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Daily Devotional - Monday, June 25, 2018 - The Call to Serve

JUNE 25TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Galatians 5:13

Jesus commanded that we serve one another, but obeying this is not natural for us. Sure, there are times we like to help others. But service that involves self-sacrifice—especially for someone we deem undeserving—is much more difficult to do.

What does it mean to serve? Consider Christ's example. He gave up everything in heaven to live among us, subjecting Himself to dishonor and human frailty. And He loved even those who rejected Him. Think about how He humbled Himself and washed the disciples' feet at Passover. This was a disgusting, lowly task that a slave might be assigned—far from anything a king should do. He even knew these men were about to abandon Him but served them anyway.

Ultimately, Christ gave His life for us. And He did so while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8). Serving others was His lifestyle—part of who He was and what He did. As His followers, we should strive to be like Him.

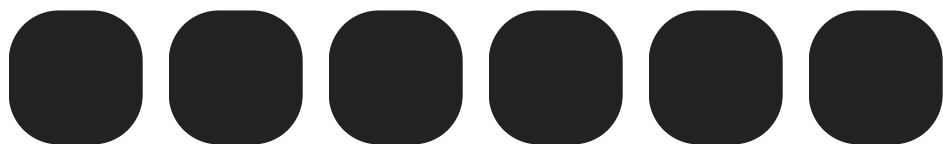
Therefore, service involves first dying to our selfish attitudes and motives. Only then can we live to glorify Christ. Jesus said that the greatest commandments are to love God wholeheartedly and to love others (Matt. 22:37-39). Ironically, it is only when we humbly serve others that we experience God's fullness in our own lives.

Many try to achieve happiness by striving after their own desires. The result? Tired, unsatisfied people. True contentment happens only when we walk closely with Jesus. He shows where we can humble ourselves and take care of others. These actions, done through His strength, will be blessed.

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Daily Devotional - Sunday, June 24, 2018 - The Power of God's Grace

JUNE 24TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Romans 5:1-5

Grace is one of God's most amazing gifts. It provides us with everything we need to live in perfect freedom: pardon for our sins, healing for our heart, the companionship of God's indwelling Holy Spirit, and access to freely cultivate our relationship with Him. We work, worship, and enjoy life, surrounded by His unconditional love. His grace upholds us, fills us, and sustains us.

Since we are forgiven people, the Lord responds to us not as enemies but as His dearly loved children (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 5:1). He hears our prayers, speaks to us, and acts on our behalf. The knowledge that we live under the covering of God's grace gives us...

Security about our position. No one can snatch us out of His hand (John 10:28).

Boldness to live for Christ. Our adequacy comes from the Lord and who we are in Him, so we can live in confidence.

Peace for today because we can fully trust in His sovereignty. The Lord is carrying out His perfect will—and we can be sure that nothing is able to thwart His plan. When we cooperate with Him, we cannot fail.

Hope for the future. This life is just the beginning. One day we will see Jesus face to face, be perfected as the individuals He created us to be, and live with Him in our true home forever.

The Lord is committed to transforming each of us according to His special plan for our lives. Even His correction is an expression of His loving favor (Heb. 12:10). When we falter or fail, we can rest assured that His amazing grace hems us in and always offers us redemption.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, June 21, 2018 - The Key to Enduring Hardship

JUNE 21ST 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, June 21, 2018 - The Key to Enduring Hardship

Genesis 50:15-21

God has given us many amazing promises in His Word. Yet, though we are assured of His steadfast love (Rom. 8:38-39), provision (2 Corinthians 9:8), and guidance (Prov. 16:9), He has not promised us an easy, trouble-free life. What we can count on, however, is that the Lord will work everything—including adversity—for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Long before Paul wrote this word of encouragement to the church at Rome, Joseph learned the same principle by experiencing its truth. His affirmation of it, however, came several years after his unfair suffering had ended. In the midst of his difficulties, it's doubtful that he understood what God was doing in his life.

The same is true for us. When our hearts and minds are agitated because of turbulent events, it's hard not to stare at circumstances in horror or confusion. But we must decide to believe what the Bible says about God's character, activity, and purposes. That choice forces our attention off the storm and onto the One responsible for ushering us safely through.

