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Daily Devotional - Monday, August 12, 2019 - The Nature of Discouragement

AUGUST 12TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, August 12, 2019 - The Nature of Discouragement

Psalm 16:7-11

Discouragement is a powerful, destructive force. Before we can understand how to rid our life of this common temptation, we must recognize its harmful nature.

Understand that discouragement...

Is something we choose. While it's a natural response to difficult circumstances, we have the power to choose a different response. No one else is responsible for our discouragement.

Is universal. At times, everybody will face periods of disappointment and discouragement because we live in a flawed world filled with flawed people.

Can recur. Sometimes we think we've settled an issue, which later resurfaces when we least expect it. Or we may have old emotional wounds triggered by something a person says or does.

Can be temporary or lifelong. Refusing to face discouragement head-on can open the door for it to influence our decisions, actions, and relationships as long as we live.

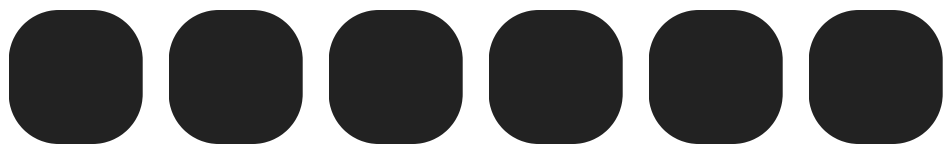
Is conquerable. With the Father's help, we can get through seasons of discouragement. He wants His children to have a rich and fulfilled life. If we trust in His promises and His character, our feelings of discouragement will slowly be replaced by hope.

Are you stuck in the throes of discouragement? If so, the Lord wants to lift your spirits. Let Him help you out of that lowly state: Start by believing that the Father wants to encourage you and get your life back on track with Him.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, August 8, 2019 - Praying in a Crisis

AUGUST 08TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Psalm 86:1-13

When life is moving along smoothly, it's easy to say, "God answers prayer." But a crisis can bring doubt, especially if the Lord is not responding as quickly as we might like. That's when we may be tempted to bargain with God as if He could be manipulated into acting on our behalf. However, the goal of prayer is not to get God to do what we want but to bring our concerns to Him, trusting that He will answer in His own way and time.

Waiting on the Lord is fairly easy when we're not facing anything urgent. But difficulties and suffering tend to make us impatient. We may even begin to find fault with God, thinking that if He truly loved us, He would intervene and bring relief.

As we seek the Lord for help, David's prayers in the Psalms provide wonderful patterns for us to follow. He faced many dire situations and continued to turn to God. Today's passage from Psalm 86 starts with an urgent cry for help, followed by a reminder to the heavenly Father that David belongs to Him. Then he recounts God's character—gracious, good, ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call on Him (vv. 3-5). These characteristics are the basis for trust.

Knowing who God is enables us to trust Him through the crises of life. Because He is faithful, we know that He will keep His promises. His holiness causes us to examine our life and repent of any sins that are hindering our prayers. And His mercy, grace, and love give us the comfort we need to endure hardship.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, August 7, 2019 - Can God Use You?

AUGUST 07TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, August 7, 2019 - Can God Use You?

Exodus 3:1-12

Do you want to be used by the Lord? I hope so because that's His will for every believer. As we saw last week, Ephesians 2:10 says God created us in Christ to do good works that He planned for us beforehand. If we are going to become useful to Him, there are three questions we must consider.

Who is God? In Exodus 3, the Lord used a burning bush to get Moses' attention (v. 2), and then He introduced Himself as the God of Moses' forefathers (v. 6). The future liberator of the Hebrew slaves needed to know the identity of the One calling him into service. In the same way, we, too, must be sure that we're serving the only true God. Otherwise, all our efforts and sacrifices will be in vain.

Who am I? Once Moses knew who God was, he was overwhelmed with his own inadequacy and asked, "Who am I?" (v. 11). The Lord uses humble people who reverence Him. Although Moses knew he was insufficient for the task, the Lord assured him by saying, "Certainly I will be with you" (v. 12).

