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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, October 31, 2017 - A Model of Hospitality

OCTOBER 31ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, October 31, 2017 - A Model of Hospitality

3 John 1:1-8

After reading today's passage, can you name the man to whom John addressed this letter? We'd be wise to take note of Gaius because John describes him as a beloved elder who walked in truth, acted faithfully in whatever he did, and loved strangers who visited the church as traveling evangelists and teachers.

Although this letter was written to Gaius around A.D. 90, the first mention of him in Scripture is over 30 years earlier, during Paul's third missionary trip. He was originally from Derbe in Asia Minor—a town Paul visited on his first two journeys. Gaius apparently left home to accompany the apostle on his last trip; during that time he was dragged by a mob into a theater in Ephesus because of Paul's preaching (Acts 19:28-32). He was also part of a group of men who traveled with Paul through Macedonia (Acts 20:4).

Since *Gaius* was a common name, some scholars wonder if the Bible's referring to several men. But either way, his hospitality, love, and faithful service to the church are noteworthy. In Corinth, Gaius served as host not only for Paul but also for the entire church (Romans 16:23). And he was still practicing hospitality and serving as an elder when John wrote to him several decades later.

Hospitality isn't reserved only for those who find it easy. Romans 12:9-21 contains a long list of commands that apply to all believers, and among them are admonitions to contribute to the needs of the saints and practice hospitality (v. 13). Gaius is a wonderful example for us because he was willing to be inconvenienced and open his home to the believers he knew as well as to those he didn't.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, October 30, 2017 - Expressions of God's Goodness

OCTOBER 30TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Lamentations 3:22-25

Imagine someone asking you if God has been good to you. What ideas pop into your head? Do you think about material possessions like a luxury car or a big house? Those things are nice, but even if you do not have any external signs of His blessing, you can still say that God has been good.

God’s goodness is expressed through His mercy. We usually talk about the Lord’s mercy in relation to His salvation plan, which provides for our rescue from slavery to sin. However, God is also concerned when we are suffering. The blind beggar Bartimaeus called out to Jesus for mercy, and the Lord responded by healing the man’s eyes (Mark 10:46-52). Nothing in Bartimaeus deserved mercy, but it is God’s nature to respond to the needs of His beloved children.

God’s goodness is expressed through His grace. None of us, no matter how well behaved we might be, deserve God’s favor. Yet because we are helpless to save ourselves, the Lord in His goodness took our guilt upon Himself and suffered the death penalty in our place. Upon salvation, we are invited to live by God’s grace and thereby constantly receive His support and help.

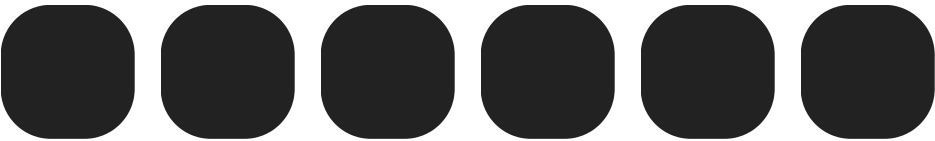
God’s goodness is expressed through His love. The Pacific Ocean, as vast as it is, seems like barely a drop compared to the Lord’s boundless love. No sin we can commit could ever place us beyond the reach of His faithfulness.

Think of all that the Father has done for you! He sent His son Jesus to die for your sins. Now He offers you mercy and grace to live by. The heavenly Father is indeed good.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, October 27, 2017 - Witnesses for Christ

OCTOBER 27TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, October 27, 2017 - Witnesses for Christ

Acts 1:4-8

Standing up and speaking out for the Lord can feel scary to a believer. Even if we desire to obey God's call to "Go ... and make disciples" (Matt. 28:19), we may wonder, *What would I do?* or *What would I say?* It can be a bit overwhelming and intimidating if we think we have to do it all on our own. But fortunately, we are not alone.

