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Daily Devotional, Thursday, November 9, 2017 - Outh Thoughts: Who's in Control?

NOVEMBER 09TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, November 9, 2017 - Outh Thoughts: Who's in Control?

Colossians 3:1-3

Do you ever struggle with thoughts that you know you shouldn't have? Perhaps you sometimes allow your mind to drift over into unforgiveness, pride, lust, or anger—attitudes and feelings that you know are not good. How do you tend to respond when this happens?

We live in a time and culture that continuously bombard our mind with information through radio and TV broadcasts, movies, newspapers, and the internet. Sometimes the message is good, but often it isn't. And the truth is that our thinking affects us more than we may realize, shaping us into who we are becoming. Thoughts reap actions, actions reap habits, habits reap character, and our character reaps our destiny.

In today's reading, the apostle Paul urges believers to "keep seeking." In other words, we need to habitually seek Christ and continually set our mind on things above. Scripture reassures us that we can control our thoughts by relying on the Lord. (See 2 Corinthians 10:5.) If we continually look to God for help with how we think, He will mold our heart and shift our attention from materialistic, ungodly priorities to more wholesome, spiritual values (Phil. 4:8).

The moment we place our trust in Jesus, we become brand-new people. That is the basis for our capacity to think correctly (that is, to think more like Christ) and therefore make wise decisions

in life. This doesn't mean we will always think right thoughts, but we now have the responsibility—and power through the Holy Spirit—to steer our mind in a heavenly direction.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 8, 2017 - Loved but Lost

NOVEMBER 08TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 8, 2017 - Loved but Lost

John 3:16-19

Through faith in Jesus, we move from our lost condition to adoption into God's family. Unless we trust in Christ, we face permanent alienation from the heavenly Father. On judgment day, each person's eternal destiny will be determined, based on that individual's spiritual state. Members of God's family will live in heaven with Him. But those who remain blind to divine truth, which is found only in Jesus, will be sent away to live in eternal torment (Revelation 20:12-15).

Many people struggle to reconcile this teaching with the concept of a loving God. They reason that love would not condemn anyone to torment. The truth is, the Father desires reconciliation with man—not separation. His love for us motivated Him to provide all we need to receive forgiveness and thereby be reconciled to Him. It is man's choice to refuse or accept God's provision of Jesus as the remedy to the sin problem. An unsaved person can't blame God for his eternal state; his suffering will be due to his own rebellion against the Lord.

A second common objection says, "Love would accept people on the basis of their moral lives and good deeds." This argument assumes that God ignores sin and bases His decision about heaven on behavior. But since He is holy and just, He won't allow sin to go unpunished. Because of His great love, however, He provided a way for our sin debt to be paid—through Jesus' atoning death.

God shows no favoritism. He extends love toward the whole lost world and invites everyone to come to Him through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

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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).

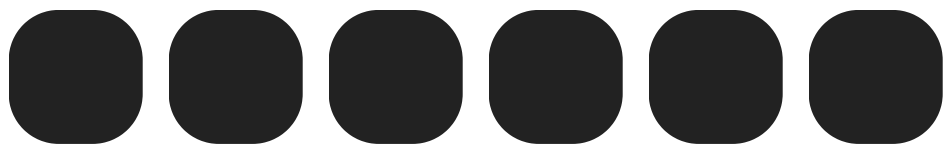
Zaccheus was a sinner because of his lost condition, not because of his greedy profession. Good behavior doesn’t make us a Christian, nor does bad conduct disqualify us. The tax collector

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.

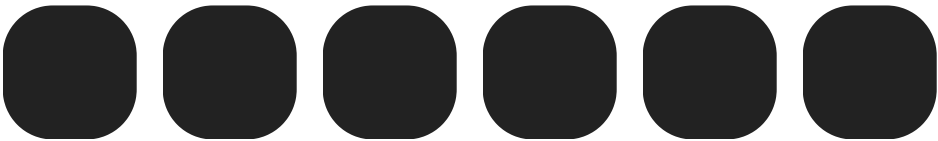
Meanwhile, Satan works hard to corrupt healthy desires. He abhors seeing people’s appetites satisfied. What he wants is to watch a person lusting after a good thing until he or she is controlled by the impulse to have it.

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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