

**DAILY READINGS**

Sunday	1 Thessalonians 5:12-28
Monday	2 Timothy 1:1-18; Psalm 147:1-7; Proverbs 31:10-13
Tuesday	2 Timothy 2:1-13; Psalm 147:8-12; Proverbs 31:14-16
Wednesday	2 Timothy 2:14-26; Psalm 147:13-20; Proverbs 31:17-20
Thursday	2 Timothy 3:1-17; Psalm 148; Proverbs 31:21-23
Friday	2 Timothy 4:1-19; Psalm 149; Proverbs 31:24-27
Saturday	Jude; Psalm 150; Proverbs 31:28-31

**DEVOTIONAL: READ 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28**

As Paul closes his first letter to the Thessalonians, he gives them a list of encouragements and ways to live. He begins his encouragements by speaking of how they should treat one another—acknowledge those who work hard among you, have peace with each other, encourage the disheartened, be patient, do what is good for each other. He then encourages them in how to live personally with God—rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, do not quench the Spirit, reject evil. These are all ways that Christ wants us to live.

If we know Christ and the Holy Spirit is in us, we are able to live as He desires for us to live. Yet, it is not just of our own doing, but God working through us. Paul seems to sum this up when He says, “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through

and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

To “sanctify” means to “make holy.” It is the word we use for the process of the Holy Spirit working in our lives to make us more like Jesus. It is a daily process that takes time and starts the moment you first trust in Him until we go to be with Him in eternity. It is something that we long to see happen but could never do apart from God. We participate by placing ourselves in the best environments for Jesus to transform our lives. We abide in Christ. We spend time with Him. We seek accountability from other believers and graciously allow them to speak into our lives. We find opportunities to serve. We pray continually and ask for help from the Holy Spirit.

## REFLECTION

Spiritually speaking, where do you want to be in five years? Where would you want to have grown in knowledge, skill, or ministry experience? Write down a few goals, noting steps you could take to see yourself get there. Find someone who can help you or walk alongside you.

What are the biggest obstacles to growing spiritually in your life? What are you doing to overcome those obstacles?

Who is someone that is a few steps ahead of you spiritually? Ask them how they got to where they are and if they can help you grow.

## DISCUSSION

How have you grown over the last year?

## PRAYER

God of peace, continue to make me more like You.

I thank You that Your work in Christ is done. Jesus, thank You that You loosened the stranglehold of sin and removed the sting of death. Nothing can separate me from Your love! Not brokenness, affliction, trials, even death. Victory is Yours!

Yet, I acknowledge that Your work in me is still being done. Holy Spirit, thank You for faithfully loosening the grip of sin as I submit to Your leading. Help me to continue to turn toward You and away from sin. Thank You for comforting me when life is difficult and darkness is around me. Help me to seek Your peace and comfort every day.

O God, sanctify every part of my being. Sanctify this church, this city, and all of creation. Heaven, make your home on earth. Lord, continue to make all things new! Amen.

“All shall be well. And all shall be well. All manner of things shall be well.”

–Julian of Norwich