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# Daily Devotional, Thursday, September 21, 2017 - When Faith Gives Way to Fear

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SEPTEMBER 21ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, September 21, 2017 - When Faith Gives Way to Fear

## **Genesis 2:7-25, Genesis 3**

Throughout the Bible, we see evidence of God's authority over both humanity and nature. However, many of us have trouble reconciling God's sovereign control with the existence of evil. Let's look at what Scripture tells us.

In the beginning, God created a perfect world, after which He declared that all He had made was good (Gen. 1:31). Wickedness was not part of what He'd fashioned. In the heavens, however, an angel known as Satan sought to elevate himself above God and was cast down to earth (Isa. 14:12-14).

God created Adam and Eve in His image. They were made with the capacity to love their Creator and the ability to choose to obey or disobey Him. God had no desire for Adam and Eve to sin (James 1:13), but He allowed their will to be tested. We know the rest of the story. When they disobeyed God, sin entered our world and corrupted mankind. As Adam and Eve's descendants, we inherited a sinful nature (Rom. 5:12).

The Lord's permissive will allowed events to unfold as they have. God did not create evil, but He has permitted it to exist and uses it to accomplish His good purposes (Isa. 45:6-7).

When you have questions or doubts about the Lord's sovereignty, start with what you do understand, study what God has revealed about Himself and His ways, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you believe. A few answers to your questions will come quickly, while some will require diligent study and spiritual maturity. As for the answers to other questions, which God has chosen to keep hidden, we are to walk by faith (Deut. 29:29).

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## Daily Devotional, Wednesday, September 20,2017 - The Witness of Suffering

SEPTEMBER 20TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## 1 Peter 3:13-18

We'd all like to be witnesses for Christ. If we faithfully display His righteousness, love, patience, and joy in our interactions with others, it's logical to think they'll be drawn to Jesus. Yet while that's true for some, many have an opposite reaction.

Jesus called believers the light of the world and said we're to let our light shine so men will see our good deeds and glorify God (Matt. 5:14-16). But He also said, "All who do evil hate the light" because it exposes their sin (John 3:20 NLT). Then Jesus warned that if men persecuted Him, they would also persecute His disciples (John 15:20).

History has proven Christ's words to be true. He was hated and crucified, all His disciples except John were martyred, and throughout history Christians have been persecuted in numerous places around the globe. Yet despite all this, the church still marches forward, and people continue to be saved.

While the righteous conduct of the saints and the preaching of the gospel may not always win the lost, many have been converted by watching how Christians suffered. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* describes believers voluntarily laying down their life—even singing, praying, and praising God as they faced excruciating deaths. In parts of the world today, believers are still being faithful witnesses for Christ with their response to persecution and suffering.

Although most of us are not facing intense hatred, our lives may be an irritation to those living in darkness. When we face slander, mocking, or mistreatment because of our faith, let's remember that a godly response may be our most effective witness.

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## Daily Devotional, Tuesday, September 19, 2017 - How to Handle the Bible

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SEPTEMBER 19TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, September 19, 2017 - How to Handle the Bible

### **Psalm 1:1-3**

The value we place on something determines how we treat it. For instance, you probably wouldn't give much thought to caring for an old shoebox. Yet if someone placed \$10,000 inside before handing you that same cardboard container, you'd likely rearrange your day to protect it against damage or theft.

Once we realize the worth of Scripture, we no longer read merely out of obligation. Instead, we hunger for its revelation and life-changing power.

Here's how you can prioritize God's Word so that it impacts your heart and behavior. First, turn to it daily with eager expectation for what the Lord will reveal. Second, meditate upon the Word by thinking about what you've read and absorbing its meaning and implications. Third, study God's truth. There are a variety of ways to do this. For example, follow a specific word through the Old and New Testaments by using a concordance or search engine. Or study an entire book by dissecting one chapter at a time. Fourth, believe what the Lord says. Fifth, obey. In other words, take what you read and apply it to your life circumstances. This often requires courage and discipline. Sixth, share what you've learned. Doing so will encourage others while

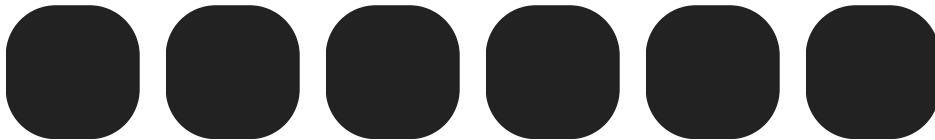
strengthening you and sinking the lesson deep in your heart.

