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Daily Devotional - Monday, March 4, 2019 - The Lure of Momentary Pleasure

MARCH 04TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, March 4, 2019 - The Lure of Momentary Pleasure

Genesis 25:29-34

After reading today's story about Jacob and Esau, you probably thought, *I can't believe Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. How foolish!* But let's think beyond birthrights and soup. Is there anything of true value that you are trading for something of lesser worth? In other words, what is your "bowl of soup"?

Have you pursued wealth and a career at the expense of family? Maybe your busy schedule has kept you from spending time with God in His Word each day. Some people become involved in extramarital affairs, trading the well-being of their family for the satisfaction of lustful desires. Others sacrifice their health by consuming harmful or addictive substances, or even by overindulging in food. The list of ways we make foolish, shortsighted choices is endless.

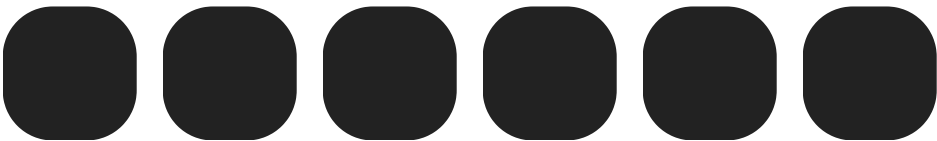
Some of the decisions we make today could rob us of the blessings God wants to give us. When you yield to temptation, you're actually sacrificing your future for momentary pleasure. We can't afford to live thoughtlessly, basing our decisions on immediate desires or feelings. Since the principle of sowing and reaping cannot be reversed (Gal. 6:7), we need to carefully consider what we are planting. The harvest will come, at which point we'll reap what we have sown—and more than we've sown.

Are you contemplating anything that could have serious long-term ramifications if you yield to the yearning? A wise person evaluates choices by looking ahead to see what negative consequences could follow a course of action. Don't let "a bowl of soup" hinder God's wonderful plans for you.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, February 28, 2019 - Living in Freedom

FEBRUARY 28TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, February 28, 2019 - Living in Freedom

Romans 6:1-14

When Eve accepted Satan's offer of greater independence from God, do you think she experienced more freedom? The answer is obvious. She, Adam, and the entire human race became enslaved to sin from that point onward. What looked like a great deal ended in deadly bondage.

Although Christ has set believers free from slavery to sin, we, like Eve, oftentimes long for the "freedom" to do what we want. But whenever we give in to sinful desires, we're behaving like slaves instead of living as free children of God. He's given us the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to say no to sin if we'll just yield to His leadership.

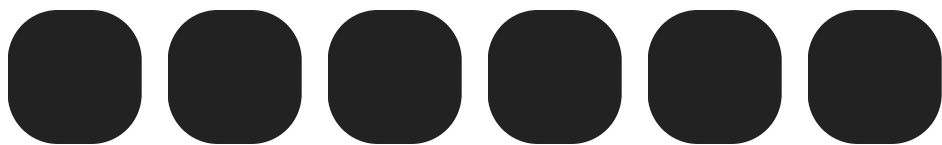
The consequences of reverting to our old ways are devastating. We'll sink deeper into bondage to sin, lose the peace and joy of fellowship with Christ, grieve the Holy Spirit, and find ourselves under the disciplining hand of the Father. We can also miss out on the blessing of helping to advance His kingdom—by falling into the hypocrisy of living like the world, we ruin our testimony because there's no discernible benefit to having a relationship with God. Our unsaved friends, relatives, and coworkers are watching. Unless they see a difference between us and themselves, why would they want our Savior?

If Satan whispers in your ear that the Lord's limitations are depriving you of something good, remember what happened to Eve in the book of Genesis. Liberty to do whatever we want is slavery to self and sin. Only when we live within the Father's protective boundaries can we experience the freedom Christ purchased for us.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, February 27, 2019 - What Takes Place After Salvation

FEBRUARY 27TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, February 27, 2019 - What Takes Place After Salvation

John 3:16-17

To truly grasp what Jesus did for us on the cross—and to be able to share the gospel effectively—it's essential to have an accurate understanding of the terms we use to describe salvation.

Saved (Eph. 2:8). This is a synonym for *rescued*. Mankind needs rescuing because without Jesus, we are all destined for divine wrath, hell, and eternal separation from God.

Redeemed (Eph. 1:7). Redemption implies a transaction. Our salvation was purchased through the shedding of Jesus Christ's blood.

