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Daily Devotional - Monday, June 4, 2018 - A Compass for Life's Journey

JUNE 04TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, June 4, 2018 - A Compass for Life's Journey

Proverbs 3:1-6

If you've ever been lost in the woods, you know the concerns, confusion, and panic such a situation causes. Now think what a difference it would have made to know that a compass was in your pocket. Spiritually speaking, we have such a compass—God's Word. But it does no good unless we let it guide us.

At times, we may fail to follow scriptural guidance because of ...

Neglect. Sometimes we are so busy walking through life that we forget to look at God's compass to make sure we're headed in the right direction.

Pride. We often want to determine our own destiny. Many of us prefer to plan a course of action by relying on our strength, wisdom, and abilities.

Distractions. The Lord's path of obedience isn't always easy. In fact, sometimes it can be extremely challenging. Satan offers other trails that promise pleasure and ease if we will just ignore the compass and follow him. Although these routes seem pleasant at first, they lead to

heartbreak and discouragement.

Difficulties. Whenever obstacles appear on the trail, our natural tendency is to try and find a way around them. But by ignoring God's compass and stepping off the path, we'll miss the blessings He wants to give us through the rough patches—benefits such as strong faith and godly character.

Why should we wander when the Lord's compass is available? Let Scripture be your guide on life's journey. God promises productive days and fruitful years if you follow His path. He'll direct each step of your way, and His peace will sustain you, even during the difficult times.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, June 1, 2018 - The Main Function of the Church

Daily Devotional - Friday, June 1, 2018 - The Main Function of the Church

Acts 2:37-47

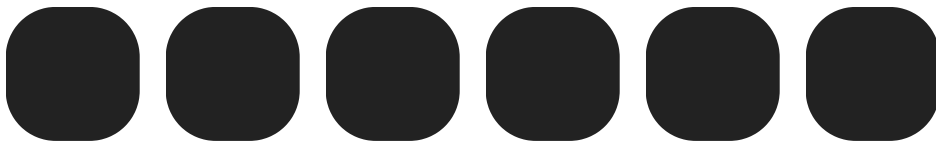
If someone asked what the primary purpose of the church is, how would you answer? There are many opinions regarding this issue—and since all the activities of the church are vital, it's a challenge to be definitive about which one is most important. To help us find an answer, let's see what Scripture says about the first church in Jerusalem, which was born on Pentecost.

Today's passage describes what happened after Peter gave his first sermon: Many of the Jews believed in Jesus, and the church grew from 120 to around 3,000 people (Acts 1:15; Acts 2:41). From this, we can conclude that preaching about Jesus is an essential activity of the church. But is it the most important?

Next, we see that Christians would come together and focus on the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer. In addition, they met in homes to partake of meals and also shared materially with fellow believers who were in need. These things certainly make a faith community desirable, but there were still other vital activities taking place in the first church.

Love and generosity for one another witnessed powerfully to observers, as did faith and praise of God. Acts 2:47 says the Lord kept adding to the number of believers, so we can say this church had a powerful evangelistic ministry. Then, is that supposed to be the primary focus of the church?

The answer is that all of these things together can be summed up as worship of God and His Son Jesus Christ. And worship is the primary function of the church—as long as these elements are done according to God's Word and with the purpose of glorifying Him.



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Daily Devotional - Thursday, May 31, 2018 - Effective Witnesses

MAY 31ST 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, May 31, 2018 - Effective Witnesses

Philippians 2:12-16

Some of the most effective witnesses are those who have gone through painful, trying circumstances. Consider how the gospel has spread in parts of the world that are poor, oppressed, and troubled. Or think of your response to the triumphant stories of former criminals, people who have suffered abuse, and religious prisoners. God's power is manifest in man's weakest moments.

Whether believers develop into stronger witnesses as a result of difficulties depends on their response to crisis. Many people make the mistake of focusing on the will of man instead of God's sovereignty. Then they find it impossible to believe that God will bring positive results from their pain.

