



[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Monday, February 18, 2019 - The Right Perspective

FEBRUARY 18TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, February 18, 2019 - The Right Perspective

Philippians 1:19-26

The way we perceive our situation often has a greater impact on our life than the situation itself. You've probably seen this for yourself in those who profess to know Christ. One Christian goes through debilitating medical treatments with such trust in God that contentment and joy overshadow the suffering, whereas another believer becomes anxious and resentful.

The setting for today's passage is Paul's house arrest. Although the apostle had committed no crime, he found himself unjustly locked up. But despite such dire and seemingly hopeless conditions, he knew he had nothing to lose. If Caesar decided to have him executed, he'd immediately be with Christ, and that was a much better option in Paul's eyes. If, on the other hand, God allowed him to live, then he could continue a fruitful ministry for the kingdom. His conclusion was, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

When we are saved by the blood of Christ, Paul's statement is true for us as well. Our life is intricately bound up with our Savior, and we can never be separated from Him by any circumstance—not even death.

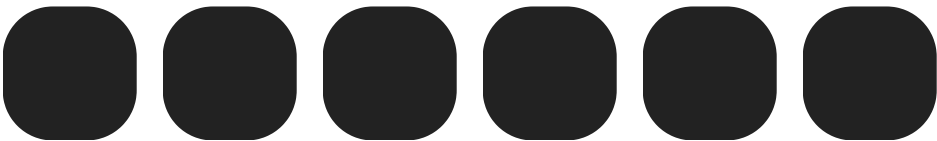
The word *circumstance* comes from two Latin roots meaning "around" and "to stand." Therefore, our circumstances are those things that stand around us, but Christ is the person who

dwells within us. Everything we face, He faces. Our difficult and painful situations are an invitation to let Christ shine through us. When He is our life, then no matter what happens, we have nothing to lose and everything to gain. So let's fix our eyes on Jesus as He leads us through whatever lies ahead.

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[Go to post](#)



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TOP

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, February 13, 2019 - A Gift for Every Believer

FEBRUARY 13TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, February 13, 2019 - A Gift for Every Believer

WEDNESDAY

Even though the Bible clearly states that every believer receives a spiritual gift, some people nevertheless think they were overlooked. So these men and women meander through life refusing opportunities to serve. Other folks are so busy wishing they had a different ability that they do not use the one bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Both of these attitudes hinder the body of Christ.

God has a specific purpose and ministry for every Christian. Our spiritual gifts help us to fulfill His plan. We learn which one (or ones) we possess by getting involved in the life of the church. In other words, a believer will know his divinely appointed abilities when he begins to exercise them.

Moreover, the Lord has a purpose in mind when He bestows spiritual gifts on His children. Christians are to exercise their special skills for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7), and everyone profits when believers do God's work through the power of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are used in a variety of ways, including to equip, edify, and encourage one another (Eph. 4:11-13).

To appreciate how various gifts work to build up the body of Christ, we may have to broaden our understanding of words like *evangelist*, *prophet*, and *teacher*. Biblically, these terms describe co-laborers who share Christ, spiritual mentors who explain biblical truths to new believers, friends who uplift the discouraged, and others doing similar work.

Every member of the Christian fellowship is important, and each one has a task to do. Where God has gifted us and opened doors of opportunity for ministry, He also provides the strength and courage to exercise our abilities.

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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, February 12, 2019 - The Holy Spirit: Giver of Gifts

FEBRUARY 12TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, February 12, 2019 - The Holy Spirit: Giver of Gifts

Romans 12:1-13

TUESDAY

12

Do you feel ill-equipped to serve the Lord? A sense of inadequacy is one of many excuses people use to avoid ministry and service, but it's not a valid one. Evading the Father's call can affect His work on earth, prevent the blessings that come from obedience, and keep us from eternal rewards in heaven.

Jesus Christ knew all about the human tendency to feel inadequate. That is why He assured His followers they would receive a Helper—the Holy Spirit—who would come to abide in them forever (John 14:16). The Spirit enables, energizes, and equips believers to serve the Lord. One of the ways He aids us is by providing spiritual gifts, which are capabilities given to believers.

