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Daily Devotional - Friday, March 15, 2019 - Dealing with Debt

MARCH 15TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Romans 13:1-8

Citizens have the responsibility to submit to governmental authority. Obeying the laws of the land that do not contradict scriptural commands is an essential part of honoring the Lord. Verse 7 of today's passage says, "Render to all what is due them." Just as we are obligated to pay our taxes, we're also to repay all of our debts (Rom. 13:8).

The Lord expects anyone who borrows money to be respectful of his neighbor and diligently repay him. By withholding what is rightfully due, we are guilty of stealing from the lender, which can influence our testimony for Christ. Since defaulting on a loan is serious and can ruin relationships, we need to responsibly get out of debt and stay out.

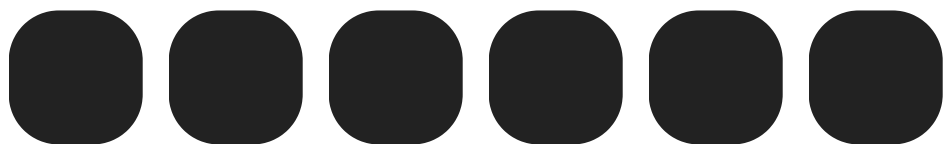
Perhaps this is hitting close to home. As daunting as the task of debt reduction may seem, you are not alone. God wants you to be financially free, and He will show you the way. However, it's usually not a fast fix but a slow and steady approach that will prepare you to avoid future debt. Confess that you haven't been a good steward of your resources, commit to making some sacrificial changes, and consistently work toward your goal. But above all else, rely on the Lord, and He will be faithful.

Does your mountain of debt seem bigger to you than your almighty heavenly Father? If so, your focus is on your own inabilities instead of the Lord's faithfulness. For those who turn to God in genuine repentance and surrender, He will supply the needed resources as well as the persistence to repay what is owed.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, March 14, 2019 - Our Source of Hope in Trials

MARCH 14TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, March 14, 2019 - Our Source of Hope in Trials

1 Peter 1:3-9

Are you presently going through any difficulties? Maybe you're experiencing a trial so intense that you wonder whether it's possible to survive. Or perhaps you're troubled by a particular hardship that drags on with no end in sight. And sometimes it's the small, daily problems and stresses that wear us down and cause us to become discouraged.

Whatever the source of our adversity may be, Peter offers insight to help us recover hope and joy. He reminds us:

- *God has reserved an inheritance for us in heaven, which is imperishable, pure, and eternal (1 Peter 1:3-5). We must lift our eyes upward instead of focusing on our troubles. If we've placed all our hopes in this life, trials will continue to lead us to despair. But as children of God, we have an inheritance that will far outweigh any temporal suffering.*
- *God is in control of our trials. Nothing comes our way randomly. Our loving Father ensures that our tribulations accomplish His unique purpose for each one of His children. He is sovereign over every adversity, including its duration, which is "for a little while" when compared to eternity (1 Peter 1:6).*
- *God uses trials to strengthen our faith. Jesus said those who don't truly believe fall away when afflictions arise (Matt. 13:20-21). To go through suffering and remain true to Christ testifies to others about our salvation. And each test makes our faith stronger.*

So, how should we respond in trials? Peter says we are to rejoice in our eternal hope, endure hardships, love Jesus, and keep trusting Him.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 13, 2019 - Acquiring Wisdom

MARCH 13TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 13, 2019 - Acquiring Wisdom

Proverbs 4:20-27

The most obvious source of godly wisdom is the Bible. There we find the Lord's principles for right character, conduct, and conversation, which apply to the situations and decisions that confront every human being.

We're all able to recall times when we didn't respond wisely. Those incidents can be traced back to one of two possibilities—either we didn't know a certain biblical principle or we knew the principle that applied but chose to ignore it. To ensure that we're familiar with God's standards and the importance of following them, we have to spend time reading and understanding His Word.

