one of the principal themes found throughout Scripture. We're told to do so joyfully (Psalm 100:1), all throughout the day (Psalm 113:3), and in the presence of others (Psalm 108:3; Psalm 111:1). The Lord truly created us to praise Him.

Take some time today to reflect on the Lord's mighty work of salvation in your life. Instead of coming with a list of requests, simply praise the Father for His faithfulness and righteousness. When your heart is full of praise, worries will dissipate, and you'll trust God to provide for your needs in His own timing.

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