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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, July 24, 2019 - Growth Through Suffering

JULY 24TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, July 24, 2019 - Growth Through Suffering

1 Peter 1:3-9

Yesterday we saw that when we focus on God, we are in a better position to grow in maturity and godliness. When our suffering persists, the Lord may also have other purposes in mind:

To increase our trust. You might think the happiest people are the wealthy or famous. But the truly contented are those who are at peace with God because their faith has been tested—and they know He has only their good in mind.

To strengthen our dependence upon Him. The apostle Paul testified about how his persistent thorn taught him reliance upon the Lord's grace and strength (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Instead of believing that we can handle things on our own, we likewise learn to depend more fully on God when our circumstances leave us powerless.

To manifest Christ's life in us. God wants us to be a living example of the conduct and character of Jesus Christ. For this reason, He uses suffering to sift, sand, and prune whatever doesn't belong in our life. But in those hard seasons of change, He also sustains us, providing all that we need in order to persevere.

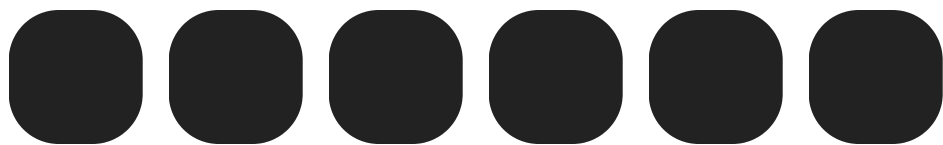
To purify our hearts. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that the pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God (Matt. 5:8). The purification of our heart is an ongoing process. Sometimes it takes difficult situations to identify the things that keep us from delighting in our relationship with God.

Do you trust that God loves you and wants the best for you? Decide to be more open to the work He wants to do in your life through the hard times.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, July 22, 2019 - Assurance of Our Salvation

JULY 22ND 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

1 John 5:1-13

Do you ever wonder if you are truly saved? John wrote his first letter to give believers assurance of salvation by describing characteristics of those who have been born again (1 John 5:13). God wants us to know we are safe and secure in Him through the salvation provided at the cross to all who come to Christ in faith. A three-fold test can help you assess whether you've experienced spiritual rebirth.

What does the Word of God say? The best way to know about salvation is through the Bible's teaching. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

What is the witness of the Spirit? When we by faith receive Jesus Christ as Lord, the Father sets His Holy Spirit within us. Romans 8:16 tells us, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God." His internal witness assures us that we are saved—regardless of how our feelings ebb and flow.

What is the desire of my heart? When the Holy Spirit takes up residence within the human heart, powerful changes occur. We are given new desires to know God and His Word and to live in obedience to Him. We now have the capacity to hate the sin we once loved and to quickly repent when we feel the Spirit's conviction.

If you've trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and can see the changes God's Spirit has made in your life, then rejoice today as a saved and secure child of God.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, July 19, 2019 - Overcoming the Flesh

JULY 19TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, July 19, 2019 - Overcoming the Flesh

Romans 8:1-11

Sin is often frightfully deceptive. We can be diligently serving the Lord without realizing that we're actually doing so for selfish reasons such as recognition, affirmation, or achieving our own goals. Or maybe our external behavior doesn't match what's really going on within our heart. We could be doing all the right things outwardly while at the same time holding a grudge, finding fault, or grumbling in our heart.

These problems flow from our flesh and its sinful desires, which are part of the condition in which we were born. The only cure for a self-focused life is what Galatians 5:16 calls "walking by the Spirit."

First, we must realize that we cannot live a godly life apart from the Holy Spirit.

Remember, the flesh cannot be changed or tamed but must be replaced with dependence on the Holy Spirit. He alone can overcome the pull of sin because His power is unlimited.

Second, we must surrender to the Holy Spirit rather than yield to our fleshly desires. In other words, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Rom. 13:14).