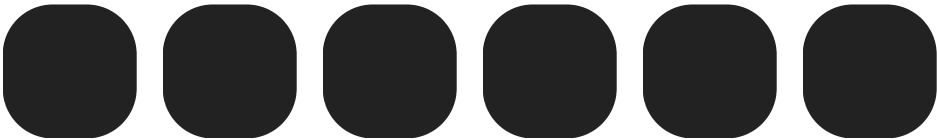
Our heavenly Father has a ministry in mind for each of His followers. Therefore, necessary spiritual “equipment” has been selected to help us carry out His work, and these gifts were planned by our Creator before we were born. It is His purpose that we embrace our gift and combine it with other believers' gifts in order to serve Him wholeheartedly as the body of Christ. Even the smallest job contributes to the Great Commission and the strengthening of Jesus Christ's body, the church.

The Lord has a plan for every believer. To ensure that we can meet His expectations, He first builds natural talents into us. At salvation, He adds a spiritual gift. Then the heavenly Father opens doors of opportunity and the Holy Spirit manifests His power so that we can carry out the work set before us.

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TOP

Daily Devotional - Monday, February 11, 2019 - When God Says No

FEBRUARY 11TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, February 11, 2019 - When God Says No

MONDAY

We've all made foolish requests of God, which we're now glad He didn't answer. But this is easily forgotten when He's presently withholding something we think is good. With so many scriptural promises to answer prayer, why is God saying no? According to His Word, there are several possible reasons.

God has forbidden it. God won't contradict His Word or will, so praying for something prohibited in Scripture is futile. Because of Moses' disobedience, God had decreed the leader wouldn't enter the Promised Land. Moses asked Him to reconsider but was told not to speak of it again (Deut. 1:37; Deut. 3:23-28).

It's for our protection. Because of the divine revelations Paul received, God allowed a "thorn in the flesh" to remain in order to keep him from exalting himself. The Lord prioritizes our spiritual protection over physical comfort.

God has a higher goal for us. Christ's power was displayed in the weakness caused by Paul's thorn. Knowing the higher goal for his suffering allowed Paul to be content and even appreciative of his weakness for Christ's sake.

The Lord has something better for us. Jesus didn't immediately heal Lazarus. Mary and Martha couldn't yet understand that He was going to do something even greater—raising Lazarus, which would glorify God (John 11:1-44).

Our motives are wrong. James says one of the reasons we don't receive our request is because we're asking for selfish reasons and not according to God's will (John 4:3).

Many times we won't understand the good that God is doing by withholding what we desire. But these examples let us know we can trust Him.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Friday, February 8, 2019 - The Protection of Meditation

FEBRUARY 08TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, February 8, 2019 - The Protection of Meditation

Psalm 119:9-16

FRIDAY

08

If there was a seminar on overcoming sin, many Christians would sign up, hoping to discover the secret to victory over their temptations. But the answer isn't elusive; it's right under our nose. All we need to do is open our Bible. Every answer the psalmist gives to his initial question of how to keep our ways pure involves Scripture.

Live according to God's Word (Psalm 119:9-10). This means we must spend time reading and meditating on Scripture in order to know what it says and means. But that alone isn't enough to guard us from sin; we must obey it.

Treasure God's Word in your heart (Psalm 119:11). Since temptation usually comes unexpectedly, we must be prepared for it even when we can't grab a Bible. That's why having Scripture stored in our mind and heart is so important.

Rejoice in God's Word (Psalm 119:14). There is great joy and peace that comes with knowing Scripture. In fact, it should be worth more to us than all the wealth and possessions this world

offers.

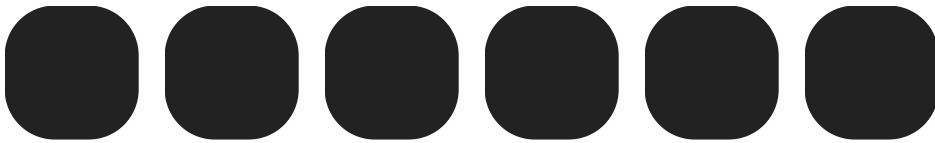
Meditate on God’s Word (Psalm 119:15). We must take time to attune our heart and mind to the Lord, ponder His words, and receive the Spirit’s help translating His instructions for our particular situation. This isn’t a rushed process; it’s a slow yielding of ourselves to the truths we read as we discover how to apply them. And consistency may require a deliberate commitment.

When we faithfully practice biblical meditation, we will discover that the Holy Spirit has been busy transforming our thoughts, emotions, and actions so we’ll be more pleasing to God and less attracted to sinful pleasures. That is good news!

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