



3/5/26

Just curious... Are you a nap person, or do naps mess up your day? I am so thankful to be a nap person. Even a 20 minute nap just rejuvenates me!!! I don't get one every day, but when I do... it's just wonderful. As I write this I'm thinking, a nap sounds really good. How about you?

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

This is a letter written by Paul. He wrote it to the Thessalonian church soon after he went there during his second of three missionary journeys. I read of his time there in Acts 17. He preached the gospel there and both Jews and Gentiles turned to Christ... but there was opposition and persecution. So, Paul was not able to stay there long. He wrote this letter because he was concerned that maybe these new believers would be like the parable Jesus told of the word being like the seed that the farmer scattered. Would these new believers be like the seed that fell on thorny ground and got choked out by the weeds? Paul wrote this letter after learning from Timothy that these believers were NOT like that seed that was choked out. The seed had taken root and they were growing in the Lord. This letter was written as an encouragement and training.

I'm coming to the last part of Paul's letter when he gives a list of final instructions before ending his encouragement to them. I imagine they would have studied and pondered every word because Paul said of them in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, "Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction." I pray that I, like the Thessalonian believers, will take the words of 1 Thessalonians 5 to heart, not only in word, but in the power of the Holy Spirit planting them in my heart with full conviction, complete assurance, that God's word is true and worthy to be followed in every way.

Vs. 12-13a ~ "We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work."

The Greek is more meaningful than, "We ASK you." It means, "We ask as those who are in a caring relationship with you... not as a superior, but as a mutual follower of Christ." I think this is very cool because what he's asking them to do is show respect and appreciate the leaders of the church. Paul had more authority than any leader... and yet he appealed to them with a sense of mutual relationship.

So, even in how we are called to respect our leaders, we understand that before God, we are on equal footing. They are not superior in value... they are leaders in helping us grow. I need to respect them even when they are correcting me. If they're correcting me, it's because they see me headed in an unhealthy or dangerous direction. The correction is done in love, not arrogance. Let me regard them exceedingly in love because they are called to work for my spiritual benefit. Help them in that. Respect them for that. Love them for that.

Vs. 13b ~ "Be at peace among yourselves."

Instead of fighting for position or my rights, pursue mutual peace. I can't be focused on SELF while pursuing PEACE. I need to be focused on US. What's best for US as we all together devote ourselves to the Lord?

Vs. 14 ~ "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."

We strongly encourage ALL of you as you pursue peace with each other...

Admonish, warn, instruct the idle... the unruly... the belligerent. So... to pursue peace doesn't mean, "Pretend that there isn't a problem." If I'm truly loving my spiritual family, I won't attack those who are not walking with the Lord. I also won't avoid them. I'll patiently and gently care enough for them that I'm willing to speak up. That call is not just for the leaders. It's for all believers!

Encourage, comfort, console the fainthearted and discouraged. Proverbs 25:20 says, "Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day and like vinegar on soda." Yikes! Who hasn't tried to cheer someone up without first just hurting with them? I need to make sure I'm patiently comforting the hurting. I can't just say, "Shake it off. It's time to get over it." I also can't say, "You just need to trust God." Jesus didn't do that with the hurting. He wept with them. Let me learn from His example.

Help the weak. Hold up those who are struggling to understand God's word and how to apply it. No man left behind. Be patient with them, too. Everybody learns at a different pace.

The goal is that by being patient and serving others according to their needs, the unruly will be repentant... the discouraged will find hope... the weak will grow in understanding... so that they can patiently serve the next ones coming up in the Lord who are unruly, discouraged, and weak. I have been all three of these. And the Lord has been patient with me! He has sent people to

admonish, encourage, and help me! And when I need it, He will do it again... because HE loves His people!!!

Vs. 15 ~ "See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone."

You know who treats people harshly? The unruly because they don't care. The discouraged because they don't even realize that they're turned so inward on their heart that they can't see that they're hurting others. The weak because they don't know God's word well enough to know that what they're doing is wrong. How should I treat them? NOT LIKE THEY'RE TREATING ME! Treat them like JESUS treats ME even though I have been evil toward HIM!

