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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, September 19, 2018 - The Blessings of Brokennes

SEPTEMBER 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, September 19, 2018 - The Blessings of Brokennes

Deuteronomy 8:1-14

WEDNESDAY

19

God's discipline isn't easy, but we cannot ignore its wonderful benefits to spiritual growth. It gives us an entirely new perspective on the Lord's plan for our life. If we enjoyed a steady, uninterrupted stream of blessings, we might think our Father exists solely for our happiness, and we wouldn't know the truth about who He is.

Think about what we generally request of the Lord. We ask Him for healing, success, or financial security and seek His blessing on our family and relationships. Philippians 4:6 tells us to pray about everything, so there is nothing wrong with coming to God with all our concerns. But we must be careful that we don't inadvertently begin to think of Him as our personal assistant or some sort of catalog, where we place our order and He delivers.

If that is the case, who is actually at the center of our prayers? It certainly isn't almighty God, who as our Creator and Savior is worthy of our adoration and worship. When we find ourselves at the center of our prayers, the end result is the subtle deception that the Lord exists for our benefit. This distortion breaks the Lord's heart and leads us far away from truly knowing His character and majesty.

The antidote for this self-centered idolatry is brokenness. When God says “no”—taking away instead of adding more and then divinely managing what we have, how much we have, and how long we have it—He is helping us keep our eyes on Him. Do not despise such moments. Instead, recognize them as the voice of your Father calling you back into His loving arms.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 18, 2018 - The Path of Brokenness

SEPTEMBER 18TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 18, 2018 - The Path of Brokenness

TUESDAY

A seed that is not planted will never produce a crop. So Jesus used a seed to illustrate why He had to die in order to bring many people to glory. He was teaching a principle that's also true in our lives: If our ambition is to remain isolated, protected, and comfortable, we'll never bear the fruit God desires. It's in dying to self and being broken of pride and self-sufficiency that we become fruitful and useful to the Lord.

Brokenness is one of the means God uses to mature His children. In that process, we may find ourselves challenged in:

Circumstances that cripple our self-sufficiency.

Areas in which we are not submissive to Him.

The timing of His plans.

If we refuse to be re-formed and instead cling to whatever God wants us to release, then how can He use us for His kingdom? Just like the single, unbroken grain of wheat, we will remain unproductive.

With so much at stake, why do we still resist His process of breaking us down? The problem is usually our shortsighted desires. It's difficult to let go of things or relationships or hobbies we enjoy even when we know they are stunting our spiritual growth. We prefer to take the path of least resistance and hope God will bless us anyway.

Don't be distracted by short-term happiness—that isn't the road to maturity that God has prepared for you. An abundance of fruitfulness awaits you if you'll release your grip and let Him do whatever it takes to get you there.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, September 17, 2018 - God Helps Us Pray

SEPTEMBER 17TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Romans 8:26-27

Why do we sometimes feel as if our prayers go no farther than the ceiling? We're speaking, but is God listening? The truth is that the Lord is always attentive to the prayers of His people. He's the one who has invited us to come boldly into His presence. What's more, He has also promised to assist us as we pray.

First, our Father has given us His Word to teach us truth so we'll know how to pray wisely and effectively. We find guidance for prayer in God's direct commands, the descriptions of His ways and thoughts, the examples of biblical characters, and scriptural principles that teach us how to apply divine truth to every area of our life.

Second, He's given us many promises in His Word. These assure us that He will direct our paths (Prov. 3:5-6), meet our needs (Phil. 4:19), give us wisdom (James 1:5), answer our prayers (John 14:13), and cause all things to work together for good as He conforms us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29).

Third, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us because in our human weakness, we don't always know how to pray as we should (Rom. 8:26-27). He takes our misguided or uncertain requests and reframes them according to God's will.

