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Daily Devotional - Thursday, June 28, 2018 - Beware of Spiritual Swindlers

JUNE 28TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, June 28, 2018 - Beware of Spiritual Swindlers

Matthew 7:15-23

Physical safety is a Natural concern for people today because the world is filled with instability, global conflicts, and terrorist attacks. We should rightly be concerned about protecting our community, yet when it comes to spiritual safety, churches often neglect protection against people who undermine our faith. Jesus called them wolves in sheep's clothing and issued some stern warnings to alert us.

These wolves are false teachers and prophets who appear to be genuine spiritual guides but are actually full of schemes to advance their own agenda. They look and sound good, but inside they are consumed with lust and greed. None of this is apparent right away because they preach a fine gospel in a most compelling manner. Gradually, however, they blend inaccuracy with facts, and at this point, people seem to forget that truth mixed with error is no longer truth but has become deception. You can recognize these folks in a number of ways. Jesus said they would bear fruit that would eventually reveal their true character.

- They subtly question the Bible's authority and relevance for today.
- Little is said about living a holy life or obeying the whole counsel of God.
- Obedience to the Lord is equated with living the way you desire.

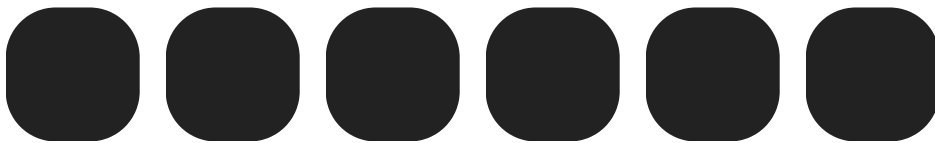
- The welfare of the sheep concerns them less than having followers.

This is a wake-up call for anyone snoozing in the pews. We can't afford to believe everything we hear. Follow the example of the Bereans, who were commended for using Scripture to evaluate whatever was taught (Acts 17:11).

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, June 27, 2018 - Grounded in the Faith

JUNE 27TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Colossians 2:1-8

Do you remember what it was like when you got saved? You probably didn't know much about the Bible, but you knew your life had changed forever. Your guilt was gone, and heaven was now your eternal destiny. The newness of salvation prompted you to want to tell whoever would listen to what had happened to you.

In time, however, we tend to settle down in our Christian life, get involved in church, and maybe even start to take our salvation for granted. Although we love and serve Jesus faithfully, we may be more interested in what the Bible says about how we're to live than we are about the beliefs that form the foundation of our faith.

In Colossians, Paul emphasizes the importance of stability in our faith—stability that results from “the rich experience of knowing Christ with real certainty and clear understanding” (Col. 2:2 TLB). Knowing what Scripture says about the essentials of our faith guards us from deception. When we're firmly rooted, built up, and established in biblical teachings, we'll recognize when false teachers offer messages that don't align with God's Word. However, unless we know what we believe and why we hold these beliefs, we could become prime targets for cults that specialize in adding just enough truth to error to make their message seem believable.

Can you defend your faith? Do you know what the Bible teaches about Jesus, salvation, and the essentials of Christianity? Knowing the truth about these things protects you from deception and also allows you to knowledgeably share the message of salvation with others.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, June 26, 2018 - Taking Risks of Faith

JUNE 26TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, June 26, 2018 - Taking Risks of Faith

Matthew 14:22-33

Have you ever taken a risk in your obedience to God? Perhaps He's given you an assignment that strikes you as beyond your abilities. Demonstrating faith in God may appear to be risky business, but it's actually the safest thing to do. Furthermore, it's the way the Lord expects His followers to live.

Can you imagine what the other disciples thought when Peter stepped out of the boat? It seemed like a crazy thing to do, yet Peter trusted that Jesus would keep him from sinking into the raging water.

And Peter did a pretty good job of walking on the water until he took his eyes off Jesus. As long as his total focus was on Christ, he was fine. Yet when he allowed himself to be distracted by human fears, he fell deep into trouble—literally!

This demonstrates an important principle: When doubts prevent us from obeying God, we are doomed to failure. But when we step out in faith, God always assumes full responsibility for the consequences of our obedience.

The story of Peter's walk on the sea teaches us three things.

- God will lead us into challenging situations that call us to walk by faith.
- Christ stands ready to rescue us when we cry out to Him.
- The Spirit of God will never let us fall beyond His reach.

Are you facing a situation that requires full trust in the Lord as you step out in obedience to Him? The real risk lies in your temptation not to obey Him. Keep your eyes on the heavenly Father, and He'll see you safely to the other side.

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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.

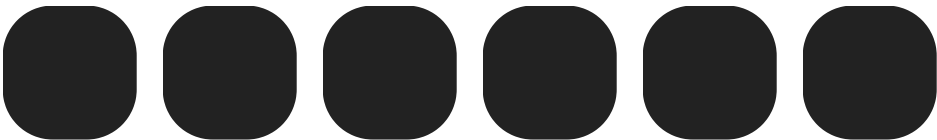
Hope for the future. This life is just the beginning. One day we will see Jesus face to face, be perfected as the individuals He created us to be, and live with Him in our true home forever.

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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