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# Daily Devotional, Tuesday, December 26, 2017 - What's Jesus Doing Now?

DECEMBER 26TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## Hebrews 1:1-3

The New Testament tells us what Jesus did while He was on earth, but what is He doing now that He has ascended to the Father in heaven? His physical absence does not mean that He has abandoned us. Though we cannot presently see Him, His Word assures us that He is always acting on our behalf, to empower, lead, and complete us.

**He gives us abundant life** (John 10:10). Christ enables us to live with peace and joy as well as the strength and determination to persist in accomplishing whatever He calls us to do.

**The Lord makes intercession for us** (Rom. 8:34). Jesus hears our every prayer and is seated at His Father's right hand, presenting our requests to Him.

**Christ reveals the Father** (Col. 1:15). Through the Son, we understand that God is our loving heavenly Father, who is personally interested in every aspect of our life. Scripture invites us to follow Jesus' example of ongoing intimate conversation with God.

**He's preparing a place for us** (John 14:2-3). One day He will come to take us home to heaven so we can be with Him forever

**The Lord Jesus is also preparing for His return** (Revelation 11:15). Christ will come back to rule and reign on earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

“Out of sight, out of mind” is definitely not a phrase that describes Christ’s relationship with us. He never forgets us and is continually working to complete His plans for believers’ lives as well as for the entire world. His constant care should motivate us to make sure that He’s not out of *our* sight and mind.

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## Daily Devotional, Friday, December 22, 2017 - Manifestations of the Teaching Gift

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DECEMBER 22ND 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Titus 2:7-8

We make effective use of our spiritual gift when we are filled with the Spirit; relying on ourselves will just send us off track. Let's look at both godly and fleshly manifestations of the teaching gift.

Depending upon human reasoning leads to self-indulgence. But by faithfully absorbing and applying Scripture, a Christian gifted in teaching reaps the fruit of self-control (Gal. 5:23). Through one's desire to learn, the Spirit develops dependability and diligence, yet unless the believer abides in Christ, he or she can become careless and inconsistent. The fruit of peace and patience grows as studies lead to deeper faith, whereas anxiety and impatience result if the focus shifts to "self."

For those of us who don't have this gift, it's possible to incorrectly perceive the ones who do—we might assume they are overemphasizing their studies or being prideful because of their knowledge. However, the characteristics of the gift of teaching show that the opposite is true. These believers desire accurate, thorough understanding so they can share it with us for our benefit. At times, we might regard people with this ability as boring because of the quantity of information they present. We might even suspect that they rely more on knowledge than on God's Spirit. And yet it is the Holy Spirit who helps them to learn and to speak. We should realize teachers want us to have enough truth so that we can live God's way and please Him.

As you exercise your God-given gift, pray for the Spirit's leading. That is how to have the greatest impact for the kingdom.

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## Daily Devotional, Thursday, December 21, 2017 - The Gift of Teaching

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DECEMBER 21ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, December 21, 2017 - The Gift of Teaching

### **Romans 12:6-8**

God has given each believer at least one spiritual gift to build up the body of Christ and to minister in this hurting world. If our gift is prophecy, we'll proclaim God's view of right and wrong. If it is service, we will desire to meet others' needs. The gift of teaching has these characteristics:

**Organized.** Whether in conversation or in a more formal setting, we will seek to communicate information clearly so the listener can follow. God has wired us to analyze material and present it logically.

**Thorough.** We want others to understand not simply the conclusion but the steps leading up to it. We also desire to help them think matters through.

**Accurate.** Our priority is to know the truth, so we ask questions in an attempt to validate the accuracy of what we learn. We will also inquire about the trustworthiness of our source of information.

**Studious.** We derive great delight from studying and researching and are strongly motivated to share what we learn. Truth is presented not simply to share knowledge but with the goal that God will transform the hearer's life.