Instead of retaliating, as my natural inclination would be to do, PURSUE good toward them. As Ephesians 4:3 says, "Be EAGER to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Pursue. As Romans 12:18 says, "Inasmuch as it depends on you, be at peace with ALL men." I can't control their behavior, but I can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, control mine. Treat them with the love Jesus has for me. There's enough from Him pouring into me that I can pour His love out for others.

Vs. 16-18 ~ "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Everything listed in these verses answers the question, What is God's will for my life? So often, I can ask the question over and over and think God isn't answering... but He already has. The answer is in black and white. Before I ask what God's will is for my career, my relationships, or anything else, I need to start here.

- Rejoice always... even when things are hard. Why? God is in it. He will never waste any circumstance of my life when I'm willing to choose His will over mine.*
- Pray without ceasing... Never stop being in conversation with God. What happens in any relationship when we stop talking? The relationship becomes cold. There's misunderstanding. Even though God never misunderstands me or pulls away from me, I pull away from Him. Don't do that.*
- Give thanks in ALL circumstances... Not FOR all circumstances, but IN all circumstances. Why? God will use every circumstance to show me His grace and mercy. This will also help me to be humble before Him.*

When I consider, "What is God's will for my life?" Before moving on to any other thoughts, can I say that I'm rejoicing, praying, and thanking Him ALL THE TIME? That is a consistent thread of all three things. Do it ALWAYS. O Lord, please help me to do Your will ALWAYS.

Vs. 19-22 ~ "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold

fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."

I guess I could say this is ALL God's will. I imagine Paul knew he was getting ready to close his letter and he just wanted to make sure he didn't miss anything. These were new believers he was writing to, and he wanted to make sure that they had as much information as he could think to give them. With many of the churches he planted, he would stay for quite a while before moving on to the next city. But with Thessalonica, there was so much pressure from the opposition that he was forced to leave after a short time. He probably felt responsible to give them as much instruction as possible. So... on top of always praying, always rejoicing, and always being thankful... this is what Paul thought these young believers needed...

- *Do not quench the Spirit... Do not silence the Spirit's teaching in my life. Do not extinguish His leading. How do I do that? By refusing to rejoice in Him, refusing to talk to Him, and refusing to be thankful for His work in my life. I also quench His work in my life when I am idle/unruly or discouraged (if I'm unwilling to let Him comfort me) or weak in understanding. I need to humbly bow to Him and His leading instead. Letting the Holy Spirit have full involvement in my life is imperative. He's the one who leads me, teaches me, transforms me, empowers me, and fills me with the love of God. Quenching Him is devastating to my soul.*
- *Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good... Don't disregard the inspired word of God. Pay attention to what it says. And test it out to make sure it's authentically God's word. Examine what people say to make sure that their words align with God's word... in context. Do disregard what is NOT the inspired word of God, but hold true and fast to what is the good word of God.*
- *Abstain from EVERY form of evil... Distance myself from EVERY kind of thing that sets itself against the Lord.*

Wow. Just these few verses are filled with so much direction. Can I keep this all straight???
It's so much to try to carry. I'm thankful for the end of this passage... It gives me so much hope ~

Vs. 23-24 ~ "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it."

Ohhh... The God of peace is the one who does this work in me. He sanctifies me one degree of glory to the next until every part of me is truly blameless before God. If it's up to me to accomplish all this, I'm in big trouble. But the LORD is faithful. He will SURELY sanctify me and guard me so that I'm blameless before Him. My role is to be faithful to Him. His role is to change me. That gives me great hope! O Lord, may I never quench Your Spirit or forget Your word... May I never cut off communication with You. May I listen to those who are trying to

help me. I am so thankful that You will never give up on me, but You will faithfully sanctify me until I'm completely blameless before You. Praise Your name!