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Daily Devotional - Dying to Serve: A Parable

JUNE 18TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Dying to Serve: A Parable

John 12:23-26

Imagine two grains of wheat lying on the floor of a warm and cozy barn. One day, the farmer comes in and tells them, “I want to take you out of this comfortable barn and plant you in the earth. I’m going to place you in the cold ground and cover you with soil. It will be dark, and you will die. But I promise that you will multiply and become very fruitful.”

The first grain of wheat turns down the suggestion. “No way!” he says. “Count me out. I like my comfort, and I don’t want to die.” But the second one, after carefully considering the pain and discomfort of dying, decides the promise of a future harvest is worth the sacrifice. So the farmer takes him outside and plants him in the ground, while allowing the first grain of wheat to remain inside the barn.

A few days later, a small green sprout begins to appear over where the seed has been planted. Then it grows and becomes a tall stalk of wheat that produces one hundred more grains. For the next 40 years, the farmer plants all the seeds that originated from that first grain of wheat, and year after year the harvest multiplies. Meanwhile, the grain of wheat that stayed in the barn remains there all alone, never growing or multiplying—but he has stayed very comfortable.

Which grain of wheat are you? Are you playing it safe, or have you let Christ plant you in the world? The only way you’ll become useful and fruitful in God’s kingdom is by abiding in Him

and trusting that His desires for your life are worthwhile.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, June 17, 2019 - The Requirements of Servanthood

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Luke 19:1-9

In sending his son to earth, God didn't intend for Him to be a superstar. Jesus came to serve. As His disciples, we are to follow His example and serve a lost and hurting world. In today's passage, we read about Zaccheus, who began to demonstrate qualities he saw Jesus model.

Awareness: Although surrounded by a crowd, the Lord stopped and took notice of one particular man perched in a tree. Zaccheus was hated and rejected because he was a tax collector. Although he was rich, there was something missing in his life, and Christ recognized his need. In our life, there are many people like Zaccheus—needy, empty, lonely, and searching for hope. But too often, we’re preoccupied with our activities and don’t even notice them.

Availability: Jesus was heading to Jerusalem to carry out the most important act in human history: our redemption. Yet He stopped to spend time with a spiritually needy man. What is so important that it keeps you from giving people your time and attention?

Acceptance: Although Zaccheus was a notorious sinner, Jesus didn’t say, “Clean up your act, and then I’ll come to your house.” We’re called, not to fix people, but to share the transforming gospel of Christ.

How are you doing at serving those around you? Maybe it’s time to slow down enough to see who might be in need. God places all kinds of opportunities in our path, but if we’re not attentive, we’ll miss them. Sometimes we just need to pause, pray, and open our eyes.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, June 13, 2019 - The Origin of Unmet Needs

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Romans 5:6-8

Emotional needs can be every bit as acute as physical ones. That's because the Lord has hardwired into human beings the desire for love, acceptance, and a sense of safety. These necessities are what cause us to seek out friendships, marriage, and, ultimately, a relationship with God. And at the root of all of our "heart needs" is the longing to feel valued.

Without a solid sense of self-worth, a person cannot fully receive love and acceptance. Nor can he feel safe or at rest. The uncertain man projects onto family and friends the God-sized job of proving his value. From them, he seeks constant verbal assurance and displays of their loyalty. The problem is that no human can be an inexhaustible emotional resource.

Inevitably, basing worth on people's judgments and acts of love can have a "yo-yo" effect on self-image—it's down, it's up, it's down again. Besides, no one can build an adequate collection of good opinions to substitute for God's faithfulness and dedication to us. On the cross, Jesus Christ gave the only accurate measure of our significance: He considered every single person worth dying for. We can't buy or earn God's unconditional love. It is ours to receive with an open heart. Jesus' sacrifice stands as proof that we are of infinite value to the Sovereign of the universe.

God desires to be our unlimited emotional resource. In fact, if our self-worth is based upon anything but Him, then it is unstable. A rock-solid self-image is rooted in the recognition of who we are in Christ—beloved, redeemed, and holy children. Nothing changes His opinion.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, June 12, 2019 - Praying for Our Needs

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Matthew 6:19-34

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have God's invitation to ask Him for whatever we need. What an amazing privilege! He's not a stingy heavenly Father, but one who loves us and cares about every aspect of our life.

Sometimes, however, if the answers we expect aren't materializing, we may question God's love, interest, or ability. In today's passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reassures us that we can pray for our needs with full confidence in our Father's provision. We are to ...

Trust in His Care. Whenever we start to wonder whether our Father hears our requests, we can look outside at His creation (Matt. 6:26-32). If God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, won't He also care for His beloved children?

Believe His Promise. Jesus assures us that God will provide our basic needs if we'll make Him our top priority in life (Matt. 6:32-33).

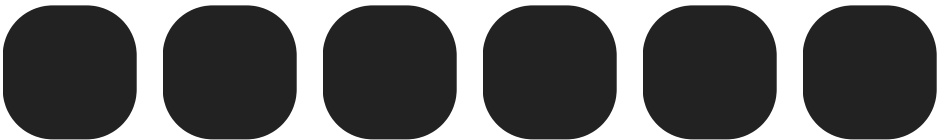
Seek His Kingdom and Righteousness. Jesus warns against making earthly things our treasure and admonishes us to store up heavenly riches instead (Matt. 6:19-21). That's what it means to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness. When the desire and ambition of our life is to obey the Lord and reflect His character in our words, attitudes, and actions, He assumes the responsibility to provide whatever we may need.

God's ways are different from how we naturally think. Human logic leads us to conclude that if we need something, we should seek it, but God's perspective says, "Seek Me, and I'll take care of your need." Whose way are you trusting?

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Daily Devotional - Monday, June 10, 2019 Feelings of Inferiority

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Ephesians 2:10

Early in my life, I experienced some feelings of inferiority. Because we struggled financially, my mother and I didn't live in the "right" places, and I didn't wear the "right" clothes. Even in school, I felt that I did not measure up academically to the other kids. The sense of failure and embarrassment at not being good enough was devastating to me.

The misery of inferiority is never what God intends for His children. Its seed usually takes root in the impressionable hearts of the young and thrives in an atmosphere of comparison. This kind of emotional baggage can have debilitating and enslaving ramifications in every area of life. Feelings of inadequacy may cause avoidance of healthy challenges; low self-esteem cripples personal relationships; and comparison steals contentment.

We need to understand how God sees us. Then, when feelings of inferiority come, we can cling to His accurate assessment rather than our own faulty one. He says we are His workmanship—His masterpieces. Each person is thoughtfully designed by the Creator for His purpose. The differences that cause us to make comparisons and feel discouraged are the very qualities that the Lord created to bring Him glory.

Feelings of inferiority are a hindrance to becoming the people that the heavenly Father designed us to be and a deterrent to fulfilling His purpose for our lives. When it comes to our value, we either accept the truth of His appraisal or decide not to believe Him and instead rely on our own feelings. What will your choice be?

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