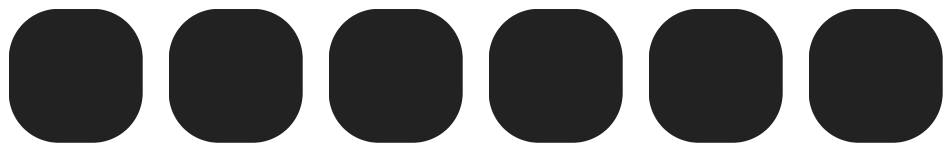
In His presence, fears dwindle and doubts dissolve; peace and a sense of oneness with the Lord will take their place. Our responsibility is to keep our eyes on God and trust His Holy Spirit to provide strength, wisdom, and courage.

Turning to the Lord will not necessarily bring an end to the hardship, but He will help us see that we are exactly where He wants us. He has a reason for the discomfort and desires that we grow in Christ through it. Whatever the situation, the safest place in the world is the center of His will.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, June 20, 2018 - Be Steadfast in Prayer

JUNE 20TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Luke 18:1-8

While the Israelites engaged in physical combat, a spiritual battle was simultaneously being waged nearby. Scripture tells us that as Moses was praying, he grew weary in the midst of a critical situation (Ex. 17:12). If this can happen to one of God's greatest leaders, it shouldn't come as a surprise when we feel defeated or discouraged.

As battles loom, we oftentimes lose heart because our eyes are focused on the circumstances. We allow the enemy to skew our perspective of the conflict, which makes barriers before us seem unlikely to give way. Then it's not uncommon to feel panicky and wonder, *Lord, what am I going to do?* We may even stop praying because it seems apparent there's no solution, no way out, no hope of victory. We're just too tired and disappointed.

Jesus knew that we would at times feel fainthearted, which is why He told the parable of the persistent widow in today's reading. The Lord wanted to encourage His followers to be tireless in prayer. This requires faith, without which it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

Let's remember that the enemy rejoices when we give up, but defeat is never our only option! If we could see the situation through God's eyes, we would see a completely different landscape. We may need to pray strenuously, as if we're tunneling through a mountain, but when we do, our faith and perseverance will grow.

So keep praying, and let the Word of God encourage you personally. You'll hear His assurance as He fights for you.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, June 19, 2018 - Look for the Good Way

JUNE 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Jeremiah 6:16-17

If you're a hiker, you know how important it is to stick to the marked trails in unfamiliar territory. To venture off on your own could lead to disaster if you get lost and can't find your way back to safety.

This is similar to what happened to the nation of Judah. They veered from the Lord to make their own way by adopting foreign gods. As a result, God told the prophet Jeremiah to point them back to Him. Sadly, they refused to listen and continued in the wrong direction.

But we don't have to follow in their footsteps. The Lord will lead us onto His path if we'll heed these commands from Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV):

“Stand at the crossroads and look.” God sometimes uses trouble to open our eyes and let us see we're at an intersection. This is the time to stop and immerse ourselves in God's Word so we can discern His way.

“Ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is.” Saints from the past have left footprints for us to follow. After meditating on psalms or prayers offered by people in the Bible, we should ponder how their petitions reveal trust in God. It’s also helpful to notice what happened next in the scriptural accounts.

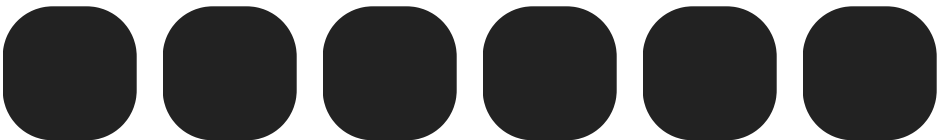
“Walk in it, and ... find rest for your souls.” With eyes firmly fixed on Jesus and with full reliance on the Holy Spirit’s strength, we can walk the road of obedience and follow Christ to sweet, soul-satisfying rest.

If you’re uncertain regarding God’s will, avoid the tendency to run faster. Pause, follow Jeremiah’s instructions, and trust the Lord to show you the good way. Then start walking.

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