Justified (Rom. 5:1). When someone trusts in Christ, God pardons that person and removes his or her guilt. A saved individual is in right standing with the Lord.

Reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Salvation results in a relationship with God. We were once separated from Him, but now we are His sons and daughters, and He calls us His friends (John 15:15).

Using words like *redemption*, *justification*, and *reconciliation* might not be effective when presenting the gospel to someone unfamiliar with the language often used in church. However,

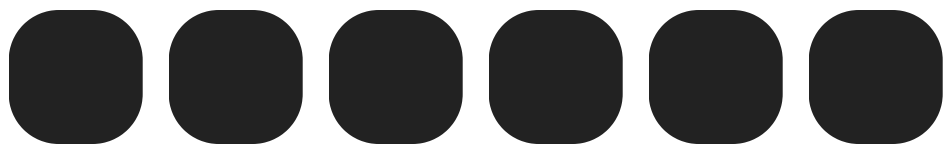
it's important for us to understand what the Bible teaches about salvation, and these terms give us a framework for explaining the good news to others.

We must recognize that we are not saved by our personal works or performance. Salvation is ours by God's grace—His unmerited, undeserved, loving favor toward us—and at the cost of Jesus' own blood. Let us not take for granted how God has rescued us: by sending His Son to die in our place.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, February 26, 2019 - The Sufficiency of God's Grace

FEBRUARY 26TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

The Lord pledges to give us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). It's a promise He always keeps. Yet when life hits us hard, we may be tempted to doubt and give up. If our faith starts to waver, we need to think about what we have already received from Him and then look for evidence that He's at work.

We should remember that we've been freed from sin's penalty. Because Jesus paid the full price by dying on the cross in our place, we owe nothing for our wrongdoing. God now regards us as blameless—at salvation, we each became a new creation and were given Christ's righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30). Originally, we were headed toward permanent separation from the Lord, but our eternal destiny has been changed to a heavenly home in His presence. And God's Holy Spirit lives within us as our constant companion and source of strength.

We also should keep in mind that even in the worst of situations, our Father works to accomplish His will. Joseph experienced betrayal when his brothers sold him into slavery, and later he suffered injustice when imprisoned for doing the right thing. In the end, he realized that the Lord had graciously used those circumstances to rescue his family from a life-threatening famine (Gen. 45:5). In a similar way, God uses adversity to develop our character and dependence on Him. He works through trials to bless us and others.

Because of the Lord's sustaining grace, we have access to His power, wisdom, and guidance. When we ask, God's Spirit will provide the strength to persevere and help us fight doubt.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, February 25, 2019 - Our Circle of Influence

FEBRUARY 25TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, February 25, 2019 - Our Circle of Influence

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5

We hear much today about being a person of influence. Although some of us may be connected to many people, there are others whose lives may seem small in comparison. However, the important issue is not numbers but faithfulness. The Lord has determined the personality and abilities of every believer, as well as our individual spheres of influence.

No matter how vast or limited our connections are, we can each be used effectively by God to influence others as we follow His instructions.

Stand firm in the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:15). We must make sure that our life is grounded in biblical truth. Otherwise, we could lead others astray.

Continue in every good work and word (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17). People watch us, and what we say and do affects them more than we may imagine. That's why it is so important to make sure our attitude, speech, and conduct reflect Jesus Christ.

Develop a lifestyle of prayer (2 Thessalonians 3:1). Praying for others and for opportunities to share the gospel is essential for effective ministry. It prepares their hearts to hear and our minds to know what to say. The simplest words can have amazing results when the Lord is directing our efforts.

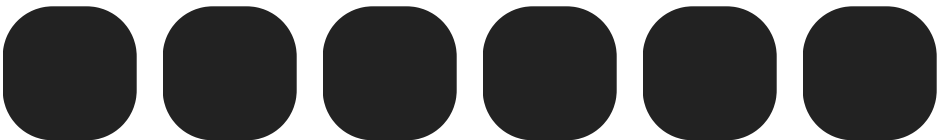
Keep obeying the Lord (2 Thessalonians 3:4). Godly influence will only be achieved if we ourselves are godly. When we are living obediently before the Lord, He will be faithful to open doors of influence according to His will (Revelation 3:8).

If you will make it your ambition to become faithful in all these ways, you can be confident that the Lord will use your life to influence others for good and for His glory.

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