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## Daily Devotional - Wednesday, January 16, 2019 - Developing a Vibrant Faith

JANUARY 16TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, January 16, 2019 - Developing a Vibrant Faith

**Acts 9:1-6**

WEDNESDAY

16

The apostle Paul had a strong commitment to know and serve Jesus Christ. His passion and love for the Lord was obvious—Jesus was always central in his thinking, whether he was working as a tentmaker, preaching to the crowd, or even sitting in prison. What fueled his love for the Savior?

Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus was a motivating force in his life. Grateful for the gift of grace he had received at salvation, the apostle told many people about his encounter with the resurrected Christ and its impact on him. We, too, have a story to tell of God's mercy, both in saving us and in giving us new life in Him.

Paul's zeal also came from his firm conviction that the gospel message was true and available to everyone (John 3:16). On the cross, Jesus took all our sins—past, present, and future—upon Himself (1 Pet. 2:24). He suffered our punishment so that we might receive forgiveness and be brought into a right relationship with God. Through faith in Christ, we've been born again, and the indwelling Holy Spirit helps us every day (John 14:26). The more we understand what Jesus has accomplished on our behalf, the greater will be our passion to share the gospel.

Developing a vibrant faith requires time and energy plus a commitment to obey the Lord. Regularly studying the Bible will strengthen your beliefs and give you courage to speak. Caring about the spiritual welfare of others will move you into action. Do you have a passion to serve Jesus wherever He leads?

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## Daily Devotional - Monday, January 14, 2019 - Assurance for Trials

JANUARY 14TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, January 14, 2019 - Assurance for Trials

**Psalm 121:1-6**

Trials will surface in our life. Thankfully, though, we can rely on our Father to help in times of need, as today's passage from Psalm 121 assures us.

**“I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth”** (vv. 1-2). When frightened about dangers and difficulties that might befall him, the psalmist knew where to turn for help. Similarly, when we encounter uncertainty, fears, or trials, our sovereign Lord will sustain us (Psalm 103:19)—even when others let us down or our own strength fails.

**“He who keeps you will not slumber”** (Psalm 121:3). With billions of people in the world, it is difficult to comprehend how the Lord could possibly know every detail of our lives—or why He would care enough to number all the hairs on our heads. But this passage confirms that God is alert to every aspect of each life and attentive to our every need.

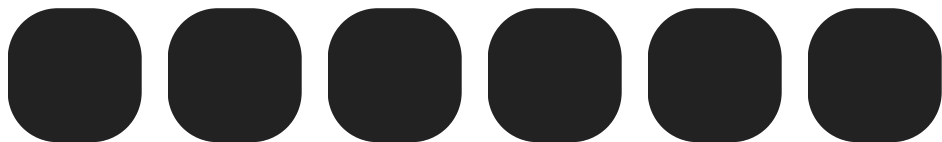
**“The Lord is your keeper”** (v. 5). In Hebrew, the word for “keep” comes from the same root as “guard” and “protect.” We use this term when parents ask a trusted person to keep their child while they are away temporarily. The childcare provider is expected to protect and provide for needs. God promises to keep His children, which means that He will defend us, give us what we need, grow us into His likeness, and guard us from evil.

Without these promises, the world could seem dangerous and lonely. But we can face unknowns and difficult times with confidence, knowing that the Lord will keep us and help us.

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## Daily Devotional - Friday, January 11, 2019 - Longing for the Word

JANUARY 11TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, January 11, 2019 - Longing for the Word

**1 Peter 2:1-3**

FRIDAY

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If you've ever had a newborn baby in your home, you understand the concept Peter is conveying in today's passage. A baby doesn't care how pretty mom is or how delightfully the nursery is decorated. There is one thing a newborn wants above all else—milk.

Is that how you feel about God's Word? Do you long for it so that you may grow spiritually mature? Is hearing Scripture explained and taught at church something you look forward to with eagerness? Or have you lost your appetite and gotten used to digesting only on Sundays?

