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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, May 22, 2019 - Why Do We Doubt?

MAY 22ND 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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James 1:1-8

How would you currently characterize your faith? Is it up one day, down the next? The short book of James contains practical advice for those whose faith fluctuates because of difficult circumstances. When we start doubting God and His Word, we're driven and tossed about like the surf of the sea.

James says a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways and should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. To be double-minded is to go back and forth in our thinking. We may begin with strong confidence in God, but as time goes by and the difficult situation continues, we may start to doubt that the Lord will do what He's promised.

Doubting and questioning are not necessarily the same thing. Questioning is seeking to gain further information in order to better understand what God has said. Doubting, on the other hand, involves believing what we think, see, or feel rather than what we know He has said.

It's natural for us to question when we're suddenly overwhelmed by a distressing turn of events. God understands our struggle and wants us to come to Him with our pain and confusion. Sometimes He has to sift our thinking by reminding us of His truth or His past faithfulness to us in a similar situation.

Even though we may not understand all that God is doing through our trials, we can rely on what He's revealed: The testing of our faith produces endurance and spiritual maturity, and it supplies something we lack. Knowing this, we can trust the Lord to accomplish His good and perfect will through the situation—and rejoice in how He will transform us.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, May 20, 2019 - The Justice of Divine Judgment

MAY 20TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Revelation 20:11-15

Every person will face God on judgment day. Whenever that topic comes up, I am usually asked something like, “What about people who live in remote areas, who will never hear about Jesus?” The concerned questioner is really wondering, *How could a loving Lord send an ignorant person to hell?* In other words, how can it be fair to condemn those who have never heard the gospel?

To understand how God judges, we should recognize two truths about Him. First, He is not limited. While whole people groups still have no Scripture in their language, God always reaches individuals whose hearts are open to knowing Him. Men like Abraham and Moses had no Scriptures, and yet the Lord spoke to them.

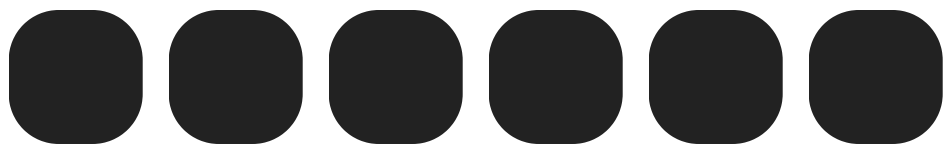
Second, God reveals Himself to all people, whether or not they have access to the Bible. As we saw yesterday, He not only demonstrates His power and attributes through creation; He also programs our conscience to understand the basic distinctions between right and wrong. For those who are blessed to hear the gospel at some point, Jesus Christ is the greatest revelation of God in their life.

When people stand before the Father, He will judge them on three criteria: the amount of truth to which each has been exposed; how many opportunities there were to accept the truth and share it with others; and what was done with those opportunities. The believer’s responsibility, then, is to reach as many as possible with the gospel so that no one need ask, “What about those who have never heard of Jesus?”

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Daily Devotional - Friday, May 17, 2019 - Building on Christ

MAY 17TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 Corinthians 3:9-15

Have you ever seen an elaborate, masterfully crafted sandcastle? That's one of the most delightful experiences of a trip to the beach. The best builders are painstaking in every detail as they craft these beautiful works of art. The towers are straight, the windows are even, and sometimes the outline of individual bricks can be seen on each wall. The end result is often stunning, rivaling the elegance of homes in the wealthiest neighborhoods of the world.

But for all a sandcastle's splendor, its hours are numbered. From the moment the first grain of sand is set in place, the miniature building is on its way to oblivion. Within hours the details are destroyed by wind, rain, and the incoming tide. There is simply no future for a house of sand.

Sometimes believers' lives are like sandcastles. Even though everything looks perfect on the outside, their life's pursuits and activities will be revealed as worthless in the fire of God's judgment. Although their eternal destiny is secure, they will suffer the loss of heavenly rewards because they used inferior building materials.

