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# Daily Devotional - Saturday, March 9, 2019 - Running Back to God

MARCH 09TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Saturday, March 9, 2019 - Running Back to God

**Luke 15:11-24**

The story of the Prodigal Son is probably the best known of Jesus' parables. Perhaps we love it so much because we can each find ourselves in the narrative since we have all moved out of our Father's will at one time or another.

The King James Bible says the prodigal son went away to a "far country." When we reject God's will, we also enter a "far country," even if we never leave our hometown. Satan beckons with promises of new experiences and entertainment, whispering, "Come satisfy your curiosity—this is the way to really live." But the reality of the "far country" doesn't fulfill those empty promises. Sin distorts our thinking, causing us to lose our sense of what is right and good. We squander time, money, and relationships. God-given talents, ambitions, and opportunities are wasted on pointless pursuits as we pour days and dollars into things that bring only temporary satisfaction.

Outside of God's will, it's easy to make foolish decisions and end up in trouble. That could involve some physical or financial need. Or it might even be a wretched emotional state, in which we feel isolated, unloved, or rejected.

The ultimate end to such a journey is our personal “hog pen”—the place where we finally realize sin doesn’t pay. Having traveled so far to reach this new low, we may wonder if the Lord can ever love us again. The answer is yes. Our sin can never outdistance the reach of God’s grace. If we, like the prodigal son, will turn around, repent, and come home to our Father, we’ll receive His restoring forgiveness and be welcomed with rejoicing.

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## Daily Devotional - Friday, March 8, 2019 - Wandering Away From God

MARCH 08TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, March 8, 2019 - Wandering Away From God

## Luke 15:1-7

It would be wonderful if after salvation, our lives progressed in a straight line of uninterrupted obedience to our heavenly Father. But that is never the case, because we all stray now and then. Jesus told a story about a shepherd who went in search of a lost sheep. While this parable is about the salvation of a wayward soul, the lessons in the story can also be applied to those of us who belong to Christ.

Even though we are held securely in the Father's hand and will never lose our salvation, we can drift in our obedience to Him (John 10:28-29). But why would believers wander away from the God who loves them?

If a sheep takes its eyes off the shepherd, it can easily meander toward a more appealing patch of grass and end up far afield. In the same way, we might see a path that seems to lead to better opportunities. But as we follow it, we grow further from the Lord. We may not notice the distance between us and our Savior until we find ourselves in trouble.

Other Christians willfully choose to pursue their own objectives. They know their choice is wrong, but they rationalize the decision or blame someone else for misleading them.

Regardless of how we end up outside God's will, we are responsible for the action that put us there. Though another opportunity may look good, the only place believers will find true contentment is in a trusting, obedient relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must keep our eyes on Jesus and guard against pursuing anything except His will.

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

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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

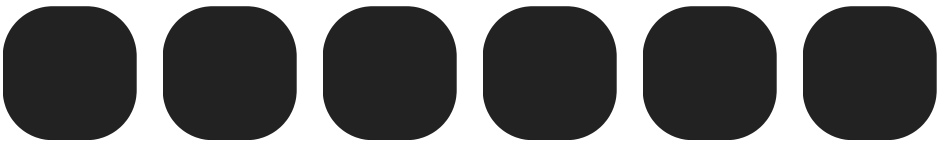
lived in the freedom of His grace.

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.

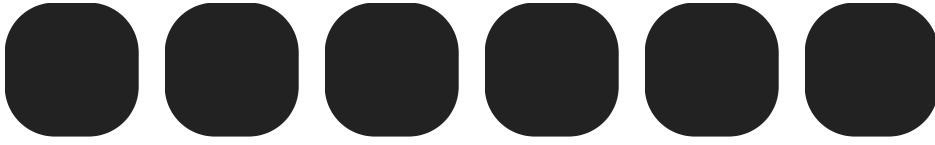
**Eventually despair will set in.** The inner turmoil may become so great that we might frantically resort to drugs, alcohol, affairs, pleasure, or excessive devotion to a career in an effort to find relief.

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).

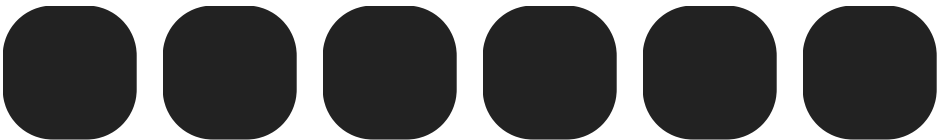
Another key to success is keeping our focus on the eternal instead of the temporal. Many decisions that seem mundane are, in fact, spiritually significant. Are you indulging an appetite that could result in the sacrifice of an imperishable reward in heaven?

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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