



[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, October 17, 2017 - How to Reach Your Goals

OCTOBER 17TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Isaiah 41:10

Yesterday, we learned the importance of determining goals. We should also be sure to establish them with God's guidance, rather than devising them on our own and expecting Him to bless our efforts. Our success will be determined by our dependence upon the Lord. If we set out to accomplish anything in our own strength—even a godly task—we are likely to fail.

Other factors can also help us achieve an objective. A consuming passion, for example, can provide us with motivation and prevent us from becoming discouraged. In addition, we should have confidence to reach the goal, knowing that the heavenly Father will equip us for every task He assigns. Think back to David, the shepherd boy: He seemed like no match for Goliath, but the Lord prepared him through his experience in protecting sheep from dangerous animals.

Planning a step-by-step course of action will also help us be successful—a calendar is useful in setting up deadlines for each part of the plan. And two more things we need are courage and consistency. Fear of failure and the opinion of others can be paralyzing. But courage comes from reading God's Word, praying, and turning a deaf ear to negativity. Then, consistency will keep our eye on the goal so we will not deviate from it.

Is the heavenly Father leading you toward a specific goal? Remember, the Lord is all-powerful. If you depend on Him completely, you'll experience His ability to do mighty things and accomplish His divine objectives through your willing spirit.

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[Go to post](#)



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TOP

Daily Devotional, Monday, October 16, 2017 - The Victorious Life

OCTOBER 16TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 Samuel 17:12-51

The Philistine army was ready to fight. Merely a boy, David traveled from his home to the battlefield in order to check on his brothers and supply them with food. There, on hearing the notorious Goliath threaten Israel, the young Israelite was outraged. *Who was this giant to challenge the Lord's army?*

David sensed God's direction and obeyed. A battle ensued between a giant and a boy, but the almighty God stood with David. Goliath, along with the entire Philistine army, was defeated.

This is truly an amazing story—we rarely hear of anything this miraculous in our world today. But we, like David, can live triumphantly, even in the midst of terrifying and seemingly impossible circumstances. First, we need to understand success from the Lord's perspective: Goals should align with Scripture; then our Father directs us, and we follow with confidence.

Second, we—like David—ought to have a clear picture of what needs to be accomplished. Goals should be clear enough to write in a sentence or two. For example, David's aim was to free God's people from their enemies. Our goals may be huge and lifelong, like modeling dependence on Jesus for our children. Or others may be simpler to achieve, like creating a weekly family night.

Whether facing a daunting challenge like David's or an easier undertaking, you should live intentionally. Ask the Lord for direction and purpose as you contemplate your goals, both big and small. The same God who led David in victory desires to lead you today.

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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Friday, October 13, 2017 - The Gift of Salvation

OCTOBER 13TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Galatians 5:1

Citizens in many countries believe they are free because their governments allow them to worship, speak, and travel as they desire. Yet despite the liberties a constitution may guarantee, countless people from those lands live in bondage. That's because true freedom isn't something that can be legislated. Rather, it is the ability to live a righteous life in the mercy, grace, goodness, and power of God.

True freedom means:

Through Jesus, we are redeemed from bondage to sin and its consequences. God has adopted us into His family, and we are able to walk with Him in truth.

Our hope is secure. When a child feels safe in his parents' love and provision, he will thrive. We, too, can live with joy and confidence since we trust the Lord to care for us today and through all of eternity.

God has enabled us to become all that He intended. He's opened the door for us to release bitterness, low self-esteem, and other impediments that once had a grip on us. Furthermore, His Holy Spirit guides and enables so we can do all that He desires.

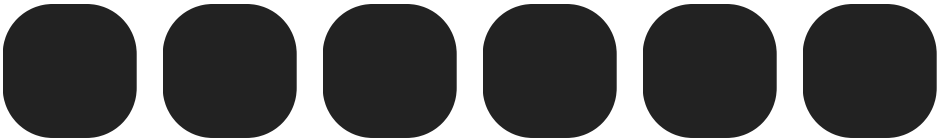
Through grace, Christ has freed us to relate to one another in a godly fashion. We can love and forgive in God’s strength because we have experienced the same from Him.

Is anything hindering God’s work in your life or interfering with your peace and contentment? Understand that the Christian life is a paradox: We are set free from bondage to sin yet choose to be bondslaves of Jesus. Only when we fully surrender and sacrifice to Him can we truly live in freedom

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Go to post



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TOP

Daily Devotional, Thursday, October 12, 2017 - The Danger of Anger

OCTOBER 12TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, October 12, 2017 - The Danger of Anger

Ephesians 4:26-27

Yesterday we learned how to deal with anger in our life. Today we'll discover God's principle for preventing long-term bitterness. The key is to deal with this emotion promptly.

It's important to realize that believers can have moments of anger and still remain right with God. Yet anger that lingers and festers is an opportunity for Satan. He quickly plants justifications in our mind: *That person deserves to be yelled at. You shouldn't be treated that way! God understands that you're frustrated.* By handing people excuses to harbor fury, Satan creates a stronghold in their life. It is a foolish person who allows anger to reside in his or her heart (Eccl. 7:9).

We are not to lay even one brick for the devil's stronghold. Instead, believers must respond to provocation by forgiving others as God forgives. His mercy is unconditional; there's no wrong that He will not pardon. Believers with long-standing anger cannot come before God and justify harboring resentment. So we must release it at once through forgiveness.

We can further protect ourselves by identifying frequent irritants. When those situations (or people) loom, we should pray that God makes us "quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger" (James 1:19). That is the spiritual fruit of self-control in action.

Anger produces only rotten fruit—such as sour relationships or a poor witness. The wise believer takes a two-fold approach to dealing with it. First, heeding the Bible's many warnings about this dangerous emotion, be vigilant against it. And second, forsake your anger in favor of forgiveness.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, October 11, 2017 - Forsaking Anger

OCTOBER 11TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Ephesians 4:30-32

A righteous life has no room for lingering anger, whether in the form of rage or resentment. Fury that hardens in our hearts becomes a stronghold for Satan.

The fleshly method for “curing” wrath is to either let it out or suppress it. Neither is effective for solving problems or relieving the anger. However, God’s way of dealing with this dangerous emotion dissolves it and sets the believer free. As today’s passage reminds us, we are to “let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from [us], along with all malice” (v. 31).

Whether we are annoyed at ourselves, another person, or God, we have to own that feeling. Pretending that the emotion doesn’t exist or that we’ve somehow risen above anger is useless. If you’re angry, admit it and then identify the source. Knowing who or what ignited the initial fury can prevent people from misdirecting irritation onto the innocent.

Here are some questions to help in identifying a source of anger:

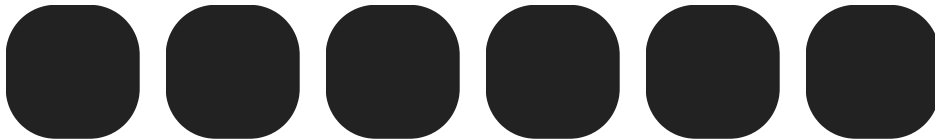
- *Why am I angry? At whom am I angry?*
- *What caused me to feel/act this way?*
- *Where or when did this feeling start?*
- *Have I been angry a long time?*

Once we know the source of our anger, it's time to forgive. Fury and unforgiveness often go together, and both will drag us down. God calls us to set them aside and take up love and kindness instead. Forsaking anger means walking in His will with a light step.

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