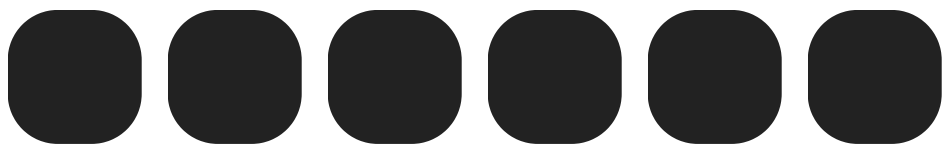
The most important thing in life is to make sure we have the right foundation. Church attendance, ministry work, discipleship programs, or community service are no substitute for the rock-solid foundation of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We also need to build our life with faithful, obedient service to the Lord. The goal is not to have the most impressive-

looking life in this world but to build one that demonstrates our devotion to the Savior who died to rescue us.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, May 15, 2019 Responding to Accusation

MAY 15TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Luke 12:11-12

When conflict occurs, the natural reaction is to blame someone else and defend yourself. But believers must respond differently. Once, I was publicly chastised for a wrong I had not

committed. Thankfully, the Lord enabled me to remain calm rather than react angrily. Praying before doing anything else is the best response in a crisis. When we do, God supernaturally provides that which we can't muster up ourselves.

Spiritual discernment. The Lord, who perfectly understands the source of every problem, can give us insight beyond our limited perspective. Perhaps there's been a communication breakdown, a feeling of jealousy on the other person's part, or a mistake we unknowingly made. The Holy Spirit can show us how to approach our accuser and see beyond hurtful words or actions.

A quiet spirit. Our human nature wants to react quickly so that we can defend ourselves. That's why we must first deliberately focus our attention on the Lord and experience the inward peace He alone makes available to us (John 14:27).

Wisdom. Jesus told His disciples the Holy Spirit would give them wise words to say when they faced hostile authorities. He'll do the same for you. Ask Him to put a seal on your lips until He shows you what to say and when (Psalm 141:3).

We don't have to react to criticism with anger and self-protection the way the world does. Instead, we are called to represent Christ in every situation by depending on Him. In responding as He directs, we bring Him glory and cause unbelievers to want to know the source of our strength.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, May 14, 2019 - Trusting God in Prayer

MAY 14TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Matthew 7:7-11

Prayer is one area of our Christian life in which most of us recognize the need for improvement. Not only do we battle with distractions, but we're also tempted to give up if we don't see immediate results. Yet the Lord wants us to keep coming to Him with our concerns because in the process, we develop an intimate relationship with Him.

We may find it a struggle to establish a consistent prayer life, but what endeavor could be more valuable than petitioning an omnipotent God for whom nothing is impossible? Of course, that is not to say He'll give us everything we request, as people don't always make petitions according to His will. But even when His answer is no, God's fatherly concern for His children is obvious. Have you ever looked back at past prayer requests and been grateful the Lord didn't give the answer you hoped for? Sometimes a maturing perspective reveals that getting what you desired would have been disastrous.

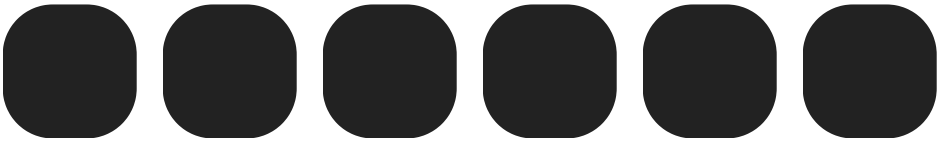
In today's passage, God draws a comparison between earthly fathers and the heavenly Father. If a human father, who is flawed and limited, can offer good things to his children, then it stands to reason that the heavenly Father, who is all-powerful and all-knowing, will give His children superior gifts.

Therefore, we can trust that even if we don't receive exactly what we've requested, our loving heavenly Father is giving us something even more beneficial. Peace and confidence in prayer come when we humbly accept that we're like children who have a very limited perspective, but our loving Father sees eternally. We can always trust Him to answer our prayers wisely.

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