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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, May 6, 2018 - The Unavoidable Appointment

JUNE 06TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, May 6, 2018 - The Unavoidable Appointment

Hebrews 9:27-28

There are many options in life, especially for those who live in a relatively free country. Where we live, whom we marry, and what kind of career we pursue—all these are very much influenced by our desires and choices. But there is one event over which we have no control, and that's our appointment with death.

Adam and Eve, the very first human beings, actually did have a choice regarding life and death. When God gave Adam the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He said, “for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” (Gen. 2:17). But Adam and Eve did eat of the forbidden tree, and sin and death became a constant companion of the human race from that day forward. In the genealogy of mankind, as recorded in Genesis 5, one phrase repeatedly drives this point home: “and he died.”

Although we can no longer choose whether to live or die, there was one other man who could. His name was Jesus Christ. In the book of John, He said, “I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me” (John 10:17-18). Jesus, the eternal Son of God and source of all life, chose to take on human flesh in order to die on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

Because Jesus chose death, man can now have life eternal by believing in Him. Our human bodies will one day die, but if we've trusted in Christ's death as the payment for our sins, we'll be resurrected as He was and enter heaven to be with Him forever.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, June 5, 2018 - God's Compass for the Heart

JUNE 05TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, June 5, 2018 - God's Compass for the Heart

Proverbs 3:7-12

Yesterday we discussed the importance of depending on Scripture as our compass throughout life. Following God’s directions will change our behavior and challenge our attitudes, desires, and thought processes. He leads us to think differently about ourselves, our values, and even the difficulties facing us.

We naturally want to determine our own course in life. It seems like the only logical way to get where we want to go. But being wise in our own eyes is pride. To combat this tendency, the Lord instructs us to fear Him and turn away from evil (Prov. 3:7). This “fear” is not a horrified dread of the Father, but an attitude of respect that motivates us to obey Him for both our good and His glory.

We naturally want to keep our money for ourselves. A desire for a better lifestyle or fear of not having enough leads us to hang on to everything we get. But our compass directs us to honor God by giving Him the first part of all we have, trusting Him to provide for our needs (Prov. 3:9-10).

We naturally dislike God’s discipline. His painful reproofs seem to imply that He doesn’t care about us. But our heavenly Father says His discipline is evidence of His love and delight in us as His children (Prov. 3:11-12).

Sometimes in our desire to follow the Lord, we focus on obedient actions—doing what He says—yet miss His directions concerning our attitudes and thought patterns. To stay on God’s path for our lives, we must make course corrections not only in our behavior but also in our heart and mind.

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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.

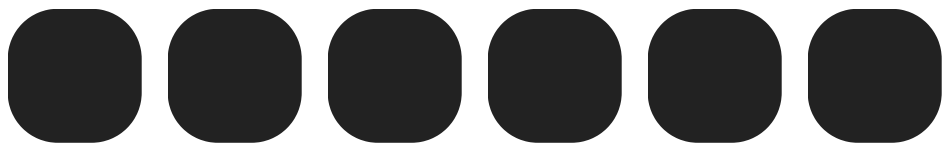
Difficulties. Whenever obstacles appear on the trail, our natural tendency is to try and find a way around them. But by ignoring God's compass and stepping off the path, we'll miss the blessings He wants to give us through the rough patches—benefits such as strong faith and godly character.

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

JUNE 01ST 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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

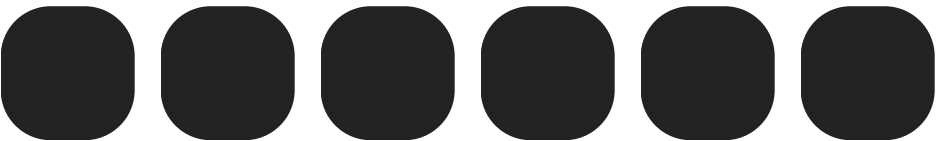
Christ, He reveals opportunities for impacting people with the gospel. These are often chances we wouldn't have had apart from trying circumstances.

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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