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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 7, 2017 - Who Are "the Lost"?

NOVEMBER 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 7, 2017 - Who Are

Luke 19:1-10

Zaccheus worked as a chief tax collector for the Roman government. His profession caused him to be despised by his fellow Jews. When Jesus sought him out and asked to visit his home, the crowd was dismayed—the Lord was associating with someone whose conduct made him a sinner in their eyes. The Savior responded, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

The word *lost* is a biblical term used to describe the spiritual situation of everyone who has yet to receive Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior. In this state, a person is separated from God—there is physical life but no spiritual connection to the heavenly Father. *Lost* doesn’t have to do with physical location; it speaks instead of spiritual deadness (Eph. 2:1), when the mind is blind to the truth of God.

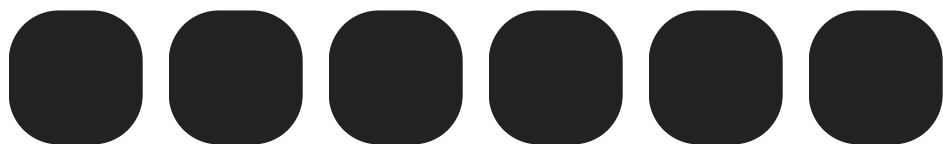
Man’s sinfulness was established through the disobedient action of the first human being—Adam. When he supported Eve’s plan and disobeyed God, his nature became one of rebellion, and all generations from then on have inherited his sinful flesh tendencies. Everyone is born into this world with a nature bent away from God (Rom. 5:12).

Zaccheus was a sinner because of his lost condition, not because of his greedy profession. Good behavior doesn't make us a Christian, nor does bad conduct disqualify us. The tax collector received salvation through faith in Jesus. By trusting in Christ as Savior, we, like Zaccheus, are no longer lost; we're made spiritually alive. Hallelujah!

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Daily Devotional, Monday, November 6, 2017 - Resisting Fleshly Appetites

NOVEMBER 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, November 6, 2017 - Resisting Fleshly Appetites

Ephesians 2:1-7

The Holy Spirit guides believers to make wise and godly decisions. But when Christians fail to listen, they can instead make choices that appeal to the flesh.

After the serpent spoke to Eve, she no doubt took a long look at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17; Gen. 3:3, Gen. 3:6). Whatever she might have thought about the tree before, she now saw it with new eyes— flesh-focused eyes. Genesis 3 tells us that the forbidden tree appealed to Eve in three ways: It was good for food, delightful to look at, and desirable to make one wise.

In other words, the tree could fulfill three legitimate human appetites: the desire for tasty meals, beauty, and wisdom. There is nothing wrong with these God-given yearnings. The Lord created a variety of food and an earth filled with breathtaking sights so that people could enjoy them. He also offers the Holy Spirit as a source of His true wisdom and knowledge. In fact, it is the Spirit who teaches believers to keep fleshly appetites under control and in balance.

Meanwhile, Satan works hard to corrupt healthy desires. He abhors seeing people’s appetites satisfied. What he wants is to watch a person lusting after a good thing until he or she is controlled by the impulse to have it.

The devil is pleased when people make themselves slaves to a desire that—in the proper context—the Lord intended to be enjoyed freely. A believer walking in the Holy Spirit rejects gluttony, preferring desires that are within God’s boundaries instead. That’s how we get His very best.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, November 3, 2017 - Sufficient Grace

NOVEMBER 03RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, November 3, 2017 - Sufficient Grace

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

I thought the Christian life was going to be easier than this. Have these words ever entered your mind? Sometimes we come before our heavenly Father, thinking that He will fix all of our problems and devote Himself to our happiness and comfort. However, that is not the reality portrayed in Scripture. The apostle Paul was a man whom the Lord used greatly, and yet his life was anything but easy.

