Faith Matters



Daily Devotional, Thursday, September 7, 2017 - Evaluate Your Commitment

SEPTEMBER 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, September 7, 2017 - Evaluate Your Commitment

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Have you ever evaluated your level of commitment to our heavenly Father? Sadly, many Christians have entered the door of salvation and settled down into their pew, expecting nothing more. But Christ wants us to make a deliberate decision to let Him be the Lord of our life. This requires the surrender of all our rights and recognition that He's the one who plots the course. Our responsibility is simply to follow.

However, our natural tendency is to limit the areas where we allow God access. The day you trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior, did you keep the title deed for your life? Have you drawn a circle indicating, "This is the area in which I will serve You, Lord, but don't ask me to go any farther"? If so, you've failed to recognize that when Jesus granted you forgiveness from sin, He also purchased you for Himself. All that you are and have belongs to Him. It's the height of pride to assume authority over that which no longer belongs to you.

When the Lord challenges us to do something beyond our self-determined boundaries, He is calling us to a higher level of commitment. No matter how dedicated we may be at present, none of us have yet "arrived." Each challenge is an opportunity to hand Christ full authority over every aspect of life.

You are only as committed as you are obedient to whatever God is asking of you at any given moment. If you've posted a "no trespassing" sign anywhere in your life, now is the time to take it down. As Christ's blood-bought possessions, we are His—not only by purchase but also by His sacrificial love.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, September 6, 2017 - A Call to Commitment

SEPTEMBER 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, September 6, 2017 - A Call to Commitment

Exodus 3:1-15

How do you respond when God tells you to do something that seems beyond your capabilities? Are you full of excuses, giving Him reasons why He picked the wrong person? That's exactly the way Moses responded. In giving him the gigantic task of leading the Israelites to freedom, the Lord was calling Moses to a high level of commitment. If we hope to step obediently into our God-given challenges, we must answer the same two questions Moses asked.

Who is God? The answer is important because it reveals whom we recognize as having authority to tell us what to do. The two names the Lord used in answering Moses—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 3:6) and "I am who I am" (v. 14)—identified Him as the sovereign Creator and self-existent, everlasting One who keeps His promises. This means there is no higher authority, and He has every right to command our obedience.

Who am I? When Moses questioned whether he was the right man for the job, the Lord gave him a promise: "Certainly I will be with you" (v. 12). Moses was able to fulfill the assignment only because God chose to enter into a relationship with him. Likewise, our source of adequacy is a relationship with Jesus Christ and the presence of His indwelling Holy Spirit in our life.

Has God given you a tough assignment? Remember that as your Creator, He's designed specific tasks for you to achieve. If you refuse to obey, you'll miss what He has planned for your life. Just think what Moses would have forfeited, had he said no. Too much is at stake. Trust God and do what He says!

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, September 5, 2017 - Living in God's Grace

SEPTEMBER 05TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, September 5, 2017 - Living in God's Grace

Philippians 1:1-11

Since all of Paul's letters begin with an expression of God's grace to us, we may be tempted to think that it is simply a customary word of greeting. But in reality, God's grace is our foundation, our covering, and the sphere in which we live as believers in Christ.

Grace is commonly defined as God's unmerited and undeserved favor. According to Ephesians 2:8, it's the means by which we are saved through faith. And Romans 5:2 says that by our faith, we have "obtained our introduction ... into this grace in which we stand." In other words, we are continual recipients of an abundance of grace throughout life and into eternity.

Just as our salvation never ends, so God's grace never ceases to do its work in our life. That's why Paul could confidently say, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). We never have to fear that we will lose our salvation, because God is the one who keeps us and promises to complete us when Christ returns. Furthermore, Paul says we have been "filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ [and glorifies] God" (v. 11).

Sometimes it's difficult to see righteousness in ourselves, because we know how weak and flawed we are. But if we've been saved, then Christ lives in us and we in Him (John 15:4). He is our righteousness, and He's actively producing His fruit in our life as we abide in Him. This process, known as sanctification, is God's grace working to align our

behavior with Christ's righteousness. So let's stand firm in His grace and trust Him to complete us.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, September 1, 2017 - Listening to God

SEPTEMBER 01ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Proverbs 2:1-5

Learning to listen to God is an essential part of following His will. The Lord regularly speaks to His children through...

Scripture. The Bible is our guidebook to God's thoughts and actions. It is the primary source for Christians to discover His character and learn to trust Him. This means we ought to read more than just a little bit every day. Our goal should be to absorb the message and then listen for God to offer instructions on how and where to apply His Word.

Prayer. Like all real friends, the Lord desires give-and-take in His relationships. Therefore, prayer is not complete when we're done talking. We must quiet our mouth and thoughts so that our spiritual ears can open.

Circumstances. In the Bible, the Lord often revealed His ways to men and women through their circumstances. He still works that way today. Situations differ, but our God does not change. He uses everyday life to reveal errors in thinking, to open or close doors of opportunity, and to prove His promises true.

Others. Pastors, friends, and mentors can all speak truth into a person's life. The Lord places believers in community so they can be supported and helped by those nearby. He doesn't hesitate to send a message from the mouth of someone we know and trust.

God does not use just one or two of these methods to reach a believer; He speaks through all four. We need to attune our spiritual ears, always remembering that a message from the Lord must agree with His holy Word. The Father is talking to you. Are you listening?

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, August 31, 2017 The Expression of Faith

AUGUST 31ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, August 31, 2017 The Expression of Faith

Mark 11:20-24

If you made a request of God and then time passed without results, it is understandable you might start wondering if He ever heard you at all. Do you remember thinking, *What happened, Lord? You said that if I asked in faith, You would do it. Didn't You hear me?*

Stop to consider this question: Can you think of a time you brought a petition to the Lord and it apparently went unanswered? What was the situation? What did you pray about it? What did you say to others about it? What did you do about it?

I believe one of the most common reasons we experience a crisis of faith is that our words and our attitude get out of line with each other. We tell ourselves that we are praying to the heavenly Father, seeking His will, and requesting His intervention, but what we're really doing is just complaining to Him.

We say, "Lord, I really messed this up" or "I don't deserve this." We might pray, "How did this happen?" Or perhaps we even cry, "How did You let this happen?" We moan about the situation, reveling in every ounce of anguish, and then petition God to fix it. Is this a prayer that honors God?

In Mark 11:24, Jesus explains that if we ask for something, we should believe in our hearts that it has already been granted. This level of faith is found not in our whines but in our praises. God absolutely wants us to cry out to Him and to lay our petitions at His feet (1 Pet. 5:7). But we must be careful to do so in a way that focuses on God's glory—not our own.

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