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Daily Devotional - Thursday, March 7, 2019 - Forgiving Ourselves

MARCH 07TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, March 7, 2019 - Forgiving Ourselves

Psalm 103:10-14

Have you ever come to the Lord in repentance, confessing your wrongdoing, and yet still felt guilty? Sometimes the problem is that we can't forgive ourselves. Therefore, we go into a self-punishing mode, repeatedly replaying the sin until we feel unworthy not only of pardon but also of blessings, answers to prayer, and the Father's love. Eventually we build a prison of guilt because our offense seems unforgivable.

But what does such behavior tell us about our faith in God and our estimation of ourselves? According to the Bible, our Father freely bestows forgiveness on the basis of His Son's payment of our sin debt—and has removed our transgression "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). Is our refusal to forgive ourselves a way of saying we consider Christ's sacrifice insufficient? In other words, is our standard of righteousness higher than the Lord's?

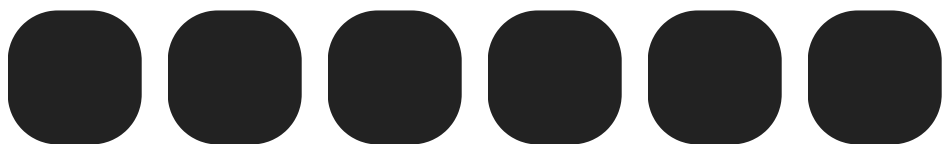
Two men in Scripture teach us about the importance of accepting God's full forgiveness. One is Peter, who denied knowing Christ, and the other is Paul, who persecuted Christians. The Bible gives no evidence that either one of them refused to forgive himself. Although their offenses were great and both men probably regretted their actions, they received God's forgiveness and lived in the freedom of His grace.

To be free of an unforgiving spirit toward ourselves, we must realize it's the result of self-focus. Instead of believing the truth of God's forgiveness, we've been relying on our own feelings and making them superior to His Word. It's time to humble ourselves and place trust in God—not in our feelings.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 6, 2019 - The Dangers of Unforgiveness

MARCH 06TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 6, 2019 - The Dangers of Unforgiveness

Genesis 50:15-21

One of the most beautiful examples of a forgiving spirit is found in the book of Genesis. Despite being the victim of jealousy, evil intentions, malicious plotting, and selfish disregard, Joseph had an attitude of forgiveness that is uncommon and hard for many of us to imagine. By responding in this way to new hurts, he demonstrated that he was a godly man who understood how to let go of resentment and grab hold of forgiveness.

If we refuse to forgive, we can expect to go through painful consequences:

We will have difficulty dealing with the wrong done to us. Instead of releasing it to the Lord, we'll rehearse the offense and relive the pain.

Resentment will take root in our heart and mind, allowing bitterness to grow.

Negativity will begin to affect other areas of our life, such as relationships, emotions, attitudes, and even physical health.

Then feelings of discouragement will rob us of joy and contentment. We may look successful to the world, but deep inside, Christ's peace is absent.

A buildup of ill feelings will start damaging our emotional health, which in turn hampers our ability to love others and accept love in return.

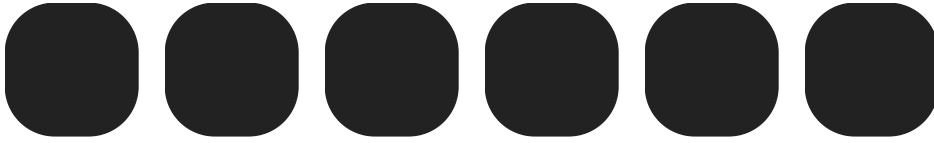
Eventually despair will set in. The inner turmoil may become so great that we might frantically resort to drugs, alcohol, affairs, pleasure, or excessive devotion to a career in an effort to find relief.

The good news is that this downward spiral can be stopped at any point along the way by choosing to forgive. If opening your heart proves difficult, accepting help from a Christian counselor or pastor could be valuable.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, March 5, 2019 - Listening to Our Appetites

MARCH 05TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, March 5, 2019 - Listening to Our Appetites

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

What words would you say describe our society? *Materialistic, sensual, impatient, indulgent, undisciplined*—these are just a few. We're also a "have it now" culture. Satan specializes in presenting us with opportunities for instant gratification while promising that indulging our appetites will bring us satisfaction.

Human appetites in themselves are not sinful. In fact, they're God-given. However, because we are human, we can't always trust them. When our appetites have complete authority, we're in trouble. The apostle Paul likened the Christian life to that of athletes who are so focused on winning the race that they devote every aspect of their lives to that goal.

That's how we're called to live, yet we lack the power to do so in our own strength—and sometimes the motivation as well. For this reason, we need to rely on the Holy Spirit within us.

If we yield our lives to Him and obey, He will be our strength, and we can say no when fleshly desires feel overpowering (Gal. 5:16).

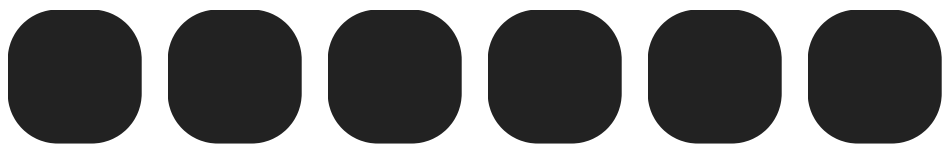
Another key to success is keeping our focus on the eternal instead of the temporal. Many decisions that seem mundane are, in fact, spiritually significant. Are you indulging an appetite that could result in the sacrifice of an imperishable reward in heaven?

When the enemy tempts us, he tries to keep our attention on our desire and the pleasure of indulgence rather than on the eternal rewards and blessings we're forfeiting. Just remind yourself how quickly immediate gratification wanes and how long eternity lasts.

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

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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.

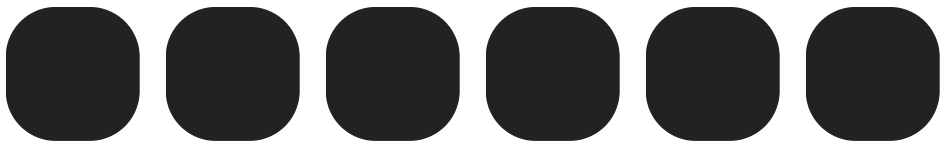
Some of the decisions we make today could rob us of the blessings God wants to give us. When you yield to temptation, you're actually sacrificing your future for momentary pleasure. We can't afford to live thoughtlessly, basing our decisions on immediate desires or feelings. Since the principle of sowing 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

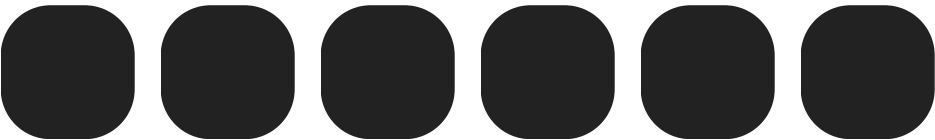
and themselves, why would they want our Savior?

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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