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# Daily Devotional, Thursday, August 17, 2017 - Patience: Our Gift of Service

AUGUST 17TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## Colossians 3:12-13

When we are troubled or in pain, we turn to people who will listen patiently to our cries of distress. But I wonder how often we seek to be the person who steps up to share a hurting friend's burden.

In today's reading, the apostle Paul encouraged believers to put on a heart of compassion, kindness, and patience. In other words, we don't come from the womb pre-equipped with these traits. Rather, we receive on-the-job training in imitating Jesus Christ as we bear with and forgive one another. The Holy Spirit is more than willing to instruct us in the proper ways to grow spiritual fruit. The heavenly Father then provides opportunities for us to try out our newly developed skills.

We tend to classify patience rather narrowly as "waiting." That's certainly part of the definition, but so are concepts like endurance, perseverance, and persistence. When we're relating to others as Paul challenged us to do, we are not simply waiting for them to become better versions of themselves. We are enduring their hardship alongside them or persisting in our attempts to offer aid. We're caring, listening, and serving however we can. In a world that insists on doing everything quickly, patience is an amazing gift to give another person.

By placing patience on the list of spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22-23), God indicated that every believer could develop this trait. Whatever additional gifts and talents you possess, patience is an attribute that you can put on. Practice it for the glory of God and as a way to serve your fellow man.

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## Daily Devotional, Wednesday, August 16, 2017 - The Rewards of Patience

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**Psalm 40:1-17**

The Scriptures contain many stories of people who waited years or even decades before the Lord’s promises came to pass. What modern believers can learn from the patience of biblical saints like Abraham, Joseph, David, and Paul is that waiting upon the Lord has eternal benefits.

Today let’s look at Israel’s most memorable monarch. David was the chosen heir to Israel’s throne, but he spent years dodging King Saul’s wrathful pursuit. Despite having two different opportunities for vengeance, David resisted the temptation and spared Saul’s life. He chose to adhere to God’s timetable for his coronation instead of dishonoring the Lord by killing the divinely anointed king. David’s psalms reveal his intimate awareness of Yahweh’s work in his life. The shepherd king not only achieved his objective through patience; he also observed that God’s way is always the best.

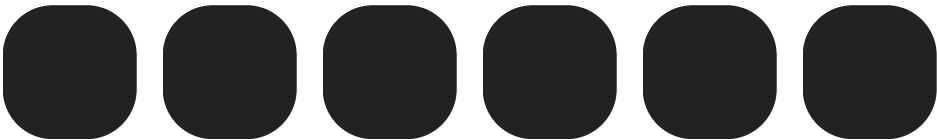
David left behind an incredible testimony of God’s faithfulness for each of us to read and ponder. He was committed to waiting upon the Lord, and as a result, he had the Father’s approval and blessing. We cannot underestimate the reward of living in divine favor. That isn’t a special state reserved for the “giants of the faith” like David. All who obediently endure until the Lord acts on their behalf abide in His favor (Isa. 40:31).

David didn’t receive his blessings because he was special; he was honored among men because he honored the Lord above all. And since he trusted in God’s faithfulness, he endured hardship with patience. We, too, can expect to be blessed when we wait upon the Lord.

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## Daily Devotional, Tuesday, August 15, 2017 - Obstacles as Opportunities

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AUGUST 15TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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### Psalm 27:14

Learning to see obstacles as opportunities takes time. Recalling certain truths can help our perspective:

**God is at work.** As barriers remain in place and our situation seems unchanged, God is orchestrating people and events to move His plan forward. He works silently, invisibly, and effectively.

**God prepares the way.** He has already decided in His mind which hindrances to remove and which to leave unaltered. For the obstacles that remain, the Lord will arrange a way around them or fit them into His plan. What He has determined will be accomplished.

**God requires our cooperation.** He wants us to be ready to face difficult situations. Through His Word, He communicates what we need to know and also equips us (Heb. 13:20-21).

**God is personally involved.** He wants to develop in us a greater sensitivity to His presence. Through Scripture, prayer, and other believers, we can receive the assurance that the Lord is near.