Look again at yesterday's key verses, Matthew 28:18-20. Knowing He was issuing a potentially uncomfortable command, Christ was intentional in the way He framed it. Notice that this passage has essentially three components:

1. *Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth.*
2. *We are to go and make disciples.*
3. *Jesus will be with us every step of the way.*

This wording, combined with the promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8, reveals that the responsibility of making disciples was never intended to be a solo act. Jesus is not only present with us, but He is also pouring His power into us so that we may more effectively be His witnesses—His ambassadors—in the world. The work is His and the power is His; we're just the instrument He's chosen to use in carrying out His work.

God wants to use us, but He hasn't left us to tackle the job on our own. The One who holds all the power and authority in the universe is with us step by step, and He has put that power within us through His Holy Spirit. Everything we need is at our fingertips. All that's left is for us to follow the command to "Go!" Where will that lead you today?

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, October 26, 2017 - Investing in Eternity

OCTOBER 26TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, October 26, 2017 - Investing in Eternity

Matthew 28:18-20

The Christian life is an active life—one dedicated to working, serving, sharing, and helping. Too often we think that being a believer simply means showing up for church each Sunday morning and dropping something into the offering plate. That's a good habit, but if it's the sum of your commitment, you've missed the mark.

There is a call that the Lord put on everyone who would follow Him—namely, He's called us to go into the world and make disciples. You may say, "Well, that applies just to missionaries and ministers, right?" No. Teaching others about the Savior is the responsibility of all who claim the name of Jesus.

Just look at the first word of Matthew 28:19. What does Jesus say? His charge to us is "Go!" In today's terms, He's saying, "Get out of your comfort zone. Go love someone who's different than you. Get up, look at the world around you, and tell someone about Me."

This is not a suggestion. Nor is it a word to only a handful of believers. If you've been saved by the blood of Christ, then Jesus is talking to you!

Making disciples doesn't mean you must quit your job and become a full-time missionary to some remote region. But you could walk outside, knock on a neighbor's door, and demonstrate the love of Christ to that person. You don't need a show-stopping sermon to minister to others;

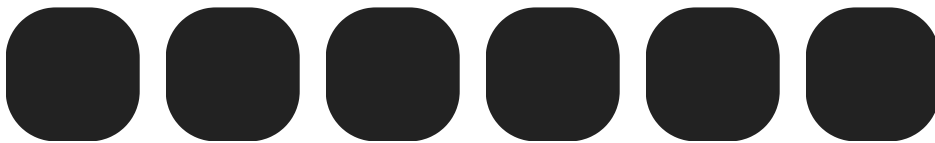
you simply need a willing, open heart.

What can you do right now to make disciples? Think about the steps you can take today to respond to God's call on your life.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, October 25, 2017 - The Process of Forgiving

OCTOBER 25TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Matthew 6:9-15

Forgiving those who have seriously hurt us is one of our most challenging assignments as believers. And merely having a desire to obey God or say the right words does not necessarily accomplish the task. Old memories and pain can slip back into the mind, stirring up emotions of anger and injustice.

Though we have a responsibility to take the initiative soon after suffering harm, forgiveness for deep hurts is a process. Begin immediately to prevent a root of bitterness from developing. But remember: The deeper the hurt, the more time it will take to work through forgiveness. Never become discouraged—the Lord will walk with you each step of the way.

Confession to God is the beginning of the process. Come before Him, admitting any resentment and acknowledging it as sin. As you lay your anger and hurt before the Lord, let Him begin to heal your broken heart.

Sometimes the process can also involve going to the offender and confessing your sinful attitude toward him or her. This is a time not to build your case or itemize the culprit's wrongs but simply to admit your own. Although the offense against you may seem greater than your unforgiving attitude, avoid the temptation to rank sins. And leave judgment to God.

Forgiveness brings freedom from the agitation that accompanies resentment. In working through the process, you'll begin to see through God's eyes—and with His compassion—when you look at the person who hurt you. Eventually, you will be able to thank the Lord for the opportunity to learn forgiveness and live in His lavish grace.

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