Why am I here? God told Moses his obedience to the assignment would culminate in worship (v. 12). Romans 12:1 says we worship God when we offer ourselves as living sacrifices. In other words, we surrender totally to Him so that He can use us for His glory. We exist to glorify

Him by the way we live, speak, and love.

Serving the Lord isn't something that we design and plan. It has nothing to do with our will but instead requires that we know and submit to the Father, humbly relying on *His* strength to do *His* will for *His* glory

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Daily Devotional - Monday, August 5, 2019 - Saved for God's Glory

AUGUST 05TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, August 5, 2019 - Saved for God's Glory

Ephesians 1:5-6

Salvation is an amazing gift from our heavenly Father, and since we are the recipients, it might appear that we're the primary reason He sent His Son to save us. After all, He loved us so much He didn't want us to perish. And though this is certainly true, the greater reality is that He saved us for "the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6).

When sinners are saved, God's glory and grace are displayed. The salvation that He offers ...

Highlights His generosity (v. 3). God not only gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sins, but He has also blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heaven.

Reveals the Father's mercy (v. 4). He took the initiative in salvation by choosing us "before the foundation of the world." His mercy toward us reaches from eternity past to eternity future.

Emphasizes His holiness (v. 4). Because God is holy, His goal is to make us holy and blameless so we can dwell with Him forever. This process of transformation begins at our conversion and will be completed at our resurrection.

Shows divine love (vv. 4-5). To rescue us from condemnation would have been enough, but in love our heavenly Father chose to adopt us and make us part of His family.

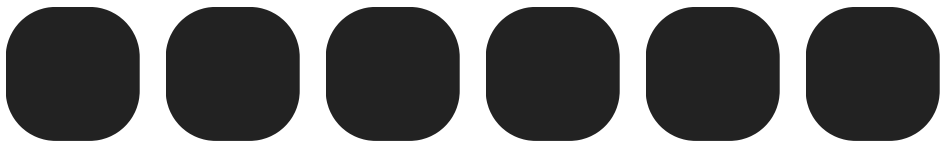
Displays God's kindness (v. 5). He saved us "according to the kind intention of His will" and not because of any worthiness or good behavior on our part.

Our greatest human need is to know and love the God who saved us. And through salvation, we come to experience His glorious grace.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, August 2, 2019 - Faithful Servants

AUGUST 02ND 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, August 2, 2019 - Faithful Servants

Colossians 4:7-17

Every word of Scripture is profitable for us, and that includes today's passage—the final greetings and instructions at the close of Colossians. Although reading a list of names may not seem edifying at first, doing so provides a lesson on living with a committed Christian community. The people Paul mentions are all examples of faithful servants of God.

For instance, Tychicus (vv. 7-8) brought Paul's letter from Rome to Colossae since the apostle was in prison. The distance is about 900 miles as the crow flies, but it was much farther for Tychicus, who had to sail around Italy and across the Mediterranean Sea before traveling through Asia Minor on foot. Yet he faithfully endured the hardship in order to bring Paul's letter to the Colossians—and to us, since the epistle is now part of the New Testament.

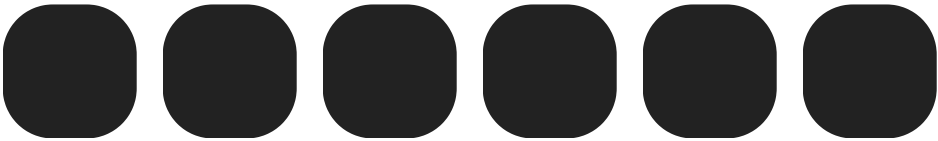
Onesimus (v. 9) exemplifies a life transformed by Christ—this runaway slave was a valuable servant not only to his former master but also to Paul (Philem. 1:10-17). Then Epaphras (Col. 4:12-13) was a faithful intercessor for the church in Colossae, and Luke was a committed companion to Paul during the apostle's travels and imprisonment. And Nympha is acknowledged for hospitality in opening her home as a meeting place for the church.

In the New Testament, we’re instructed to be faithful stewards, live transformed lives, pray for one another, serve humbly, and practice hospitality so Jesus’ love is apparent to those who don’t know Him. As the people in today’s passage show, your actions can reflect Christ even more than words do.

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