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Daily Devotional, Monday, December 11, 2017 - God's Viewpoint About Money

DECEMBER 11TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 Timothy 6:17-19

Money plays a huge role in our existence. In fact, it's impossible to live without it. How would we purchase food, shelter, and clothing? But it's more than just a means for acquiring necessities. The quest for wealth has dominated mankind's history. Wars have been fought over it, lives have been ruined by it, and people have died for lack of it. To gain a proper attitude about money, Christians must understand the Lord's perspective.

God is the source. Since everything originates from the Creator, it all belongs to Him (Psalm 24:1). This means we are merely stewards of the wealth He's entrusted to us. Even if we work for it, the Lord is the one who has given us the opportunity and capabilities to earn it.

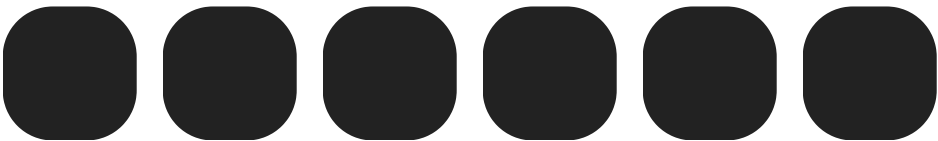
God uses money for His purposes. We can't separate our finances from our Christianity. The Lord doesn't provide money for just our physical needs; He uses it to transform us spiritually. In times of need, He trains us to rely upon Him and proves Himself faithful by providing for us. Wealth is also a tool He uses to teach us self-discipline. Instead of indulging our desires, we must learn to seek His will and be content with what we have. In addition, God uses money to train us to be generous.

Take a dollar bill from your wallet and look at it. That piece of paper is a powerful instrument in the Lord’s hand when you give Him authority over it and submit to His spiritual transformation program. Anytime you open your wallet and see a dollar, be reminded that what you do with it will reveal your character.

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Daily Devotional, Saturday, December 9, 2017 - Be Strong and Courageous

DECEMBER 09TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Saturday, December 9, 2017 - Be Strong and Courageous

Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Have you ever faced a challenge that left you feeling inadequate and afraid? The great men and women in the Bible weren't superhuman, so they undoubtedly experienced the same weaknesses we do. Though Joshua was a strong military leader, he probably felt inadequate to fill Moses' shoes. After all, Moses had talked with God face to face, performed amazing miracles, and led the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. How could Joshua ever expect to live up to that?

But remember, Moses didn't start out as a mighty man of faith. When God first called him to deliver the children of Israel, he focused on his own inadequacy and begged the Lord to send someone else (Ex. 4:10-13). I think Moses knew exactly how Joshua felt. That's why he exhorted his successor to be strong and courageous.

However, the strength Joshua needed was not going to come from positive thinking or puffed-up self-confidence. What he needed was assurance that the Lord would go ahead of him every step of the way and give the nation the land as promised.

Confidence for God-given challenges never comes from within ourselves. But when we believe the Lord and rely on His Word instead of our feelings, He'll give us the ability and courage that we need to accomplish His will.

If your life were always easy, you'd never need strength and courage—and you would miss great opportunities to get to know the Lord intimately. Only as we face one faith-stretching challenge after another and experience God's faithfulness will we learn to depend on Him instead of ourselves.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, December 8, 2017 - Clean Feet, Clean Heart

DECEMBER 08TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, December 8, 2017 - Clean Feet, Clean Heart

John 13:3-15

Israel can be a dusty place, and sandaled feet get filthy walking to and fro. In ancient times, a person entering a home removed his sandals and cleaned his feet. Or if the homeowners were wealthy, servants would do the washing. This distasteful but necessary task fell to the worker of lowest position in the household. Imagine the disciples' surprise when the Son of God put Himself in the role of a lowly servant and knelt to wash their feet. The need for such a service was great, but not one of them offered to do it. Jesus was the last person they expected to take on such a demeaning task.

Jesus did more than fill a need—He offered an object lesson. As He explained, “I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you” (John 13:15 NLT). Some churches have incorrectly interpreted this as a command to make foot washing an ordinance. But it's possible to clean someone else's skin without contemplating the significance of Christ's actions.

