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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 18, 2018 - The Path of Brokenness

SEPTEMBER 18TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 18, 2018 - The Path of Brokenness

John 12:23-28

TUESDAY

18

A seed that is not planted will never produce a crop. So Jesus used a seed to illustrate why He had to die in order to bring many people to glory. He was teaching a principle that's also true in our lives: If our ambition is to remain isolated, protected, and comfortable, we'll never bear the fruit God desires. It's in dying to self and being broken of pride and self-sufficiency that we become fruitful and useful to the Lord.

Brokenness is one of the means God uses to mature His children. In that process, we may find ourselves challenged in:

Circumstances that cripple our self-sufficiency.

Areas in which we are not submissive to Him.

The timing of His plans.

If we refuse to be re-formed and instead cling to whatever God wants us to release, then how can He use us for His kingdom? Just like the single, unbroken grain of wheat, we will remain unproductive.

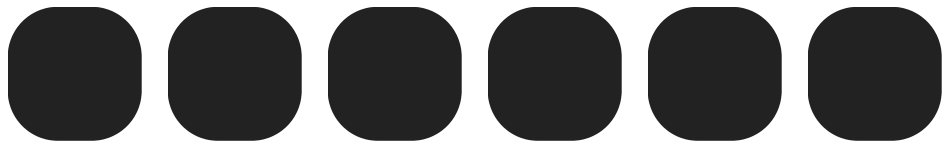
With so much at stake, why do we still resist His process of breaking us down? The problem is usually our shortsighted desires. It's difficult to let go of things or relationships or hobbies we enjoy even when we know they are stunting our spiritual growth. We prefer to take the path of least resistance and hope God will bless us anyway.

Don't be distracted by short-term happiness—that isn't the road to maturity that God has prepared for you. An abundance of fruitfulness awaits you if you'll release your grip and let Him do whatever it takes to get you there.

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Daily Devotional - Monday, September 17, 2018 - God Helps Us Pray

SEPTEMBER 17TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Romans 8:26-27

Why do we sometimes feel as if our prayers go no farther than the ceiling? We're speaking, but is God listening? The truth is that the Lord is always attentive to the prayers of His people. He's the one who has invited us to come boldly into His presence. What's more, He has also promised to assist us as we pray.

First, our Father has given us His Word to teach us truth so we'll know how to pray wisely and effectively. We find guidance for prayer in God's direct commands, the descriptions of His ways and thoughts, the examples of biblical characters, and scriptural principles that teach us how to apply divine truth to every area of our life.

Second, He's given us many promises in His Word. These assure us that He will direct our paths (Prov. 3:5-6), meet our needs (Phil. 4:19), give us wisdom (James 1:5), answer our prayers (John 14:13), and cause all things to work together for good as He conforms us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29).

Third, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us because in our human weakness, we don't always know how to pray as we should (Rom. 8:26-27). He takes our misguided or uncertain requests and reframes them according to God's will.

Fourth, Jesus Christ sits at the Father's right hand as our High Priest, interceding on our behalf (Heb. 7:25-26).

We are never alone when we pray, because the Trinity acts on our behalf. Not only is prayer an amazing privilege; it's also an awesome and powerful endeavor. The next time you come to the Lord in prayer, remember that it's a divine appointment with almighty God.

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Daily Devotional - Friday, September 14, 2018 - Two Ways Through a Valley

SEPTEMBER 14TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, September 14, 2018 - Two Ways Through a Valley

Psalm 27:1-14

FRIDAY

14

What do you do when the pressures of life seem greater than you can bear? Journeys through a valley are inevitable and painful, but God doesn't waste them. The trials of life can be times of discovery about Him.

In our helplessness, we discover His almighty power to sustain us.

In our despair, God invites us to experience His peace and promises.

In our pain, He becomes our comforter and protector.

In our hopelessness, He lifts our eyes to see His sovereignty and goodness.

Other discoveries we make in severe crises have to do with ourselves. Terrible times test our faith and reveal our true character. When a crisis first hits, most of us immediately respond with alarm. But at that point, we can take one of two very different paths.

The way of fear. If our relationship with the Lord is weak, fear may cause us to panic, seek ungodly counsel, blame people or God for the problem, or try to find a way out on our own.

