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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, October 9, 2018 - The Death of Self

OCTOBER 09TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, October 9, 2018 - The Death of Self

Matthew 16:24-26

TUESDAY

09

Jesus Christ was obedient to the point of death (Phil. 2:8). While some Christians may be called upon to give up their life for the glory of God, most believers won't face martyrdom. The death required of us, however, is no less real. We die to self.

Human beings are an independent lot. We want things our way, in our time, and on our terms. But Jesus said that anyone who wants to be His follower must deny him- or herself (Matt. 16:24). Of course, that covers obvious issues like sinful habits and evil thoughts. But it also means that in some instances we must decline good things because they come at the wrong time or don't fit God's plan.

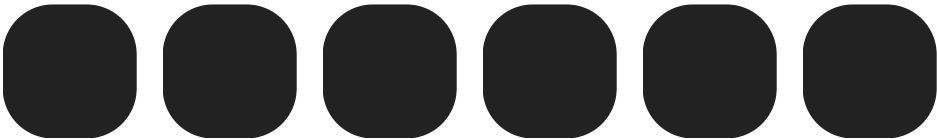
To an outside observer, the Christian's commitment to obey must seem strange, especially when hands emptied by self-denial take up a cross instead (v. 24). Sometimes following the Lord involves suffering. What bystanders can't see or experience is the deep satisfaction believers gain from doing what is right. Jesus once said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). As food is to the body, so obedience is to the soul and spirit. Working for God nourishes, energizes, strengthens, and enlightens—bringing us even more satisfaction than do those things we typically think of as pleasures.

Even when self-denial hurts, obeying God brings joy. Believers who prioritize submission to Him will know what I mean. Contentment is found in drawing close to the Lord, sensing His approval, and looking forward to hearing, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” (Matt. 25:21 NIV).

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Daily Devotional - Monday, October 8, 2018 - Obedience or Preference?

OCTOBER 08TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, October 8, 2018 - Obedience or Preference?

MONDAY

Every believer must choose whether he will live by the principle of obedience or follow his preferences. When a person commits to doing the Lord's will, then every situation and decision is sifted through the standard of "God said it, so I'm going to do it—and that's the end of it." He or she may complain, weep, or try to argue. But in the end, the individual will be obedient, no matter what.

I recall being invited years ago to interview with a church in Atlanta. During the entire trip, I told the Lord that I didn't want to move. I fussed and carried on a good while, but I knew Atlanta would be my new home. I didn't like the idea, but the alternative was unimaginable: There are few things more unpleasant than living with the nagging anxiety that you missed out on something good.

The Lord certainly understands our need to question, cry out, and petition Him for the strength to do what He commands. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that we have a high priest who can sympathize with us. Jesus wasn't excited or happy about the cross. He grieved over the coming separation from His Father. Nevertheless, He was committed to following God's will (Matt. 26:39). No one took Christ's life from Him; He laid it down (John 10:18).

Our lives are about fulfilling the heavenly Father's purpose. Many people miss out on its goodness because they choose to follow personal preferences instead, believing their own choices are better. Obedience is sometimes hard, but the struggle and sacrifice are worth it. The Lord's ways and principles lead believers to joy and peace.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, October 5, 2018 - Turning Doubts into Assurance

OCTOBER 05TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, October 5, 2018 - Turning Doubts into Assurance

1 Timothy 2:1-6

FRIDAY

05

One Sunday morning several years ago, a lady made her way down the church aisle when I invited people to come and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. As we talked, she explained that she became a Christian as a young girl but never felt certain she was saved because she was still struggling with sin. Her story of doubt is common, but according to God's Word, believers can be sure of their salvation.

God desires all people to be rescued from a future in hell so they can spend eternity with Him (1 Tim. 2:4). That's why He designed a plan for our salvation. Since the penalty we owe for our sins is death and eternal separation from God the Father, He sent His Son to bear our sins and die in our place. Jesus took our punishment so we could be rescued (1 Peter 2:24). And this amazing, undeserved gift is offered to us by faith.

If we believe in Jesus Christ and trust in His death on our behalf, God forgives all our sins—past, present, and future. This is the only way we can be saved, because none of our good works can offset our sin debt. In fact, the opposite is true. Paul said salvation is “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:9).