In fact, at one point Paul thought his pain was too much to bear, and he begged God to remove it. There's nothing wrong with asking the Lord to relieve our suffering, but what should our response be if He doesn't? The apostle probably had no idea that His experience would find its way into the Bible, to comfort and guide believers throughout the ages. The promise God gave him applies to us as well: "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God's grace could be defined as His provision for us at the point of our need. The problem is, there may be times when it doesn't seem the Lord is truly meeting our need. But He frequently sees deficiencies, outcomes, and complications that we don't. His goals for us involve spiritual growth, the development of Christlike character, and strong faith. And trials play a vital role in achieving such things.

The important issue is how we respond. If all you want is relief, you could descend into anger and doubt. But if your desire is to become the person God wants you to be, you'll see each trial as an opportunity for Christ to display His character and strength in you

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, November 2, 2017 - A Commitment to Obey

NOVEMBER 02ND 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, November 2, 2017 - A Commitment to Obey

Psalm 1:1-6

Scripture proclaims God's great power and majesty while also revealing His deep mercy and love. He is worthy of wholehearted, passionate submission but doesn't often get it. Are you among the few who offer themselves to Him without reservation?

Complete obedience is a choice to follow God regardless of the consequences. This means that we obey the Lord even if our friends choose a different path or when suffering and embarrassment are guaranteed. Seeing His will done is more important than our own comfort or personal ambition. We commit the consequences to God and cling to His promises: He will never leave us (Deut. 31:6), and He makes good out of every situation (Rom. 8:28).

Notice the word *commitment* in the title of today's devotion. I'm not writing about obedience that is born of the moment (as in, *I choose to follow God in this instance*) but about total submission as a way of life. Setting restrictions on compliance is so tempting—we want to be able to change our mind when obeying upsets our lifestyle, the final result is unclear, or we're just plain scared. But let me ask you this one sobering question: If Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life, what right do you have to limit how and when you'll do His will?

Believers have no right to set their own limits; their one criterion for making decisions should be, *What does God want me to do?* The answer at times may cause suffering, but obedience is always right. And following God in all things is the surest path to favor and spiritual growth.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 1, 2017 - The Passion to Obey

NOVEMBER 01ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 1, 2017 - The Passion to Obey

John 14:15

For a sermon I wrote several years ago, I jotted down a list and titled it “The Evolution of a Passion to Obey God.” A passion to obey the Lord doesn’t typically just spring up, full-blown, when we get saved. We do enter our new life in Christ with a desire to please Him, but a determined pursuit of His will develops more slowly and over time.

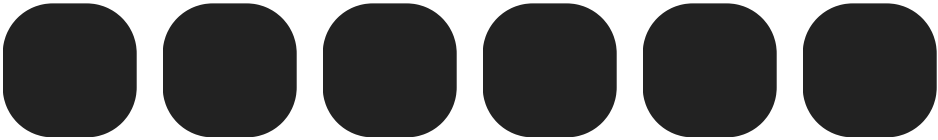
In fact, when we first believe, we’re typically motivated by fear concerning the consequences of disobedience. This barely qualifies as reverence for God, because it’s more about us than Him. But as we progress in our faith and form a commitment to obey the Lord, we develop a deep love for and devotion to Christ. Wouldn’t you rather follow Him out of love than out of fear?

Progressing from one motivation to the other begins with what you might expect: a growing knowledge of the Lord. As we dig into God’s Word, we learn who He is—His heart, His character, His will. We begin to see how He has provided in the past and trust that He’ll provide in the future. People like Mary, David, and Paul weren’t satisfied with what the world had to offer, and we won’t be either once we witness God’s hand at work. We’ll recognize the wisdom of obeying our heavenly Father—not just because of the promised blessings, but because He knows what’s best and loves us.

Where are you on the spectrum between fear and devotion? It is my hope that you’ve committed to obeying God and that you’re reading His Word daily to learn how to stay faithful to those intentions. God wants your best—your passionate pursuit of His will—and is giving His best to you

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