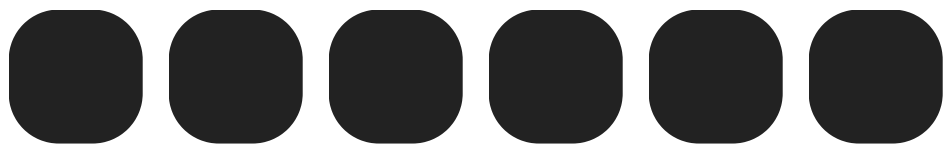
**Bible-oriented.** With this gift comes a strong desire to know what the Lord has to say. While we may recognize the value of others' experiences, we are less motivated by personal illustrations than by the actual words of Scripture.

All of the spiritual gifts can be used in the workplace, in our communities, and in our homes. If your gift is teaching, allow the Spirit to direct your ability for God's glory and others' gain.

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## Daily Devotional, Wednesday, December 20, 2017 - Unjust Suffering

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## Daily Devotional, Wednesday, December 20, 2017 - Unjust Suffering

### 1 Peter 2:18-25

One of the hardest situations to bear is unjust suffering. We can expect to reap pain and trouble if we sow sin, but what if we haven't done anything wrong? Even trials that seem to come for no reason are easier to bear than those resulting from someone's mistreatment of us.

This is what Peter had in mind when he wrote today's passage. Slaves in the Roman Empire had few rights if any, and abuse wasn't uncommon. Becoming a Christian didn't change the circumstances, but it did require a different response. Peter told them to respectfully submit to their masters and endure mistreatment because such a response finds favor with God.

Whoever has been saved by Christ is also called to follow in His footsteps. Although the Lord committed no sin, He suffered death on a cross for us. Jesus not only paid the penalty for our sins, but He also made it possible for us to respond to mistreatment as He did.

Christ's responses are noteworthy, first because Jesus didn't revile or threaten those who hurt Him. His silence was fueled by forgiveness rather than anger or thoughts of revenge. Even as He was being nailed to the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). Second, Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father, who judges righteously. The Lord had no need to fight for His rights, because He was doing exactly what God had called Him to do.

Our job is to make sure we're following Christ and living in God's will. Then if others mistreat us, we can simply hand the situation over to our Father, knowing that He will judge it rightly in His time.

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## Daily Devotional, Tuesday, December 19, 2017 - Ministry Friendships

DECEMBER 19TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Acts 18:1-19

A significant facet of the Christian life is the development of friendships that help both parties fulfill God's will for their lives. This is the kind of friendship Paul had with Aquila and Priscilla. The relationship, which began from their common Jewish heritage and occupation, soon became a partnership in ministry.

Paul met Aquila and Priscilla when he first arrived in Corinth during his second missionary trip. After teaching and mentoring them for about 18 months, he brought them along on his return trip, leaving them to minister in Ephesus until he returned to help them on his third missionary trip.

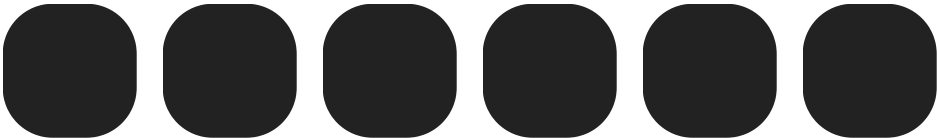
Although they all eventually went their own ways in ministry, their friendship—which was founded upon their mutual love for Christ—never ended. A few years later when Paul wrote to the church in Rome, he expressed his gratitude for this couple because they risked their own lives for his and were faithfully serving the church, which met in their home (Rom. 16:3-5). While Paul was sitting in a Roman prison during his last days on earth, he wrote to Timothy in Ephesus, telling him to send his greetings to Priscilla and Aquila (2 Tim. 4:19).

God never intends that Christians live like “lone rangers,” who simply attend church without growing close to one another. Our common bond in Christ draws us together, forming a closeness not found in other associations. Ministry friendships are among the deepest relationships we will ever have. These friends are the ones who always point us back to the Scriptures, challenge us to walk in obedience to Christ, and encourage us to persevere.

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