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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, June 4, 2019 - Does God Want You to Succeed?

JUNE 04TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, June 4, 2019 - Does God Want You to Succeed?

Proverbs 16:1-3

Is success a legitimate goal for believers? Is this something God wants for His children? The answers depend upon your definition of success. Many people define it as the achievement of wealth, prominence, or fame. If that's what you're seeking, then you are following the world's definition, not the Lord's.

In His eyes, true success begins internally—the first step is a relationship with Jesus, whereby you have trusted Him as Savior and are following Him obediently. His goal for you is ongoing growth in Christlike character and spiritual maturity, but that's not all. He also has some work for you to accomplish here on earth (Eph. 2:10). God planned these tasks specifically for you and designed them with your personality, talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts in mind. You could think of them as your unique calling and responsibility in life.

Genuine success involves doing what the Lord has called you to do, not just occasionally but continually. It has to do with persistence rather than perfection. When this is your definition of success, you can know that the Lord wants you to succeed. And He's committed to helping you become the person He designed you to be—and to accomplish the goals He's set for you.

The ultimate evaluation of our success will take place when we stand before God and give an account of our life (Rom. 14:12). Any self-centered earthly achievements will be left behind. But if we've lived by His definition of success, our treasure will await us in heaven—along with the words “Well done!”

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Daily Devotional - Monday, June 3, 2019 - Following in Christ's Footsteps

JUNE 03RD 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, June 3, 2019 - Following in Christ's Footsteps

Matthew 10:24-42

Much of Christianity has a distorted view of discipleship. In our desire to see more people come to Christ, we may be guilty of offering a gospel that emphasizes the benefits of following Jesus while avoiding any mention of the cost involved.

However, Jesus didn't shy away from speaking truth. He let people know that being His disciple would not be easy, because they'd be following in His footsteps. Since Christ didn't sail through life without challenges, why should we? Our goal should be to become like our Savior, and that means we must be willing to suffer to one degree or another.

Contrary to what many contemporary sermons suggest, following Jesus may not make your relationships better. It could become a source of contention because a true disciple's love, devotion, and loyalty to Christ supersedes every other relationship. If what a friend or family member desires contradicts what the Lord has commanded, then the choice must be to follow Christ rather than a loved one.

As Christians, we'll frequently be tempted to compromise in order to avoid misunderstanding, criticism, rejection, or persecution. But as Christ's followers, we are called to live a crucified life—and compromise undercuts the wholehearted nature of crucifixion. We cannot pursue the acceptance of the world and at the same time follow the Lord. Until we stand with both feet on the side of obedience, we forfeit assurance of God's peace and blessings.

Although discipleship is costly, the reward is great. Jesus promises to confess us as His own before God when we enter our heavenly home.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, May 30, 2019 - Following Our Convictions

MAY 30TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Thursday, May 30, 2019 - Following Our Convictions

Acts 4:1-20

Most of us have been blessed to live relatively free from persecution. We may have experienced some mocking, ridicule, or ostracism because of our beliefs, but we don't have to fear punishment or death. However, that's not the case elsewhere in the world. There are Christians in other countries for whom today's passage is all too familiar.

Acts 4 tells us that Peter and John faced great opposition for their faith. After being thrown into jail for healing a sick man, they were warned not to speak or teach in Jesus Christ's name. But they held firmly to their convictions and replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20 NLT).

Our goal as believers is to become unshakeable in our faith. Peter and John didn't flinch from their responsibility to proclaim salvation in Jesus' name, even in the face of imprisonment and threats. Yet in reading this account, we may wonder how we could ever endure persecution.

The truth is that in ourselves, we can't do it. But we are never alone. When we stand for our convictions, God's Spirit is always present in us. He gives us the physical, spiritual, mental, and moral strength to stand firm when we are tested and tried (Luke 12:11-12).

God wants His children to trust Him with the future; He doesn't want us becoming panicky about what may lie ahead. But if He ever calls us to suffer for Him, in that moment He'll provide the grace we need in order to remain faithful.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, May 28, 2019 - Small Steps to a Great Destiny

MAY 28TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, May 28, 2019 - Small Steps to a Great Destiny

Luke 5:1-11

God’s simple requests of us are oftentimes stepping-stones to His greatest blessings. Although we may view these lesser events as unimportant, the Lord sees them as a big deal. The apostle Peter is a wonderful example of a man who took small steps that led to a great destiny.

When Jesus asked to be taken out in Peter’s boat, the fisherman could have said no. After all, he’d put in a full night’s work and was probably exhausted. But by taking this small step, Peter received a front-row seat to hear the greatest teacher on earth, and he began a life-changing adventure.

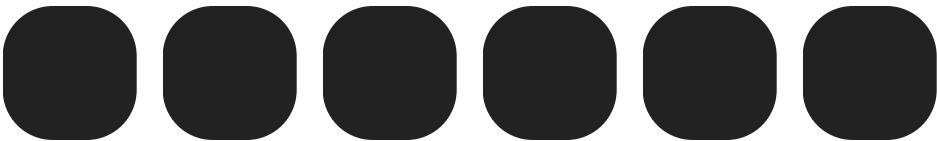
Although Jesus’ first request was fairly ordinary, His next suggestion would challenge everything Peter knew to be logical. Heading into deep water at midday for the purpose of catching fish was ludicrous to this fishing expert. Sometimes the Lord asks us to do what seems unreasonable. We should remember that the Lord is not obligated to work within the realm of what’s normal or logical. If Peter had refused this unusual request, he would have missed the biggest catch of his life—and I don’t mean just the fish. This miracle opened Peter’s eyes to catch sight of his Messiah. When he got out of that boat, the fish meant nothing to him because Jesus became his everything.

The Lord isn’t waiting for us to do some big, impressive task for Him; He’s simply calling us to obey Him one small step at a time. Don’t miss the great adventure God has for you. Even when His ways seem unreasonable, follow Him faithfully, and your destiny will unfold before your eyes.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, May 24, 2019 - The Christ Centered Life

MAY 24TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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2 Corinthians 5:14-15

If someone asked if your life is centered on Christ, how would you respond? Oftentimes a Christ-centered life is equated with going to church, giving, praying, reading the Bible, and talking to other people about Jesus. However, did you know that even if you do every one of these things, it's still possible to live a life that is controlled by self rather than Christ?

This is because our motives may be self-centered. Religious activities can be done for a variety of reasons that have nothing to do with our love for Jesus. We could be seeking to relieve feelings of guilt or to make ourselves feel better or look more righteous. Perhaps we read the Bible to quickly find a verse that affirms us. Or prayer might be our attempt to get God to do what we want.

The answer is not to give up on these good activities but to shift our focus to Christ and what He desires. Our battle with self is one that will continue as long as we live in these earthly bodies. That's why Paul tells us to "lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted," and to "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph. 4:22; Eph. 4:24).

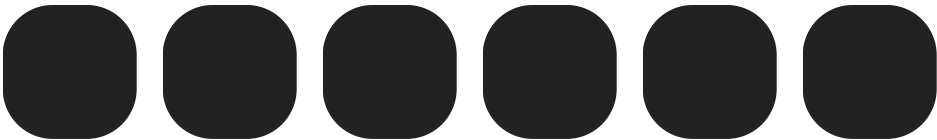
A Christ-centered life is fueled by love for the Savior, which flows from increasing knowledge of Him. And we learn to know Jesus more intimately through reading, praying, and quietly

abiding in His presence. As Christ increases in our mind and heart, we'll discover that our self-focus decreases and He becomes the delight of our lives.

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