Faith Matters



Daily Devotional - Monday, March 20, 2022 - Today Is the Day of Salvation

MARCH 21ST 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

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John 5:24-30

Procrastination has serious consequences in many areas of life—especially when it comes to spiritual matters. You see, every person is going to spend eternity somewhere, and the destination is determined by a choice in this lifetime: We each must either accept or reject Jesus' offer of forgiveness of sins. Some people think they can delay this decision until death is near.

Unfortunately, there are several problems with this reasoning. First of all, there's no guarantee that you'll have any warning before death. Second, by spending a lifetime rejecting Christ's offer, you run the risk of developing a hardened heart. Repeatedly saying no to God may result in being unable to say yes when death comes knocking at the door. In fact, you may not even be interested in Christ's offer anymore. Then you'll face the terrifying reality of judgment, as you stand before God without a Savior (Hebrews 10:26-27).

By putting off a decision for Christ, you not only lose the immediate blessings of a deeply personal relationship with God now; you also risk permanent separation from Him for all eternity. Don't procrastinate! Place your faith in Christ today. Acknowledge your sin, ask His forgiveness, and trust Him as your Savior and Lord.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, March 18, 2022 - Healing for Our Hurts

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Psalm 6:1-5

Throughout the world, people are mistreated and traumatized, and many carry deep scars throughout life. Not everyone's experiences are extreme, but even mild hurts can fester, affecting relationships and self-image. Something as common as betrayal or rejection by friends or family can lead to distorted thinking and negative behaviors.

Unhealed hurts can lead to various symptoms, such as feelings of inferiority, fear of failure or criticism, and oversensitivity. Some people cope by criticizing others in an attempt to make

themselves feel better. Others misinterpret innocent comments as personal attacks. Hurt can also overflow as unpredictable anger, as a person who's been wounded is more likely to lash out at others. Sometimes those with a distorted self-image become loners because they're overly concerned about others' opinions of them.

Now and again we're bound to experience some of these feelings, but God doesn't want us to be trapped by the hurts we've suffered. Nor does He want us to be so crushed by our experiences that we feel worthless. Those who know the Savior will find comfort, healing, and trust in the Father's love. Then, painful experiences can make us more like Jesus so we can glorify Him with our responses.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, March 17, 2022 - The Problem of Pride

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1 Samuel 13:1-14

Pride is a condition that's common to all mankind. It doesn't matter our age, ability, social status, or culture—we're all prone to exhibit aspects of this self-promoting attitude.

As Israel's first king, Saul was to lead by following God's instructions under the power of the Holy Spirit. To be successful, he needed to remember two things: Any authority he had came from the Lord, and his responsibilities included executing God's plan, leading the people by example, and obeying divine commands. But like so many of us today, Saul acted as if he were in charge rather than the Lord. Because of prideful self-reliance, he broke God's commandment and exercised priestly duties, which were not rightly his.

You may be thinking this doesn't apply to you since you don't have a high position. But in reality, you do. As Christians, we've been chosen to be God's people (1 Peter 2:9), and He has special work for each of us to accomplish (Ephesians 2:10). That's why His Holy Spirit dwells within believers: to guide and empower us for our part in the divine plan.

Do you sometimes think your way is better than God's? Independence flows from pride, but a humble heart lives in complete reliance upon God.

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Daily Devotional - Wednesday, March 16, 2022 - The Damage of Prayerlessness

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Colossians 4:2-6

Prayer should be a priority in the life of every Christian. If Jesus, who was the Son of God, often slipped away to talk to His Father, then we surely need it even more! Without prayer and Bible reading, believers are prone to feel discouraged and distant from God.

When troubles loom, do you seek man-made options in place of taking your concerns to the Lord? Chasing counterfeit solutions only leads you away from God and His will. What's more, they are short-lived at best and utter failures at worst. Under such conditions, discouragement is unavoidable. But a believer who's immersed in prayer and Scripture reading finds security in God's power and presence.

Even though a habit of neglecting prayer has negative consequences, the direction can be reversed at any time. First, confess your prayerlessness. Then ask the Lord to give you the strength and desire to make communication with Him a regular discipline. Then set aside time every day to read your Bible and pray. In those moments of communion, He'll make burdens lighter, offer encouragement, and fill you with confidence in His faithfulness and care for you.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, March 15, 2022 - The Price of Prayerlessness

MARCH 15TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Isaiah 40:28-31

Our heavenly Father invites us to come to Him with all our concerns. Even so, there are believers who do not bother communicating with the Lord, except in emergencies. Unfortunately, neglecting prayer is costly because it often results in weariness and discouragement.

Certain situations take an emotional, physical, and spiritual toll on us—we refer to them as "burdens." These low points can wear us out if we attempt to endure them alone. For one thing, we aren't built for such loads, so trying to haul them around will deplete us. What's more, 1 Peter 5:7 tells us, "Cast all your anxiety on [God] because he cares for you" (NIV, emphasis added). There's no point in both the Father and us carrying that

weight, especially when He wants to handle it on our behalf. In God's design, His strength supports us in our weakness, and He is in fact glorified by this arrangement (2 Corinthians 12:9).

As you pray, picture Jesus' shoulders just above your own—with Him bearing your problems. Even if the burden doesn't disappear, it will feel noticeably lighter when you hand it over to the Lord. Then, like David, you can say, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden" (Psalm 68:19).

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