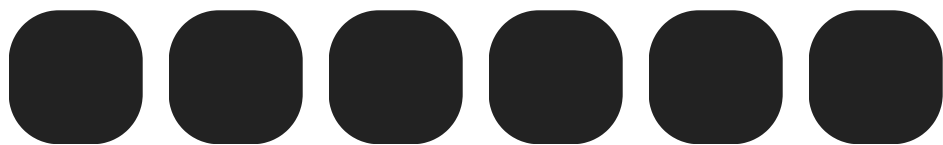
Third, we must trust the Lord. We can’t fully surrender to Him until we confidently believe both that His Word is true and that He keeps His promises. Then, as our thoughts, decisions, and actions align with the truths of Scripture, we are empowered to stand firm against temptation.

God wants you to live in the fullness of His Spirit. So lay your flesh down at the cross today, and let the Spirit lead you into a fruitful, abundant life.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, July 18, 2019 - Our Struggle with the Flesh

Daily Devotional - Thursday, July 18, 2019 - Our Struggle with the Flesh

Galatians 5:16-26

One of the most misunderstood concepts in the Christian life is that of “the flesh.” So, what is it? In today’s passage, *flesh* refers not simply to the physical body but also to the inner being, which is still subject to sin even though believers have a new nature given to them by God’s Spirit. Therefore, *flesh* refers to our entrenched habits of sinful thoughts, desires, and attitudes—which often lead to ungodly behaviors.

Paul presents, in a painfully honest way, the results of living according to the flesh: deeds including immorality, impurity, idolatry, anger, strife, dissensions, and other destructive attitudes and actions. In contrast, a life led by the Holy Spirit produces the rich spiritual fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

Why do so many people who desire a godly, self-controlled life repeatedly fall to fleshly sin? Paul says the determining factor is whether or not they are being led by the Spirit. If Christians try to overcome sin on their own without submitting to the Spirit’s reproof and guidance, they will fail.

The flesh cannot be disciplined, rehabilitated, or improved. Instead, it must be put to death (Rom. 6:11). Then, through the power of the Spirit, we do not have to yield to sinful impulses but can instead present ourselves to God for obedience to His desires (Rom. 6:12-14).

Walking by the Spirit means submitting to the Lord when you feel tempted to follow your flesh. With His help, you can see your desires give way to obedience that pleases your heavenly Father.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, July 17, 2019 - Can We Trust Our Conscience?

JULY 17TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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2 Corinthians 1:12

The conscience looks at thoughts and actions to determine if they are in line with a person's principles. It is important to keep our internal monitoring system well maintained so it will be trustworthy. For our moral alarm to sound at the right time and for the right reason, we must:

Accept Scripture as our standard for behavior. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." If we choose to adopt our culture's values, which are often at odds with the Lord's, our conscience will be unreliable. Instead, we want our radar to alert us to the possibility of going off course.

Align our thinking with the Lord's. Romans 12:2 says to renew our minds. It is necessary and ongoing work to combat what this unbelieving world accepts as true and right.

Apply God's Word to daily living. When our habits reflect godly values, our conscience will become more sensitive to what is right and wrong.

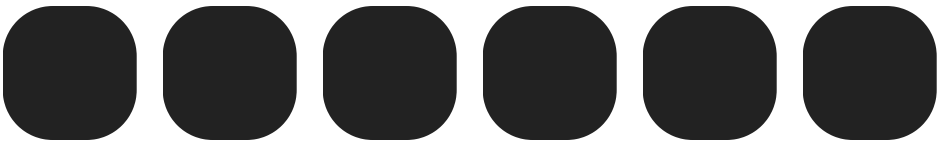
In addition, it is essential that we rely on the Holy Spirit for understanding. Our conscience by itself is of some usefulness, but it becomes indispensable when accompanied by the Spirit’s guidance (John 16:13).

The Scriptures teach us how to live—with regard to our thought life, conduct, and emotions. As we fill our mind with the Lord’s standards and wisdom, our conscience will become increasingly trustworthy because it is based on what’s important to our heavenly Father.

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