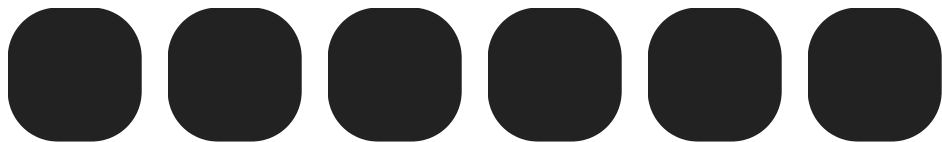
Fourth, Jesus Christ sits at the Father's right hand as our High Priest, interceding on our behalf (Heb. 7:25-26).

We are never alone when we pray, because the Trinity acts on our behalf. Not only is prayer an amazing privilege; it's also an awesome and powerful endeavor. The next time you come to the Lord in prayer, remember that it's a divine appointment with almighty God.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, September 14, 2018 - Two Ways Through a Valley

Daily Devotional - Friday, September 14, 2018 - Two Ways Through a Valley

Psalm 27:1-14

FRIDAY

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What do you do when the pressures of life seem greater than you can bear? Journeys through a valley are inevitable and painful, but God doesn't waste them. The trials of life can be times of discovery about Him.

In our helplessness, we discover His almighty power to sustain us.

In our despair, God invites us to experience His peace and promises.

In our pain, He becomes our comforter and protector.

In our hopelessness, He lifts our eyes to see His sovereignty and goodness.

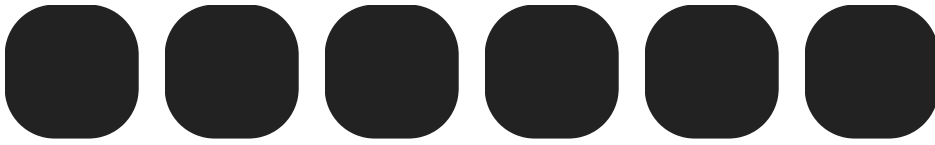
Other discoveries we make in severe crises have to do with ourselves. Terrible times test our faith and reveal our true character. When a crisis first hits, most of us immediately respond with alarm. But at that point, we can take one of two very different paths.

The way of fear. If our relationship with the Lord is weak, fear may cause us to panic, seek ungodly counsel, blame people or God for the problem, or try to find a way out on our own.

The way of faith. On the other hand, if our faith is strong, we'll progressively move from alarm to trust by seeking the Lord through prayer and His Word. We do this by believing He will keep His promises despite supposed evidence to the contrary and by remembering how He helped us in the past. In this way, our endurance and confidence in the Lord is strengthened.

Every adversity God allows in our life is designed to bring us to spiritual maturity, not to devastate us. When we yield to Him in the midst of a crisis, He enables us to trust and wait on Him with patience and hope.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, September 13, 2018

You Must Be Born Again

SEPTEMBER 13TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, September 13, 2018 You Must Be Born Again

John 3:1-16

THURSDAY

13

Life is like a ladder we climb until we die. It would be a shame if we simply stopped and never progressed. But it could be utterly disastrous if we placed our ladder against the wrong wall and after a lifetime of climbing discovered that we had wasted all the years given to us.

This may have been how Nicodemus felt after talking to Jesus. He'd climbed to the top rung of religious success in Judaism and was known as "the teacher of Israel" (John 3:10). Yet Jesus told him the only way he would see the kingdom of God was to be born again. All his good works, extensive knowledge, and great accomplishments were worthless. Nicodemus realized immediately that just as he had done nothing to bring about his first birth, he could do nothing to be born again. His hopes for eternal life were dashed.

Before Nicodemus was ready to hear the good news, he had to be emptied of all his self-confidence and accomplishments in order to see his need for a Savior. His ladder came crashing down, and he had to start afresh with a new birth of the Spirit if he hoped to gain the kingdom of heaven.

Where have you placed your ladder? Has God ever emptied you so He can fill you up again? Although there's nothing you can do to be born again—no good works or religious service—there is something you can believe. God wants you to glimpse His holiness and realize how far you are from His perfect standard. Then, if you come broken and contrite to Jesus, believing His death paid your sin debt, you'll be born again and will someday see the kingdom of heaven.

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