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Daily Devotional - Monday, January 21, 2019 - Overcoming Life's Ups and Downs

JANUARY 21ST 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Philippians 4:10-13

MONDAY

21

Have you ever heard a testimony from someone who has been through a horrible tragedy and seen firsthand the faithfulness of God in that situation? We pay close attention to these accounts because they inspire us to trust the Lord. And of all the witnesses to God's grace in times of trouble, none is more compelling than the apostle Paul.

Paul was no stranger to hardship. Throughout his ministry, he was dragged, beaten, stoned, arrested, shipwrecked, and accused of heresy by both the Jewish leaders and the Roman government (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). This was certainly a contrast to his early life, when he enjoyed opportunities that his Roman citizenship and Jewish education provided.

In the midst of these amazing ups and downs in his life, Paul discovered a valuable lesson. In Philippians 4:11, he writes, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." His attitude didn't change with his circumstances—it remained constant whether he had plenty or was in need (Phil. 4:12).

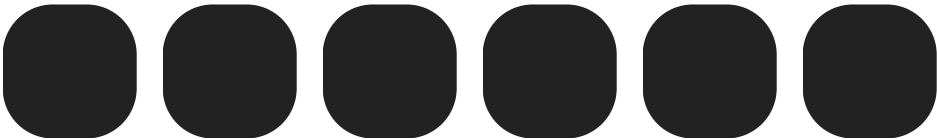
Paul referred to this contentment as a "secret" but then revealed the source of this attitude in the very next verse: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). He is speaking, of course, about Jesus.

In ourselves, there is no way we can muster contentment in every situation. But once we understand that God works through our trials to make us more like His Son and that our union with Christ strengthens us to endure and even rejoice, we have a strong foundation for contentment no matter what is going on around us.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, January 17, 2019 - Knowing God's Ways

JANUARY 17TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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THURSDAY

Having facts about someone is not the same as truly knowing the person. For instance, if a friend you know relatively well were to come and live with you for several months, you would discover his or her ways—that is, habits, preferences, attitudes, and priorities.

When Scripture speaks of God’s ways, it’s referring to much more than His actions or facts about His nature. His ways include His manner, motivations, desires, thoughts, and purposes. One of the reasons believers often become discouraged is that they don’t understand what God is doing in their life. That’s why it’s essential to learn how the Lord operates. As long as we remain ignorant of His ways as revealed in His Word, we won’t trust or know Him intimately.

The Bible is such a big book that some believers may be tempted to give up, thinking it will take too long to learn how God works. But it’s important to remember that we all have the same starting point. When we’re born again, God doesn’t automatically download everything we need to know about Him into our brains. Learning to understand the Lord and how He does things is a process; He teaches us as we continue to read, obey what we know of Scripture, and spend time with Him.

Do you find yourself longing to grow in intimacy with the Lord? If so, you must live closely with Him by listening as He speaks through His Word—and by humbling yourself to learn, accept, and delight in His ways above your own.

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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.

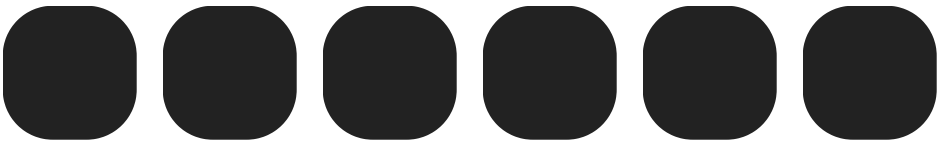
If someone has truly been saved, a hunger for the Word should be evident. That's because as believers, we have tasted the kindness of the Lord and, therefore, long to know Him more fully. Habitually nibbling on Scripture doesn't do much to stimulate our appetite. God's Word is an acquired taste, and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