For example, suppose that you walk into the office and a coworker verbally assaults you with undeserved blame for a costly mistake. Your flesh and the world would have you respond in kind with anger and malice. But Luke 6:27-29 offers a different approach, that might go something like this, spoken gently: "Is there anything else? Thank you for telling me how you feel about this."

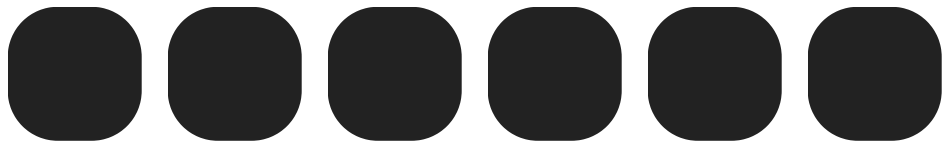
Knowledge comes from learning biblical principles; wisdom has to do with applying them. The Lord cautions us to keep His Word in our heart and in our head so we will heed His instructions (Josh. 1:8; Prov. 8:33).

In pursuing the Christian life, we acquire wisdom by absorbing Scripture, doing what it says, and observing the result, which is for our good even when consequences appear less than favorable. Special classes aren't required; God simply wants an obedient heart and willing spirit.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, March 12, 2019 - Pursuing Wisdom

MARCH 12TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Proverbs 4:5-10

We live in the information age, where news pops up on our cellphones and college can be attended online. But I've noticed that while there is an abundance of knowledge floating around, there isn't much wisdom. Godly wisdom is the capacity to see things from the Lord's viewpoint and respond according to scriptural principles. This wisdom isn't a natural characteristic, but you can develop it gradually over time through practice and prayer.

In God's opinion, wisdom is a valuable treasure (Prov. 8:11). Believers need His perspective and His principles to live abundantly and obediently—that's why acquiring wisdom is not a suggestion but a command (Prov. 4:5).

Think back to stories about "gold fever" during the 19th-century gold rush. People risked their lives in a single-minded quest for riches. Wisdom is worth so much more than a vein of precious metal. In comparing the two, the Lord calls us to passionately pursue godly knowledge and discernment.

Proverbs 8:17 personifies wisdom, who says, "I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me." God will see to it that believers who pursue wisdom acquire it. Moreover, when the desire of our heart is something with lasting value, we receive a bonus—knowledge, prudence, and discretion (Prov. 8:12).

King Solomon, the wisest man of his time, wrote about the importance of acquiring wisdom (Prov. 4:7). Determine in your heart to pursue this great treasure. As you study the Word, seek the Lord's will, and observe His principles in action, God will pour wisdom into your mind and spirit.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, March 11, 2019 - Living Obediently

MARCH 11TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, March 11, 2019 - Living Obediently

Joshua 6:1-20

If you grew up attending Sunday school, you know the story of Joshua and Jericho. But we must be careful not to file this story away in our minds as something amazing the Lord did a long time ago. The same God still guides us today, and by studying this account, we gain insight into living obediently.

Joshua heard God's directive, "You shall march around the city" (Josh. 6:3). In order for us to obey, we likewise need to hear what the Lord is telling us to do. This means we must be reading and meditating on His Word, confessing sin, praying, and spending time with Him.

Joshua obeyed, telling the people, "Go forward, and march around the city" (Josh. 6:7). Joshua did as instructed, despite three potential stumbling blocks:

- 1. He could have questioned God's directive. After all, marching around the city didn't seem like a practical battle strategy for overpowering a fortified city.*
- 2. He could have felt pressured to explain himself to his men in order to gain their approval and*

agreement.

3. He could have let fear of failure keep him from obeying.

But Joshua did none of these. Upon hearing God’s voice, he followed instructions to the letter—and without hesitation. The result was that God honored his obedience: “The wall fell down ... and they took the city” (Josh. 6:20).

Are you willing to do what God says, regardless of your feelings or misgivings? Joshua was confident because the Lord had promised to give Jericho into his hand. And God’s promises to us are also the reason we can trust and obey Him.

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