The Bible may *look* like just another book. But it is living truth that can protect and guide, pierce and encourage. It holds the story of Christ's sacrifice and our salvation, so we can eventually dwell with the Lord in heaven. The way that we look to and depend on God's Word will reflect to others the value we place on it.

LAST UPDATED ON SEPTEMBER 19TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## Daily Devotional, Monday, September 18, 2017 - The Book of Books

SEPTEMBER 18TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Daily Devotional, Monday, September 18, 2017 - The Book of Books](#)

## Isaiah 55:9-11

Step into almost any bookstore, and you will find volumes covering every topic imaginable. Want new direction for your life? Self-help sections are extremely popular and accessible. Are your children disobeying? Parenting literature abounds. But do all of these “expert” authors have trustworthy credentials?

There *is* a place to find guidance and information that won’t ever mislead: The Bible will bless and benefit everyone who reads and applies its wisdom. Here’s what the Author—“the God of truth” (Isa. 65:16)—says about His own Word:

**1. The Bible gives direction for life** (Psalm 119:105). God uses His Word to lead us, no matter what our circumstances may be. The Holy Spirit can take even simple verses, which seem general at first glance, and apply them to our specific situation.

**2. Scripture strengthens us when we grieve or face difficulty** (Psalm 119:28, Psalm 119:116). By spending time processing what God says, we’re reminded that He loves us, cares about our situation, and can handle whatever we’re facing. Worry and pain turn into peace, hope, and joyful confidence.

**3. God’s Word helps us understand our inner motivations** (Heb. 4:12). Scripture acts like a mirror that lets us see ourselves as we truly are.

The Bible is the very mind of God put into words so that man can know his Maker more fully. In deepening our understanding of the heavenly Father, we learn how to live successfully and die unafraid. To what extent do you depend upon this amazing Book as your foundation for life?

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## Daily Devotional, Friday, September 15, 2017 - Abiding in the Lord

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SEPTEMBER 15TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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### **John 15:1-5**

Yesterday I shared with you about the time when God reminded me that I am not the vine—He is. For years I had tried to accomplish by myself what Jesus Christ wanted to achieve through me. In other words, I attempted to produce fruit by doing good works. My desire was to impress God and earn His approval. His goal, on the other hand, was for me to act like the branch that I am and just abide.

The Holy Spirit's job is to live the life of Christ through each believer. This process is known by a variety of names, including the exchanged life, the Spirit-filled life, and the abiding life. All of these monikers describe the joyful existence Paul spoke of in Galatians 2:20: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." The apostle meant those words literally.

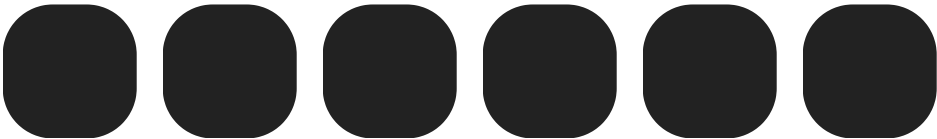
Seen from the outside, a branch does not appear to be doing anything. But don't get the idea that the abiding life is passive. Jesus was the perfect example of a Spirit-filled life, and He certainly didn't sit around! He worked hard out of a reservoir of divine energy (John 14:10). All of Christ's wisdom, knowledge, and courage were drawn from God through the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit does not pop out of believers through effort; Christians bear fruit through surrender. We “take root” in the heavenly Father by meditating on His Word, praying, and serving. We reserve nothing for ourselves to control but fully rely upon Him. That’s not passive living; it’s an abiding life.

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