Those who rise above their circumstances understand that God uses every experience for good. (See Gen. 50:20.) To trust that principle, we must realize that any situation we face is under the authority of a kind, loving Father. Paul's time in prison yielded better and more abundant fruit than he could have produced any other way (Phil. 1:13). He spread the gospel to Roman guards because he was chained to one after another every day for years. As we turn our attention to

Christ, He reveals opportunities for impacting people with the gospel. These are often chances we wouldn't have had apart from trying circumstances.

You are always in God's hand. I understand that in hard times, it's not easy to focus on His sovereign will and the good He has in store for you. But I also know that God never allows anything to touch us that He will not turn to our benefit and the good of His kingdom.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, May 30, 2018 - Left as Witnesses

MAY 30TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, May 30, 2018 - Left as Witnesses

Acts 1:6-8

One of the biggest problems in the church today is that many Christians do not see themselves as servants of the Lord. However, it isn't His will that we simply come to church and listen to sermons. He wants us to go out and be witnesses for Christ wherever we are or wherever He sends us.

The roles and methods by which we carry out this task will be different, but each believer has a vital role to play (1 Corinthians 12:4-20). Individually, you may feel as if your efforts have little impact, but the Lord can work wonders through a willing servant. No one is too "messed up" to be used by Him—He specializes in taking broken people and making them whole. Nor does anyone reach an age when he or she is no longer useful. You can be sure that as long as you're still alive, the heavenly Father isn't done with you.

The question isn't whether or not we are adequate to be His witnesses, but whether our hearts are willing. The Lord has promised the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His purposes through our life, but if we won't use His divine strength, then we waste opportunities for impact. Earthly responsibilities have a way of stealing our attention and limiting our obedience to the Lord. However, nothing in life is more important than doing the will of the Father.

Have duties and pleasures of this world lured you away from your responsibility to tell others about the Savior? Salvation is not just an experience to be enjoyed; it's a gift to be shared. You don't need a theology degree. Just tell what Jesus has done for you, and the Spirit will do the rest.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, May 25, 2018 - Righteous Anger on Display

MAY 25TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, May 25, 2018 - Righteous Anger on Display

Numbers 25:1-18

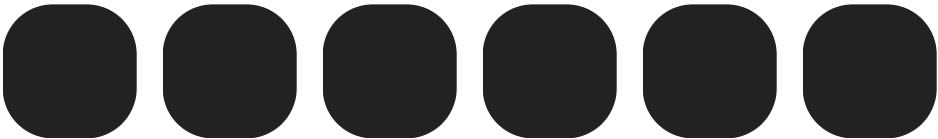
Think about the times you have felt angry—what were the usual causes? In all honesty, most of us would have to admit that our irritation is often for selfish reasons. The book of James tells us that “the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God” (James 1:20). However, there is such a thing as righteous indignation, and it can be exercised to promote the work of God.

In today’s passage, we find an excellent example of this in Phinehas, who rose up to execute Zimri and Cozbi for their evil deeds. For this act, he was commended by God with the following words: “Phinehas ... has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them” (Num. 25:11). God looked into the heart of Phinehas, saw his passion, and called it “My jealousy.” Of course, we cannot take the law into our own hands and begin executing people, but we can have the same attitude of heart that Phinehas had. This was a man who loved God so ardently that he couldn’t help but hate evil. He displayed the same wrath that drove Jesus to go through the temple with a whip of cords. (See John 2:13-17.) In both of these instances, zeal for God’s interests was demonstrated with anger.

How can we do this? It’s a matter of having God’s perspective and standing up for what is right. We can station ourselves at the door of our heart and put a spear through any unholy thought that tries to enter. Likewise, we can drive out the rivers of filth and immorality all around us, which try to enter our homes. As our love for God grows, so will our hatred of evil.

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