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Daily Devotional - Thursday, October 18, 2018 - The Consequences of Anger

OCTOBER 18TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Proverbs 19:19

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God feels anger, and He has given us this same ability. Anger is a common emotion that arises when we encounter threats, insults, injustices, or frustrations. However, because of our fallen nature, we often respond in a sinful manner when this intense feeling overwhelms us.

One sinful response is to hold on to anger until it becomes part of our character, taking up residence in our innermost being. There, it starts to twist thinking and agitate emotions. Peace and joy are noticeably absent because they can't coexist with the anxiety and frustration that accompany bitterness.

After poisoning the character, anger spills over and affects others. We might throw hurtful words like flaming arrows, even at those who weren't the cause of the rage. And then we raise shields of self-protection in an effort to avoid future hurts. But sadly, these behaviors lead to stressed relationships and isolation.

While anger can damage our character and connections with others, its most tragic consequence is broken fellowship with God. Wrath not only hinders His work in and through believers; it also grieves the Father's heart. He desires to shower His children with blessings, but angry fists

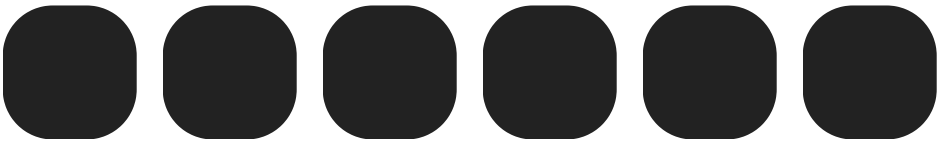
cannot receive His riches of character and calling.

Are you harboring anger? It could be so deeply buried within your soul that you are unaware of its presence. Since sustained, unresolved bitterness will affect every area of your life, ask God to reveal any hidden resentment. Then release it, and take hold of the riches of Christ.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, October 17, 2018 - How to Strengthen Faith

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WEDNESDAY

How do you know whether your faith is strong or weak? We realize that as believers, we're supposed to trust God with every aspect of life, but circumstances may cause us to waver. This is not a new problem—five times in the book of Matthew, Jesus pointed out examples and symptoms of what He called “little faith.”

Anxiety. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed people who were worried about their basic needs being met (Matt. 6:25-34). He assured them of divine provision if God's kingdom was their top priority.

Fear. When a storm arose, the disciples were afraid even though the Creator of the wind and the sea was with them, asleep in the boat (Matt. 8:23-27).

Focus. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he had faith to walk on water. But when he focused on his circumstances, he began to sink. (Matt. 14:24-33).

Forgetfulness. Despite the feeding of thousands, the disciples failed to remember Christ's past provision in their current situation (Matt. 16:5-12).

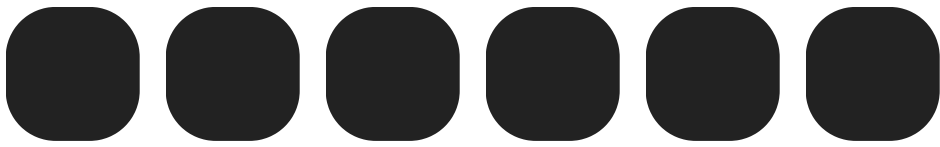
Inadequacy. Although Jesus had given His disciples authority to cast out demons, they felt inadequate and lacked divine power when faced with a particularly difficult situation (Matt. 17:14-20).

In each case, the wrong mindset resulted in a lack of confidence in Christ. Diminished faith begins not with circumstances but with our thinking and focus. Therefore, if we want to increase our trust in God, we must fill our minds with the truth of Scripture, remember our Father's faithfulness to us in the past, and look for His hand working in our present situation. When our minds are renewed, our faith will be also.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, October 16, 2018 - Returning to God

OCTOBER 16TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Malachi 3:7-12

TUESDAY

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Many Christians are familiar with God's words in verse 7 of today's reading: "Return to Me, and I will return to you." When Malachi delivered this message to Israel, they seemed ignorant of the fact that they had left the Lord. Throughout the book, God made statements about their poor spiritual condition, and they always responded by asking how they had offended Him.

