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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, July 24, 2018 - He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

JULY 24TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, July 24, 2018 - He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Daniel 2:20-22

How many of us have listened to the global or national news and wondered, *What in the world is going on?* Without a firm foundation of biblical truth, we can easily be overcome with fear and despair. Despite the upheaval in political and financial realms, Christians can find peace in the knowledge that our God is sovereign over every nation and ruler on earth.

Though the future of a nation appears to be in the hands of its rulers and lawmakers, an omnipotent hand is orchestrating a good and glorious plan: The Lord is the one who “removes kings and establishes kings” (Dan. 2:21). Ultimately, every governmental leader is put into office, not by voters, political campaigns, or personal abilities, but by the hand of God.

Nothing that the Lord does is carried out in isolation. He’s working all things according to His divine plan. We tend to think that a ruler has to be righteous for God to use Him, but Proverbs 21:1 tells us the Lord can direct the heart of any national leader wherever He wishes. In fact, He describes two pagan kings—Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus—as “My servant” (Jer. 25:9) and “My shepherd” (Isa. 44:28). Unbeknownst to them, God guided their paths to fulfill His purposes for Israel.

When the news threatens to dislodge your peace or cause despair, remember who holds the nations and rulers in His hand. The Lord’s plans for this world are moving along according to His divine purposes, and no unrighteous ruler can thwart Him. Just keep singing, “He’s got the whole world in His hands.”

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Daily Devotional - Monday, July 23, 2018 - Wisdom for Life

JULY 23RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Proverbs 4:10-27

Sometimes life seems like a confusing maze of options, and we don't know which path to choose. What we need is God's wisdom to guide us. Our first source for insight is His Word, but that is not the end. With scriptural principles as our foundation, God provides other opportunities that can help us grow in wisdom.

Discernment. Instead of blindly accepting cultural ideas, we should compare what we hear and see around us with what God has said in His Word. Then we'll recognize evil and deception and have the wisdom to avoid that path.

Observation. By noticing actions of godly and ungodly people, we gain wisdom. As we observe their mistakes and successes, as well as our own past, we learn the blessings of obedience and the consequences of wrongdoing.

Godly counsel. The Lord will sometimes use other people to give direction for our life (Prov. 12:15). Whether they speak encouragement or correction, we can trust their advice when it lines up with Scripture and is confirmed by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

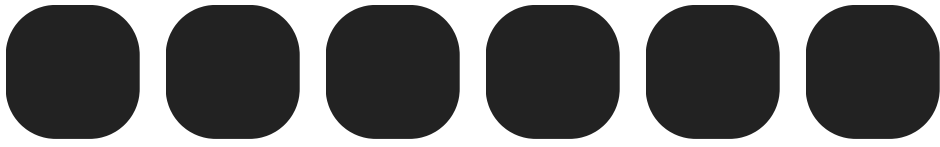
Wise Associates. There's great benefit in spending time with those who know the Lord and routinely respond in a godly manner (Prov. 13:20). Before developing close relationships, we should learn what people value. As we recognize which individuals reflect wisdom in thought and deed, we can cultivate a relationship with them and emulate their discerning ways.

God wants us to pay attention to what we see and hear—and to be deliberate in our choice of companions. Wisdom isn't just having the right information; it's an ability to perceive between right and wrong, good and best.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, July 20, 2018 - God's Promise to Provide

JULY 20TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, July 20, 2018 - God's Promise to Provide

Philippians 4:10-19

Today's passage contains a marvelous promise—that “God will supply all your needs” (Phil. 4:19). Although these words bring great encouragement, we can't afford to ignore the rest of the verse or the surrounding context.

“According to His riches in glory” (v. 19). This phrase emphasizes the sufficiency of God's supply, but it also reveals that many of His provisions are spiritual. We usually want Him to provide physically—and He often does. However, He is more concerned with the condition of our spirit. Since He knows that trials assist in conforming us to the image of Christ, some difficulties may remain until they have accomplished His good purpose in us.

“In Christ Jesus” (v. 19). These may be the most important words of the verse, as they give the basis for the Lord's abundant supply. It has nothing to do with our hard work or worthiness but is based only on our relationship with God through His Son. As our Father, He assumes the responsibility for meeting the needs of His children.

“You have done well to share with me” (Phil. 4:14). The Philippians were generous people who sent Paul gifts when they could. Their generosity enabled him to assure them of the Lord’s provision: “Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38).

Pulling verses out of context can distort our understanding of God’s promises. Resulting misconceptions may lead to disappointment and doubt, leaving us to wonder why God isn’t doing what He said. Knowledge of the context motivates obedience and helps us recognize God’s less obvious provisions.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, July 19, 2018 - Jesus: A Servant

JULY 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Matthew 20:20-28

Believers like to talk about Jesus as Lord, Master, and especially Savior, but rarely is He mentioned as Servant. Yet describing His own mission, Christ said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). He entered the world to offer Himself for the Father’s purpose and mankind’s need.

Because every human being is born enslaved to sin, Jesus came to set us free. He voluntarily exchanged His glory for flesh because only as a human could He die in our place to pay the penalty for our sin. The greatest service He offered was His sacrifice on the cross. He allowed His purity to be violated by our transgressions. In fact, God made Jesus “who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf” so that we could gain His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Our sinless Savior suddenly and painfully felt the burden of guilt, the vileness of sin, the weight of a tarnished soul, and a wretched separation from His Father. He suffered the injustice of dying for our sins in order that God’s holiness and our imperfection could be reconciled, and we could be shown mercy.

Jesus was the Father’s servant, agreeing to an atonement plan that made Him a sacrifice. And He is your servant as well—He humbly endured the punishment you deserved. To receive the benefit of His sacrifice, you need only believe and call on Him for the forgiveness of your sins. When you receive Him into your life, then you too will know the Servant, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, July 18, 2018 - An Unforgiving Spirit

JULY 18TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Matthew 18:21-35

Because of man's propensity to sin, we're surrounded by opportunities to forgive others. Perhaps we've been unfairly criticized, disappointed by a broken promise, or harmed financially or physically. In this broken world, the list of wrongdoings is endless. The question is: How are we to deal with the offenses of others?

Peter was wondering the same thing, so He asked Jesus how often he should forgive a brother who sins against him. He probably thought he was being very generous by suggesting, "Up to seven times?" But Jesus replied, "Up to seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21-22). In other words, forgive every single time you're wronged. Forgiveness doesn't mean finding reasons to justify or excuse someone's behavior, nor is it about forgetting what happened or pretending it never occurred.

Genuine forgiveness requires deliberate action on our part. While acknowledging that a wrong has been committed, we choose to release the offender from any obligation toward us and surrender our perceived right to hurt him or her back. In essence, we're no longer holding the unfair, hurtful behavior against the person but are extending mercy, just as God has done toward us.

The only alternative is to hold onto anger and bitterness. Though we may think we are punishing the wrongdoer, we're actually hurting ourselves. Resentment is like sludge that contaminates the mind, clogs the heart, and poisons the soul. Untreated anger turns into bitterness, which hinders our relationship with God and others and leaves us vulnerable to Satan's attacks (Eph. 4:26-27). The only remedy is forgiveness.

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