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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, August 21, 2019 - Our Trustworthy Guide

AUGUST 21ST 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, August 21, 2019 - Our Trustworthy Guide

Psalm 32:8-9

Many years ago, while I was on a photography trip, the heavenly Father taught me a valuable lesson about leading and following. My party had been hiking on a trail for three or four hours when I felt a slight sensation of dread. I had a sneaking suspicion that we were traveling the wrong way. When I asked our guide about it, he calmly reassured me that we were, in fact, heading in the right direction.

Well, that quieted me for a few minutes, but this persistent sense of being off track simply would not go away. So I pulled out my compass and discovered that, sure enough, we were heading the wrong way. When I pointed this out to our guide a second time, he finally stopped to think about it. After examining the compass, map, and trail markers, he realized that we really were off course. We lost about three hours—and some beautiful photo opportunities—because our guide wasn't leading us correctly.

That experience taught me how vitally important it is to trust in the person who is guiding us. Beyond the hiking trail, this holds true in business, church, families, or any other relationship. If our guide isn't trustworthy—if we cannot put our complete faith in him or her—we'll end up lost.

So let me ask you: Who is your guide? Are you following celebrities or news reporters? Are you trusting in politicians or business leaders? If you've placed your absolute faith in anyone or anything other than your heavenly Father, you're already off course. He is our one trustworthy Guide. Seek Him and get back on track today.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, August 20, 2019 - Relying on the Spirit in Our Work

AUGUST 20TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, August 20, 2019 - Relying on the Spirit in Our Work

Ezra 4:1-5

Israel's enemies were clever in their efforts to block the temple's reconstruction. First, they offered to help. What better way to cause things to go wrong than to get involved in the work? When their aid was rejected, they set out to discourage the workers and make them afraid. The opponents even hired counselors to thwart the Israelites and were successful in hindering the project.

God, however, wanted His people to reject self-reliance and instead carry out His work in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. He offered them encouragement and protected their building project despite the mountain of opposition facing them. Sometimes this means He will remove the problem; at other times He walks us through it. In either case, we are to rely steadily on God's Holy Spirit. Doing so will allow us to:

- Patiently love our spouse when there is turmoil in the home.*
- Wisely guide our children toward godliness in our self-centered culture.*
- Follow scriptural principles about giving, saving, and spending in a society that urges us to get what we want now.*
- Experience contentment and God's peace in our current circumstances—single or married, employed or out of a job, healthy or sick.*
- Do God's work His way.*

Being led by the Spirit characterizes how we work. While that mindset is countercultural and not pleasing to the flesh (Gal. 5:16), it's the only way to live as a child of God. Seek out believers who are trying to practice dependence on the Spirit, and encourage one another not to give up

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Daily Devotional - Monday, August 19, 2019 - Abusing God's Patience

AUGUST 19TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, August 19, 2019 - Abusing God's Patience

Romans 2:4-5

Have you ever ignored a nagging sense of conviction in your heart? Maybe you rationalized wrongdoing with the thought that if God were really upset, He'd put a stop to things by disciplining you. Psalm 50:21 reminds us that the silence of heaven does not mean approval. Remaining in sin is an abuse of the Lord's patience.

When God seems slow to react, we might hope He's overlooking our transgressions—we'd like to continue in sin because the momentary pleasure is more appealing than obedience. But thankfully, the Father knows our weaknesses, our innate carnality, and the state of our spiritual growth, and He therefore measures His response. Motivated by love and a desire to gently restore His children to righteousness, God refrains from instantly doling out punishment. Instead, He waits for the Holy Spirit's proddings to impact the believer's heart. The weight of conviction is actually an invitation to turn from wrongdoing and return to godliness.

However, we're a stubborn people. There are times when we persist in sin because the sentence against an evil deed isn't executed quickly (Eccl. 8:11). In this dangerous situation, it's possible to immerse ourselves in sin and harden our heart against the Lord. Then the Holy Spirit's call to

repentance falls on spiritual ears rapidly going deaf.

As we learn and understand more about God and His ways, we are increasingly responsible to live righteously. Our heavenly Father is not slow; He's patient. But don't abuse that patience with callous disregard for His statutes. Repent and be holy in the sight of the Lord.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, August 16, 2019 - Grace in Sorrow

AUGUST 16TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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John 20:11-19

The famous hymn “How Firm a Foundation” describes God’s purpose for our trials: “For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.” The pain and hardship we endure is meant not to crush us but to refine and shape us into Christ’s image. God alone knows how to replace ashes with a crown, and mourning with the oil of gladness (Isa. 61:3).

This is what Mary Magdalene discovered on the morning of the Christ’s resurrection. She went to the garden tomb, overwhelmed by sorrow and loss. The darkness of despair was swallowing her when she turned around and saw Jesus. After He spoke her name, she immediately recognized the Lord and clung to Him, fearing that even now He might be taken away from her.

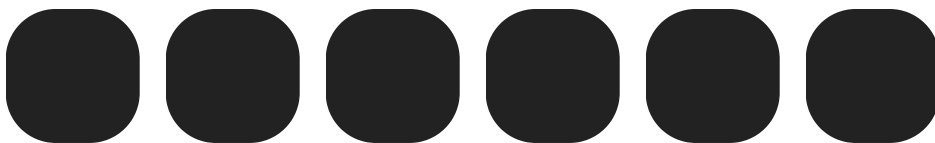
But Jesus assured her that He had not yet ascended to His Father. Although there would come a day when He would physically depart from her and all His followers, in reality nothing could separate them from Him. Because He had paid the penalty of their sins with His death, His Spirit would soon indwell them. And one day Jesus would come to take them back to His Father’s house to be with Him forever (John 14:3).

We can all relate to feelings of despair. Dashed hopes—even small ones—can lead to suffering. But when expectations are high or personal loss hangs in the balance, our hope can be crushed if disaster strikes. Then it’s important to remember that when we have Christ, weeping may last for the night, but joy comes in the morning ([Ps. 30:5](#)).

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, August 13, 2019 - Dealing with Discouragement

AUGUST 13TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, August 13, 2019 - Dealing with Discouragement

Psalm 42:1-8

How can we conquer discouragement? Let me suggest nine specific tips:

- 1. Look within.** Examine yourself for the underlying cause.
- 2. Admit that you are discouraged.** This is something that's easy to avoid, ignore, or lie about, but denial doesn't help you grow.
- 3. Identify precisely what you are discouraged about.** Name it—then face it.
- 4. Recall the nature of discouragement.** Disappointments will come and go, but discouragement is a response, and we can respond in other ways.
- 5. Begin meditating frequently on Scripture.** God's truth can help you accurately evaluate what you feel.
- 6. Take your area of discouragement to God in prayer.** Ask Him to reveal what He wants to teach you in this area of your life.

7. Focus on the Lord, not your situation. Ask Him to help you see this disappointment and its lessons from His perspective.

8. View the cause as coming from the Lord. If we understand that He allows disappointments, we can find meaning in trouble.

9. Confess three things: *The Father is with me in the pain; He's in control of my life and has allowed this for a reason; He is a good God, who will not let this disappointment be in vain.* Try speaking these truths out loud.

Discouragement may sound harmless enough, but don't underestimate its power. By keeping watch, you can avoid its deadly trap. So write down these nine steps on an index card, and then review the list whenever disappointments start to consume your thinking.

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