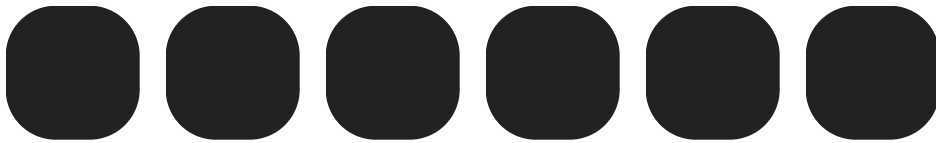
In fact, the act itself is not the main point; attitude is what counts. Jesus desires that we be willing to humble ourselves to serve others. He is looking for men and women who will ignore pride, position, and power in order to do whatever must be done, wherever it needs doing, and for whoever requires assistance.

Jesus performed His greatest and most humble acts of service within 24 hours of each other. He washed dirty feet, using two hands that would be pierced by nails the following day. The message here is that every task God gives us is important to His kingdom.

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Daily Devotion, Thursday, December 7, 2017 - The Pattern for Servanthood

DECEMBER 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotion, Thursday, December 7, 2017 - The Pattern for Servanthood

Matthew 20:25-28

In the world's thinking, great men are the ones with authority, prominence, and power. Though Jesus Christ had all that, He surrendered it to become a servant (Isa. 42:1; Phil. 2:7).

Jesus gave Himself completely to fulfill the Father's plan of redemption, even though the beneficiaries—namely, each of us—were undeserving. God, who is holy and righteous, has eyes that “are too pure to approve evil, and [He] can not look on wickedness with favor” (Hab. 1:13). Therefore, He must separate Himself from those who are stained by wrongdoing. That includes all of humanity (Rom. 3:23).

Everybody is born captive to fleshly desires (Rom. 6:16-18). When someone claims to be living on his “own terms,” he is serving whatever his human nature craves. The penalty for that false sense of liberty is death (Rom. 6:23).

Jesus' ultimate act of service was to give His life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). The word *ransom* describes the price paid to set a slave free—Christ voluntarily purchased our liberation. There was only one way our holy God could remove our guilt yet remain true to His own law: Someone sinless had to pay our sin debt for us.

Jesus' sacrifice spared us the penalty we deserve. Instead, we receive grace and have been declared not guilty. Moreover, we are elevated from slaves to children of the Almighty! Jesus served the Father's purpose faithfully. He gave up His righteousness to carry our wickedness—and endured a crushing separation from God. To meet our needs, the Savior held nothing of Himself back, and thereby set a powerful example of servanthood for us to follow.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, December 6, 2017 - Walking in the Light

DECEMBER 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, December 6, 2017 - Walking in the Light

Ephesians 5:1-17

If you've ever lost power at night, you know how disorienting it can be to try and find your way to a flashlight or candle. You think you're heading for a doorway but unexpectedly bump into a wall. This is what our life was like before we met the Light of the World. In fact, we didn't even know what real light was and had become comfortable in the darkness because it kept us from seeing how sinful we truly were.

An amazing transaction occurred when we finally believed the gospel, repented of our sins, and confessed Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We were rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of Light. And now Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, has come to dwell within us (Col. 1:13; Eph. 3:17). So how are Christ's followers supposed to live? Today's passage outlines three basic responsibilities:

1. Walk in love (Ephesians 5:1-2). As the Savior sacrificially loved us, so we are to love others. If we are at odds with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we can't claim to be walking in Light (1 John 1:7).

2. Abstain from sin (Eph. 5:3-7). Believers aren't sinless, but they don't habitually practice deeds of darkness.

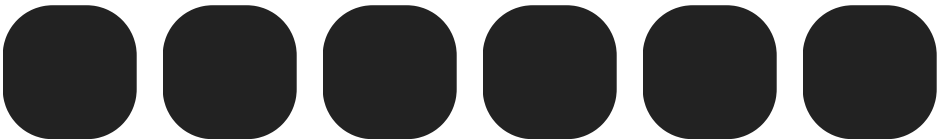
3. Learn what pleases God (Eph. 5:8-17). The fruit of Light is goodness, righteousness, and truth. These are displayed in our character, conversation, and conduct when we are living out our faith.

Let’s make it our aim to move ever closer to the Light, letting Jesus expose and remove any areas of darkness so we can reflect His glory and goodness.

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