Often, right after someone has come to faith, there's an initial hunger to read the Bible because everything about salvation is new and exciting. But as time passes, the novelty wears off, the problems and daily pressures of life continue just as they did previously, and passion for the Word may be replaced with the cares of this life.

If someone has truly been saved, a hunger for the Word should be evident. That's because as believers, we have tasted the kindness of the Lord and, therefore, long to know Him more fully. Habitually nibbling on Scripture doesn't do much to stimulate our appetite. God's Word is an acquired taste, and the more we consume it, the greater our hunger for it will become.

If you've lost your desire for the Word, ask the Lord to restore your appetite, and begin reading every day. As you become more familiar with Scripture, you'll notice your understanding and desire for it increase. Best of all, your love and devotion for your Savior and will grow as well.

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## Daily Devotional - Thursday, January 10, 2019 - Dealing With Guilty Feelings

JANUARY 10TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, January 10, 2019 - Dealing With Guilty Feelings

THURSDAY

Guilt comes from a feeling of responsibility for some wrongdoing. Conviction can result from the Holy Spirit's efforts to turn us away from sin and guide us to our heavenly Father. But not all guilt stems from ungodly actions.

False guilt, which is not prompted by sin, can surface for a variety of reasons, such as disappointment in one's own performance, a sense of shame over past events, or criticism from others for unmet expectations. Rejection or a pattern of abuse from childhood can also trigger this emotion. False guilt is a powerful weapon the enemy uses to direct our thoughts away from the Lord.

Whether false or real, the emotion of guilt divides our mind, drains our energy, and creates a sense of insecurity. If we allow it to linger, we can start to have doubts about God's goodness and love for us. Depression and hopelessness may follow. To cope, some people develop compulsive behaviors in an attempt to replace self-reproach with something pleasurable. Excessive amounts of food, television, internet, shopping, and exercise are common ways people try to push away self-condemning thoughts.

Addressing guilt quickly is important. Acknowledge the emotion to the Lord, and identify the reason behind it. If you've violated God's law, ask His forgiveness, and take steps to change the behavior. If you discover false guilt, confess it and ask God to adjust your thinking to match His. In either case, praise Him because He doesn't want His children carrying unnecessary burdens and has promised to forgive our sins.

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## Daily Devotional - Wednesday, January 9, 2019 - God's Plan for Our Guilt

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JANUARY 09TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, January 9, 2019 - God's Plan for Our Guilt

### **Romans 8:1-8**

Scripture teaches that one aspect of the Holy Spirit's work is to convict us of sin (John 16:8). His purpose is to turn us from our iniquity and direct us to God.

One example is Peter, who felt great remorse after denying he knew Jesus (Matt. 26:75). Another is Paul, who fell to the ground when Christ came to confront him about his behavior (Acts 9:4). Both men responded to these convicting experiences by repenting and following the Lord.

At one time we all were spiritually dead. Sin's presence was corrupting our human nature from the inside out, blinding us to spiritual truth. With our will directed towards self and against God, "we were by nature deserving of wrath" (Eph. 2:3 NIV). In other words, we were under condemnation and facing eternal death—God's required payment for our transgressions. (See Rom. 6:23.) So in our natural state, we were unconnected to the Lord and headed toward eternal separation from Him.

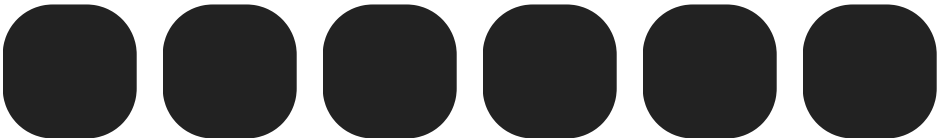
Although we were helpless to change our situation, God had a plan that would satisfy His justice and include us in His family. He sent His Son to be our substitute—to bear our sin and guilt and to die in our place. Not only did Jesus pay our sin debt in full, but His righteousness also becomes ours the moment we place trust in Him.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our guilt before God, and, thankfully, we don't have to be separated from Him now or throughout eternity. Have you received Jesus as your personal Savior? If so, then recognize that your position before the Lord has been changed from guilty to righteous.

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