In this passage, God accuses them of robbing Him by withholding the tithes and offerings required by the Law to support the Levites and priests. God viewed their persistent disobedience to His commands as theft because they were keeping for themselves what belonged to Him. If we consider all that the Lord has given us, we must ask ourselves whether we're robbing Him in any way. Consider these examples:

- *God has given us life and determined the number of our days (Psalm 139:16). Yet some of us claim that we don't have time to read the Bible or pray. We may be busy, but it's our responsibility to prioritize time with the Lord in the 24 hours He has allotted to us each day.*

- *Our Father has also given us abilities, talents, and spiritual gifts, yet we oftentimes reserve their use for our career or hobby rather than for serving Him.*
- *God is the one who has given us the ability to work and earn an income, and all He asks of us is the first portion.*

Is there anything of the Lord's that you've been keeping for yourself? With an obedient and grateful heart, you can joyfully give back to Him a fraction of whatever He has given you.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, October 15, 2018 - Can You Trust Your Conscience?

OCTOBER 15TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Daily Devotional - Monday, October 15, 2018 - Can You Trust Your Conscience?](#)

MONDAY

“Let your conscience be your guide” is a well-known expression, but one that isn’t necessarily good advice. That’s because your moral compass is only as reliable as the principles you’ve learned. It will be a dependable safeguard through your life if you store up biblical instruction. But using false ideologies from popular culture to program your conscience will set you up for moral failure.

Our heavenly Father has given each person a conscience as a gift intended to be a tool of the Holy Spirit—our one true Guide. As such, it is designed to protect you from going astray. Your conscience is most trustworthy when the following seven statements are true of you:

- *Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord.*
- *The Bible is the basis for your conduct.*
- *You have a strong desire to obey God.*
- *You make decisions prayerfully.*
- *Your conscience sounds the alarm when you consider a wrong direction.*
- *You feel guilty when you disobey.*
- *You feel compelled to repent of your transgression.*

A trustworthy conscience reacts immediately to disobedience. There is no making excuses over whether or not something may have been wrong.

To develop a reliable inner compass, read and apply Scripture so God’s principles will override any false or corrupted programming. Then, with the Holy Spirit’s guidance, your conscience will alert and protect you. Ask God to make it an effective tool for leading you.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, October 12, 2018 - The Results of Rejecting God

OCTOBER 12TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Romans 1:24-32

Who hasn't listened to the news and wondered, *What's going on in the world?* The evil and social decline in our present culture is something we couldn't imagine even a few decades ago. What we are seeing today is the inevitable result of a society that has denied the existence of God. As a result, many have been given over to a depraved mind and sinful pursuits.

As our Creator, God is the only one who can truly satisfy our heart. When people reject Him, they will seek alternative ways to fill the emptiness within them. But when they turn to something or someone other than God to give meaning to their life, the result is idolatry. From there, they quickly step into immorality in an attempt to gratify their desires but eventually discover that they still feel empty.

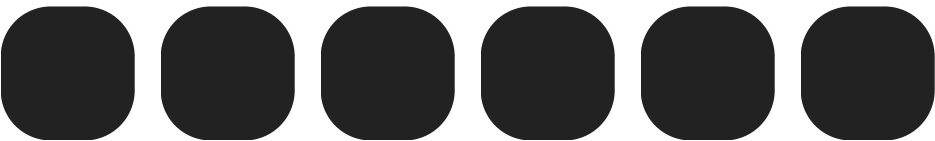
Scripture clearly warns that idolatry and immorality incur divine wrath. God's punishment of those who suppress the truth and reject Him is accomplished through His withdrawal. He turns them over to be guided and ruled by a depraved mind and degrading passions. Basically, He pulls away and lets their sin control them. There is no worse penalty than to have the Creator turn away.

Knowing what awaits those who reject God should cause us who know and love Him to respond with wholehearted devotion, faithful obedience, and overwhelming gratitude for our salvation. Sometimes we can't truly appreciate what we have until we see the horror of the alternative. Our loving God and Savior is truly worthy of all our worship.

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