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# Daily Devotional, Thursday, December 14, 2017 - Requirements for Answered Prayer

DECEMBER 14TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## John 14:12-14

Jesus taught many things about prayer and its central role in a believer's life. He also promised that our petitions will be answered when we meet certain requirements.

One condition is mentioned in John 14:14: After receiving Christ as our personal Savior, we have the right to present requests *in Jesus' name*, which means praying something that the Lord Himself might pray. To exercise this privilege, we must come to the Father, depending not on our own good works or character but on the merits of Christ alone. Jesus' atoning death on the cross is the only basis for approaching God and being assured of receiving an answer to our petitions.

A second requirement is separation from all known sin. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear." This refers to ungodly behaviors and thought patterns that we know are wrong but refuse to give up. Remember, God looks at our heart attitude. If we struggle against our sinful ways, grieve over them, and ask for forgiveness, He will hear our cries and respond. But when He sees a hard heart, He is not obligated to listen.

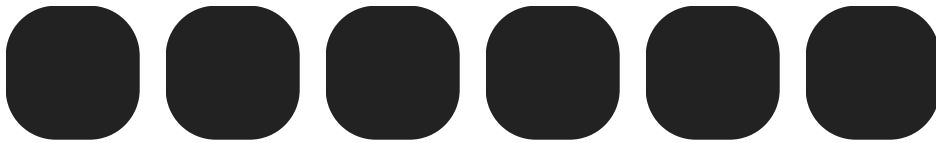
Next time you pray, start with words of praise to God for His sacrificial love and gratitude to Jesus for dying in your place (1 John 4:10). Express that you understand why your prayers are

heard—because you have a relationship with the Father through Christ, and not because of anything you have done. Confess all known sin and ask for forgiveness. Then present your requests to God with anticipation, and trust His answers.

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## Daily Devotional, Wednesday, December 13, 2017 - Skills Needed to Walk by Faith

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**Genesis 12:10-20**

Learning to walk by faith requires time. As we have seen, Abraham listened to God and obeyed Him. Then over the years he learned to master additional skills.

**Dependence.** The Christian life is one of reliance upon God. From the very start, Abraham recognized that his own knowledge was limited and the right way was not obvious. But he understood whom he could trust to meet his needs: God knew the plan perfectly and had all the necessary resources to accomplish His will through Abraham.

**Waiting on God.** This can be one of the hardest disciplines to master. Scripture shows that even Abraham, the great man of faith, had trouble in this area. While our human nature wants action, the Lord often asks His people to hold back (2 Chronicles 20:17). He wants us to let Him act first. Our part is to meditate on the Word, listen for God's voice, and hold off until He instructs us to act. The Lord, meanwhile, promises to bless those who wait (Isa. 64:4).

**Confession.** Abraham was not perfect. When famine threatened, he headed toward Egypt, not toward God. Then he lied, which made trouble for others. Later, Sarah found it too hard to wait for the promised child, so she and Abraham took matters into their own hands (Gen. 16:1-3). We also will stumble. But when we return to the Lord in repentance and acknowledge our failure, we will receive forgiveness and can resume walking by faith.

God knows we are imperfect people. He will patiently and repeatedly teach us faith-walking lessons until we learn to trust Him. We just have to maintain responsive hearts and teachable spirits.

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## Daily Devotional, Tuesday, December 12, 2017 - Requirements of Walking by Faith

DECEMBER 12TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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### Genesis 12:1-9

We all know people who live according to their own desires and natural abilities. Sometimes we do it too. But as children of God, believers are called to walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). That means we are to live based on a confident assurance that the Lord is true to His character and keeps every promise.

In the school of faith-walking, the first skill to master is listening. Because God's Word is essential to our hearing from Him, we must cultivate the habit of biblical meditation. Through it, we will hear God's Spirit speak to ours, illuminating the meaning of Scripture and showing us how to apply its truths to our circumstances. But recognizing the inner voice of the Holy Spirit does not come automatically; it takes practice.

A second skill to acquire is obedience—carrying out what the Lord commands and then doing it His way, in His time. Abraham left his homeland just as God commanded, but he “adjusted” the divine plan by bringing Lot along (Gen. 12:4). The life of faith is one of submission to God's requests, methods, and time frames. As our listening skills improve, our faith in the Father will deepen, our commitment to Him will grow, and complete obedience will become easier.

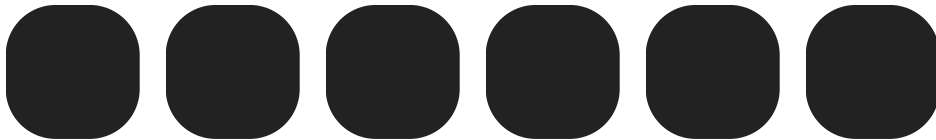
Faith-walking also involves remembering what happened when we obeyed God in the past—He communicates with us not only for today but also to teach us for the future. Can you recall what

He said to you last week? Have you put it into practice? Commit to being a better listener and a more obedient follower in the coming year.

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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

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### **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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