



[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Monday, October 22, 2018 - God's Blessing of Brokenness

OCTOBER 22ND 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, October 22, 2018 - God's Blessing of Brokenness

Exodus 2:11-15

MONDAY

22

The Lord had a great calling in mind for Moses—to free more than 2,000,000 Israelites from Egyptian bondage. And the future liberator seemed qualified for the task. As Pharaoh’s adopted grandson, he would have had access to royal privilege, power, and education.

But Moses also had a strong independent spirit that could get in the way of his obedience to the Lord. God’s plan required a broken spirit that would follow Him and rest on His divine power.

A big mistake—killing an Egyptian for beating a slave (Ex. 2:11-12)—was Moses’ opportunity to learn this important lesson. Realizing the murder had been witnessed, he fled to the desert to escape Pharaoh’s wrath. It was there that he came to the end of himself.

Like Moses, we’re all born with a tendency toward selfishness and stubbornness and want things done our way. But God gives us opportunities to bring every area of our life to Him in submission.

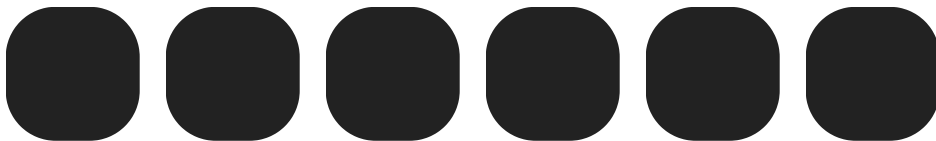
Though few will be given a task on the scale of Moses', the Father has a calling in mind for each believer. Whether His plan is that we raise a godly family, reach out to a neighbor, or run a business with integrity and consideration, He wants us to do so in His power. To prepare us for this work, He sometimes uses brokenness. That wouldn't be our chosen method, but God knows hardship is sometimes necessary to strip us of our selfish ways.

Do you want to achieve what God has planned for you to do? In humility, ask Him to bring any brokenness that He deems necessary.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Friday, October 19, 2018 - Contagious Anger

OCTOBER 19TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Proverbs 22:24-25

FRIDAY

19

Anger can wreak havoc on both the body and soul, but its scope extends beyond the individual and impacts everyone nearby. In this way, bitter outbursts and silent resentment are not just our own personal issues.

An angry spirit is contagious. It can pass from one person to another—and even from one generation to the next. Workplaces can become tense environments full of caustic words and attitudes. Ire turns homes into battlegrounds of verbal explosions or silent hostility. Even churches suffer from malicious gossip and fights over personal preferences.

God created us to live in fellowship with others, but anger can poison our relationships. Tragically, those closest to us are the ones who suffer the most. Children learn to respond to life's situations by observing their parents' example. They then develop similar attitudes and patterns of behavior. We need to give serious thought to what kind of heart we are passing down to our sons and daughters.

Thankfully, God is in the heart-changing business. Just as we learn an angry person's ways by association, so we can learn righteous ways by walking closely with the Lord. Christ calls us to come, learn from Him, and find rest for our souls (Matt. 11:28-29).

Which would you prefer: churning anger or Christ's peace? Both require sacrifice. To maintain anger, you forfeit healthy relationships and possibly a godly heritage for your descendants. But to acquire peace, you simply ask God to help you leave grudges, personal rights, and insults at the altar.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

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

OCTOBER 18TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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

Proverbs 19:19

18

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.

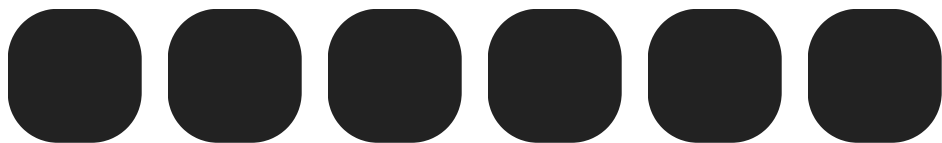
While anger can damage our character and connections with others, its most tragic consequence is broken fellowship with God. Wrath not only hinders His work in and through believers; it also grieves the Father’s heart. He desires to shower His children with blessings, but angry fists cannot receive His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

OCTOBER 17TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Matthew 17:14-20

WEDNESDAY

17

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).

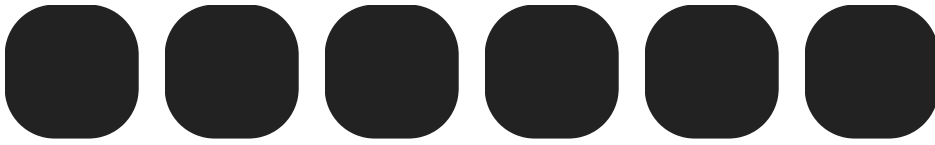
Inadequacy. Although Jesus had given His disciples authority to cast out demons, they felt inadequate and lacked divine power when faced with a particularly difficult situation (Matt. 17:14-20).

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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[Go to post](#)



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

OCTOBER 16TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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

Malachi 3:7-12

TUESDAY

16

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:

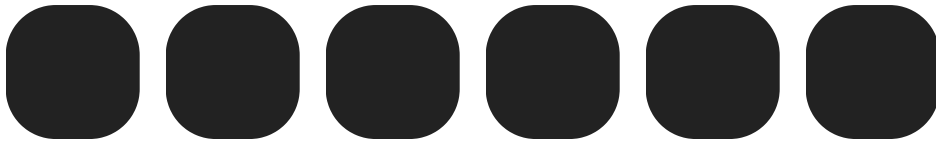
- *God has given us life and determined the number of our days (Psalm 139:16). Yet some of us claim that we don't have time to read the Bible or pray. We may be busy, but it's our responsibility to prioritize time with the Lord in the 24 hours He has allotted to us each day.*
- *Our Father has also given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