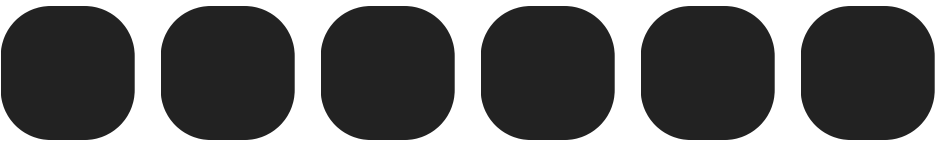
**God gives clear instruction.** He does not bring confusion. Whether we receive His direction in stages or all at once, He asks us to trust in Him rather than our own thinking (Prov. 3:5-6).

Facing challenges involves courage, patience, and faith. It takes courage to accept the presence of barriers, to move in step with God, and to do what He asks. Patience is required as we wait for Him to equip us and reveal His plan. Faith is necessary for us to trust God with the outcome and to focus on obeying Him.

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## Daily Devotional, Monday, August 14, 2017 - Overcoming Obstacles

AUGUST 14TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Matthew 17:14-21

Nothing is impossible for the heavenly Father. No obstacle confuses God or poses any kind of challenge for Him. Though we know He is sovereign over every situation, we have trouble maintaining this perspective, just like the disciples in today's passage. Too often when difficulties arise, we ...

**Experience a shift in focus.** During trials, we tend to take our eyes off the Lord and instead see only our problems. The longer we look at our circumstance, the larger it seems. As we dwell on it in thought and conversation, our mindset can become very negative. Though God still has a direction for us to take, we are no longer concentrating on His purposes.

**Develop an incorrect assessment of resources.** In our troubles, we start taking inventory of our own strength and abilities. When they prove insufficient, we become discouraged. The truth is that we don't have what is needed for life's trials—Jesus Himself told us that. (See John 15:5 .) But God's capabilities are unlimited, His power is never-ending, and His wisdom is complete. We need to take stock of His resources, not our own.

**View obstacles as barriers.** For the obedient believer, impediments represent opportunities, not problems. The Lord can demonstrate His awesome power through our difficulties. (See 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.) At such times, we grow in our faith and learn more about our Father. If we view hardships simply as troubles, then we can miss demonstrations of God's love, power, and wisdom.

Start each day committed to a Christ-centered focus, a dependence on His resources, and an "opportunity" mindset.

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## Daily Devotional, Friday, August 11, 2017 - Jesus Christ, Bondservant

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AUGUST 11TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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### **Philippians 2:5-7**

The disciples gathered around a table to celebrate Passover with Jesus. If one of them had been more thoughtful of the others—or possessed a spirit of servanthood—he would have done the very thing Christ did: take water and a cloth, kneel before the 12 other men, one at a time, and wash their feet. Jesus came into this world as a servant (Matt. 20:28). He was willing to do whatever was necessary to move men and women’s hearts and bring them to a saving knowledge of God.

A bonds slave was the lowest of household servants, and he had the distasteful job of washing the feet of anyone who entered the home. This is the very task Christ voluntarily performed that evening, right before His trial and sufferings would begin. His act was a foreshadowing of the service He was about to render on behalf of the whole world—by dying on the cross for humanity’s sin.

We who believe in Jesus Christ do not call Him “slave”; we identify Him as our Master. So when He says that a servant is not greater than His master, He is speaking of our relationship with Him (John 13:16). Believers bend their knees to God’s most humble servant, His Son.

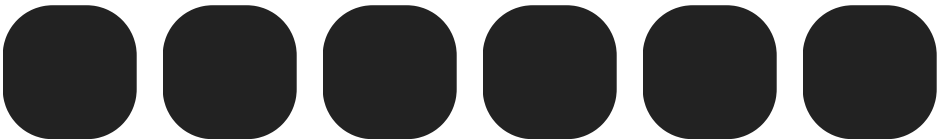
How are you serving the almighty Lord?

Christians are God’s workmanship, created for the purpose of good works (Eph. 2:10). In other words, we were saved to serve. Therefore, there is no valid excuse for refusal. When you surrender to the Lord, you step onto the pathway of Jesus Christ, which is the best possible way to live.

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