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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, July 30, 2019 - Essential Truths of the Faith

JULY 30TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, July 30, 2019 - Essential Truths of the Faith

Ephesians 4:11-16

It's fairly easy to coast through the Christian life without thinking too deeply about the essentials of our faith. Every child of God knows the basics of the gospel, since they are necessary for salvation. But once we are saved, we need to grow in our understanding of the doctrines that are foundational for Christianity.

We must believe that the Bible is true. Scripture is the heavenly Father's self-revelation about His nature, plan of salvation, and dealings with mankind. It's the final authority on life, faith, salvation, and conduct (2 Peter 1:3), and we can trust that it's without error because God inspired its writers and protected its transmission throughout history (2 Timothy 3:16).

There is only one God who expresses Himself in three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. The concept of the Trinity is supported in numerous Scriptures, including Jesus' baptism when all three were present and the Great Commission in which we are told to make disciples and baptize them in one name—that of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17; Matt. 28:19).

The Lord is the Creator of all things. As His creatures, we exist for Him and through Him, and He has authority and power over us (1 Corinthians 8:6). God is not simply a greater version

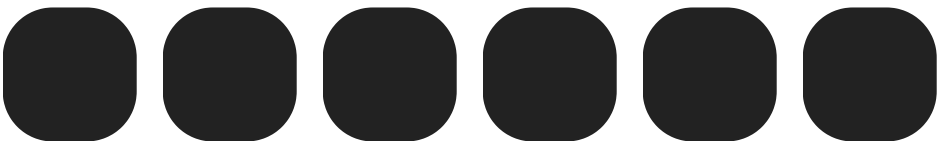
of us; He is in a totally different category because He is self-existent and the source of life. We, on the other hand, are dependent upon Him for our next breath.

These three essentials keep us grounded in the truth. If we doubt them, we will find ourselves deceived by other doctrines (Eph. 4:14).

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Daily Devotional - Monday, July 29, 2019 - Making Wise Decisions

JULY 29TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Galatians 6:7-10

Much of our life can be summed up by the decisions we've made right until the present. This is why it's so important to learn to make wise choices that lead to the life God wants for us. And the foundation for doing so is a firm conviction regarding the truth of God's Word, which will ground us in every area—relationships, finances, work, church, and the use of our time.

The unchanging principle of sowing and reaping is one that should guide every decision we make, because a harvest will eventually result from the action we take. Paul contrasted two different ways Christians can sow—either to the Spirit or to the flesh.

There is a battle raging within us between the desires of the Holy Spirit, who has come to live within us, and the desires of our flesh—those sin patterns and self-serving tendencies remaining in us even after salvation (Gal. 5:17). Our goal should be to put our sinful, selfish desires to death so that we can follow the Spirit as He directs us according to the Scriptures. Therefore, the better we know and understand God's Word, the more we will be able to discern the Spirit's leading.

To make this practical, remember that every time you rehearse a wrong done to you, complain with regard to your situation, gossip about a friend, or indulge an addictive desire, you are sowing to the flesh and will reap more of the same later. But if you let the Spirit lead and empower you, you'll be able to forgive others, be content in every situation, and acquire holy desires and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

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Daily Devotional - Friday, July 26, 2019 - Prayer Makes a Difference

JULY 26TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, July 26, 2019 - Prayer Makes a Difference

1 Timothy 2:1-8

When we observe the godless condition of our nation, we readily recognize the need for change. But the biblical solution for our predicament is surprising. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul instructed his protégé to establish some priorities in the church, including prayer “for kings and all who are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:2). Our petitions help us live tranquil and godly lives and thereby provide opportunities to tell others about the Savior (1 Timothy 2:2-4).

Paul would never have given this command to Timothy if he didn’t believe that the church’s prayers made a difference in achieving God’s purposes for their nation. Our problem is not with the Lord’s promise or power, but with our doubt. By focusing on the enormity of the problems or the power of those in office, we lose sight of our sovereign God, who listens for our pleas that He intervene.

Political policies and legislation are not ultimately determined in conference rooms and governmental chambers, but in prayer closets. The voices that shape the direction of a nation are not necessarily those that loudly ring out in legislative halls, but those that approach the throne room of the heavenly Father with bold faith (Heb. 4:16). As the church believes and prays, the Lord will respond.

Knowing that God can change a country, you may be wondering why He has waited so long. But He is likely already working in ways we don't recognize or understand. Every authority on earth can be touched by the power of prayer if we are willing to ask and believe God.

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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

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

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.

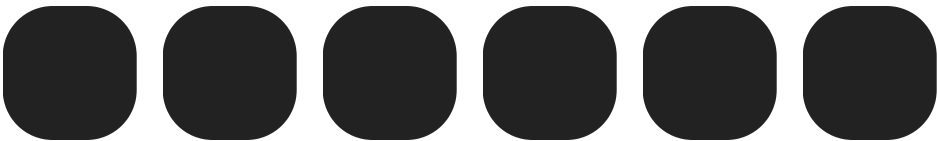
What is the desire of my heart? When the Holy Spirit takes up residence within the human heart, powerful changes occur. We are given new desires to know God and His Word and to live in obedience to Him. We now have the capacity to hate the sin we once loved and to quickly repent when we feel the Spirit’s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