



[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, February 23, 2021 - Passionate Obedience

FEBRUARY 23RD 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Acts 5:17-42

Yesterday, we studied passionate obedience and how it develops over time. The apostles reached the pinnacle of submission. Without being compelled by fear or the hope of reward, they faced shame, pain, and death. Why? Because they loved Christ too much to stay quiet.

People who receive salvation and then sit back, content that they'll go to heaven when they die, have missed the point. Salvation isn't just about heaven; it also allows us to be used for God's glory here on earth. He lives through us, expressing His life-changing truth so that we can impact others. The only hindrance is the restriction we set on our own usefulness.

Limitations and passionate obedience can't coexist. Life might seem easier if we choose when to obey God, but that type of existence won't ever prove totally satisfying. Instead, we will tend to wonder why the Lord doesn't use us or bless us more.

Passionate obedience begins with commitment. Our dedication may at first be based on the promised reward, which is acceptable because blessing is part of obedience. But as we mature, we're likely to experience increasingly difficult challenges relative to our submission. And then our devotion also grows until we, too, can rejoice when we suffer for Jesus' name.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Monday, February 22, 2021 - A Passion to Obey

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Romans 6:16-23

A passion to obey God doesn't come naturally. Salvation may spark love and a desire to please Him, but a passionate fire is built slowly from the timbers of spiritual knowledge, faith, and devotion.

Obedience usually begins with a fear of the consequences of disobeying. That is, newer believers can at least enjoy the safety of avoiding repercussions until they develop better

reasons to follow God. Thankfully, as we mature and build a scriptural foundation, fear is replaced by both recognition of God's sovereignty and submission to His wisdom.

Over time, following the Lord becomes less about consequences for disobeying and more about blessings for obeying. Once we taste His goodness, we learn that obedience and God's best are natural partners—good derives from following divine commands, while suffering results when we demand our own way. This irrevocable principle plays out in the Bible as well as in day-to-day life, and the more we observe it, the more we realize the Lord's will is the wisest choice.

All the promised blessings in the world cannot make a believer follow God into some frightening places. But that's where love for our Father comes in, as it compels us toward obedience no matter what is at stake.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Friday, February 19, 2021 - When

We Don't Understand

FEBRUARY 19TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, February 19, 2021 - When We Don't Understand

Job 23

Starting at a very early age, children will repeatedly ask their parents the question *Why?* And this desire for reasons isn't something we outgrow. As adults, especially during dark times when we cannot figure out what the Lord is doing, we tend to think, *If I could just know why, then it would be easier to bear.*

In his extreme suffering, Job experienced pain and frustration at God's silence. He longed to present his case and hear what the Lord had to say. But when God did not immediately respond, Job nevertheless clung to Him and relied upon what he knew to be true: "He knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

Like Job, we should channel our emotions and responses through the truth of God's Word. Otherwise, we might be tempted to doubt our Father's goodness and love, since they aren't readily visible in times of hardship. But if we trust in what the Scriptures reveal about God's character and ways, we can endure affliction faithfully, whether or not He ever explains why. After all, God never guaranteed us answers during our time on earth, but He did promise to be with us.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional, Thursday, February 18, 2021 - The Power of Consistency

FEBRUARY 18TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, February 18, 2021 - The Power of Consistency

Daniel 6

We live in a noncommittal world, where perseverance is all too rare. If a job is difficult or boring, people often think, *Why not find another one?* Or when a marriage becomes unhappy, many wonder, *Should I be with someone else?*

Sadly, this mindset is also found among believers. At the first sign of conflict, some Christians hop to another church instead of working through difficulties with their local body of believers. And when it comes to our personal walk of faith, many of us struggle to maintain a consistent quiet time with the Lord.

Daniel was a man of steadfast loyalty. Not even the awareness that he could be killed interfered with his practice of praying three times a day. Such commitment to the Lord was noted by others. Jealous officers and governors used Daniel's consistency to trap him, but the king made a remarkable statement: "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you" (Dan. 6:16). Apparently, he believed Daniel's devotion would be the key to the young man's deliverance.

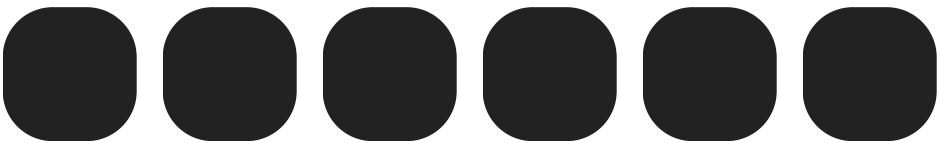
Daniel's victory in the lion's den led to great influence, as it inspired the king's decree to worship the Lord. Have you considered that the Lord was able to use him because of his unwavering obedience and worship? Imagine what God can do with you when you also commit

yourself to Him.

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[Go to post](#)



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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, February 17, 2021 - The Influence of Our Convictions

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Although our circles of influence vary in size, we all have the power to affect people at home, in church, or in the world. The fact is, our life is always on display, whether we’re aware of it or not.

Daniel didn't set out to impress others, but his convictions had an effect on everyone who came in contact with him— from lowly servants to kings of empires. He clung to the truth of the Scriptures. When he was taken to Babylon's royal court, he "made up his mind" not to defile himself with the king's food (Dan. 1:8), because he knew that eating meat offered to idols was forbidden by the Mosaic law.

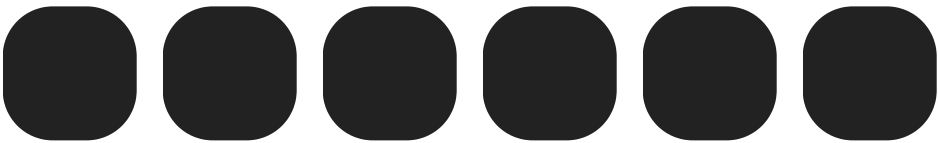
The important thing to notice is that Daniel's convictions, not his environment, determined his behavior. One can always find some reason to give in, but being sure of our beliefs ahead of time can help us stand firm in obedience to God. Although the world may mock our values, people actually lose respect for us when we waffle and yield to temptation. What's worse, our witness for Christ is damaged.

Conviction about God's truth is like an anchor holding you steady in the waves of temptation and the winds of opinion. Don't underestimate your obedience to the Lord—it can powerfully influence others.

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