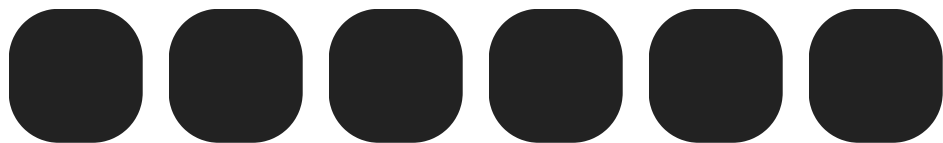
The way of faith. On the other hand, if our faith is strong, we'll progressively move from alarm to trust by seeking the Lord through prayer and His Word. We do this by believing He will keep His promises despite supposed evidence to the contrary and by remembering how He helped us in the past. In this way, our endurance and confidence in the Lord is strengthened.

Every adversity God allows in our life is designed to bring us to spiritual maturity, not to devastate us. When we yield to Him in the midst of a crisis, He enables us to trust and wait on Him with patience and hope.

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Daily Devotional - Thursday, September 13, 2018

You Must Be Born Again

SEPTEMBER 13TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

John 3:1-16

THURSDAY

13

Life is like a ladder we climb until we die. It would be a shame if we simply stopped and never progressed. But it could be utterly disastrous if we placed our ladder against the wrong wall and after a lifetime of climbing discovered that we had wasted all the years given to us.

This may have been how Nicodemus felt after talking to Jesus. He'd climbed to the top rung of religious success in Judaism and was known as "the teacher of Israel" (John 3:10). Yet Jesus told him the only way he would see the kingdom of God was to be born again. All his good works, extensive knowledge, and great accomplishments were worthless. Nicodemus realized immediately that just as he had done nothing to bring about his first birth, he could do nothing to be born again. His hopes for eternal life were dashed.

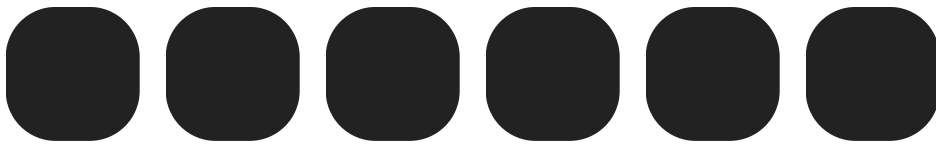
Before Nicodemus was ready to hear the good news, he had to be emptied of all his self-confidence and accomplishments in order to see his need for a Savior. His ladder came crashing down, and he had to start afresh with a new birth of the Spirit if he hoped to gain the kingdom of heaven.

Where have you placed your ladder? Has God ever emptied you so He can fill you up again? Although there's nothing you can do to be born again—no good works or religious service—there is something you can believe. God wants you to glimpse His holiness and realize how far you are from His perfect standard. Then, if you come broken and contrite to Jesus, believing His death paid your sin debt, you'll be born again and will someday see the kingdom of heaven.

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Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 11, 2018 - When Foundations are Shaken

SEPTEMBER 11TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Tuesday, September 11, 2018 - When Foundations are Shaken

Hebrews 12:25-29

TUESDAY

11

Seventeen years ago, the United States of America experienced a massive surprise attack by terrorists. Our people were shaken by the realization that the country is not as safe as we once thought.

Of course, it grieved us to learn of the events that occurred and the lives that were tragically lost. But at the same time, the horrible situation led to some positive outcomes. For example, our nation unified and people served with courage and selflessness.

One of the biggest benefits, I believe, was that many of us realized our great dependence upon God. Safety in this world is an illusion. Sadly, the peace and blessings we've experienced in America have led to much complacency and self-dependence. Sometimes we need to be shaken out of our forgetfulness and into reliance upon Jesus Christ.

Just listening to the news these days can rattle our sense of well-being. There is always something unsettling taking place. But as believers, we should look at life from a resurrection

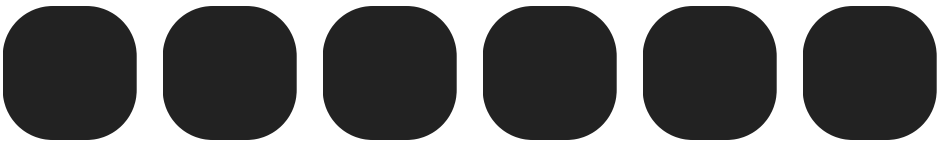
perspective. We are children of the living God, not people who seek security only in the natural, secular world. Our hope and refuge is firm: Through Jesus Christ, our relationship with the Lord is eternal. Everything else we possess could be destroyed in a moment.

Worldly circumstances—natural disasters, wars, and assorted turmoil—may have an effect on everyone, but they can’t control the believer’s heart. Let your hope rest in Christ alone. Only by finding security in the arms of almighty God can you endure times of uncertainty.

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