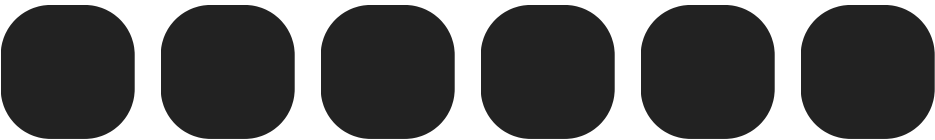
All of the glory for this wonderful plan of redemption belongs to the heavenly Father. He's a loving God who not only wants us to be saved but has also made a way for it to happen—by

sending His Son to die for our sin. He promised that if we believe, then salvation is ours. The child of God does not have to be burdened by doubt.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, October 4, 2018 - The Most Important Preparation

OCTOBER 04TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, October 4, 2018 - The Most Important Preparation

Psalm 78:1-8

THURSDAY

04

When you hear the word *preparation*, what comes to your mind? Do you think about having enough life insurance, studying for a test, or maybe packing all the necessary equipment before a camping trip? If it makes sense to prepare for all these events, then think how much more important it must be to prepare your heart for the Lord (Psalm 78:8).

Today’s psalm is a recitation of Israel’s history and a warning to subsequent generations not to follow that nation’s unfaithful ways. Despite all that the Lord had done for them, the people had taken God’s provisions for granted and forgotten the mighty works He’d accomplished on their behalf. They lived for themselves and did not prepare their hearts to be faithful to the Lord.

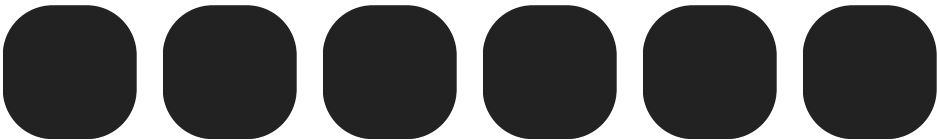
We readily recognize that many of the things we do in life require preparation. But do we approach our spiritual life with the same forethought, or do we tend to take more of a haphazard approach? For instance, do you plan to spend time each day with the Lord in prayer and His Word, or do you tend to seek Him only when you’re facing a problem?

It’s doubtful that we’ll know God very well or become the person He wants us to be unless we put effort into developing our relationship with Him. In these precious moments of prayer and reflection, we have the opportunity to calmly dwell on the Word as we focus on an intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. These are the occasions for strengthening our faith, growing in love for Christ, and laying a solid foundation in the Word—all of which are good preparation for whatever troubles come our way.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, October 3, 2018 - Letting Go of Unforgiveness

OCTOBER 03RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, October 3, 2018 - Letting Go of Unforgiveness

Ephesians 4:30-32

WEDNESDAY

03

It's a common dilemma: Someone has hurt us, and we know we should forgive but just can't. Despite all our promises to God about letting go of the offense, we find ourselves mentally rehearsing the event until we're once again consumed with anger and hurt.

God has not simply called us to relinquish our bitterness; He's given us the means to do it. The Spirit empowers us to forgive others just as God has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32). However, it's not always a quick process—especially if the offense is great and the hurt is deep. Sometimes we must work through steps until we can finally release the burden.

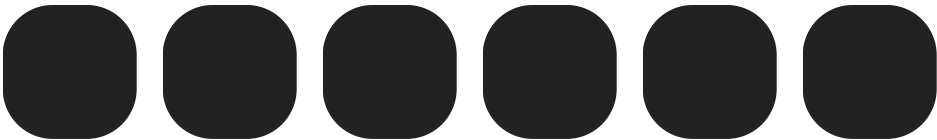
- *First, we must confess to God that we have sinned against Him with our unforgiving attitude and ask Him to help us repent of it.*
- *Next, we should acknowledge that the basis for forgiving others is God's forgiveness of us. We didn't deserve to be pardoned, yet Christ's sacrifice has released us from our guilt. And it's good to remember that while offenses against us may seem to be the most grievous, we usually underestimate the magnitude of our own sins against God.*
- *Finally, we must let the Bible renew our minds. Instead of allowing ourselves to dwell on the wrong done to us, we can surrender those thoughts to God and replace them with biblical truths about Him, His promises, and His ways.*

So how will you know when you have truly forgiven your wrongdoer? The negative emotions that once arose at the thought of the offender will subside, and you'll be at peace.

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