



# Devotional

Oct. 4 - Dec. 30

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As we get ready for Thanksgiving and Advent, we give thanks for all that was, is and will be. We claim our calling in Christ with humility, patience and love, knowing that when we send that out into the world around us, we are changed and maybe even those around us are too.

Prayer: Loving God, help us to lead a life worthy of our calling in Christ, to love generously and without conditions. Help us to build up your kingdom with kindness, not tear it down with angry, hurtful comments. Help us to be thankful for what we have, not envious of others, as we live into your coming Light. Amen.

## **WEEK NINE (NOVEMBER 29–DECEMBER 5)**

### **Day 334: November 29, 2020**

**Full Plan: 1 Thessalonians 4:1–5:28**

**Abbreviated Plan: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 5:1–24**

1 Thessalonians 4-5 is the basis for much speculation about the return of Jesus. But Paul is less interested in how or when Jesus returns, and more interested in our living out the faith every day and not losing heart. It has been used to talk about the return of Jesus in an effort to scare the hell out of people. But Paul reminds us here that it's better to love the hell out of them instead.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **Day 335: November 30, 2020**

**Full Plan: 2 Thessalonians 1:1–3:18**

**Abbreviated Plan: 2 Thessalonians 2:1–17; 3:6–16**

In 2 Thessalonians, there's something worse than working without observing Sabbath. It's working without actually accomplishing anything of value. Paul called this "idleness." (3:11) It's worth asking: "Does what I'm doing create value, for God and others?"

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **Day 336: December 1, 2020**

**Full Plan: 1 Timothy 1:1–3:16**

**Abbreviated Plan: 1 Timothy 1:1–7; 3:1–13**

In 1 Timothy 2, Paul says women should be silent in church and are redeemed only through childbearing. Today many (sadly, not all) Christians appropriately deem that command anachronistic. Doing so does not undermine the Bible's authority. It is a reminder that biblical interpretation is inexact and requires trust in the Spirit's work in a particular time and context.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 337: December 2, 2020**

**Full Plan: 1 Timothy 4:1–6:21**

**Abbreviated Plan: 1 Timothy 4:1–16**

Of the many items on your to-do list today, 1 Timothy 6:11-12 may have the best ones: “Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith, take hold of eternal life for which you were called and made.” Check those off your list every day!

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 338: December 3, 2020**

**Full Plan: 2 Timothy 1:1–2:26**

**Abbreviated Plan: 2 Timothy 2:1–26**

The second letter to Timothy reveals a different Paul and Timothy: They are more battered and worn by life and ministry. So Paul calls Timothy to remember that God put a gift in him that has never gone away, and it is time to “wake up that fiery beast.” (1:6) In times of weariness, we would do well to remember 1:7: Fear is

not from God. Instead, God has given us power, love, and self-discipline. We have everything we need (body, heart, and mind) to live without fear and rekindle God’s gift within us.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 339: December 4, 2020**

**Full Plan: 2 Timothy 3:1–4:22**

**Abbreviated Plan: 2 Timothy 3:1–17; 4:1–5**

The responsibilities involved in being a Christian, particularly a leader in the church, can often feel too big, almost impossible. Paul and Timothy certainly felt that. But press on, regardless of whether the times are “favorable or unfavorable.” (2 Tim. 4:1-2) God will strengthen and rescue us. (4:17-18)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 340: December 5, 2020**

**Full Plan: Titus 1:1–3:15**

**Abbreviated Plan: Titus 2:11–15; 3:1–11**

Setting aside the troubling commands for slaves to submit to their masters and wives to submit to their husbands, the overall message of Titus is that character matters. Self-control, sound judgment, and trustworthiness must supersede unprofitable quarrels.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**November 29–December 5, 2020: Weekly Devotional**  
**by Trish Krider**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NRSV) Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I have always found this scripture to be a challenge, one I work on daily and have researched to try to understand how this is even possible. But through my readings, and through the example set by a lady for whom I pray daily, I am coming closer to understanding just how to do this.

For the past few years I have been privileged and blessed to lead a small group study. Over the years, these women have become my faith partners, my prayer warriors and my friends. As part of our weekly study, we share prayer concerns with each other. Through this, we have gotten to know Jeannie. A friend of one of the ladies

in our group, the rest of us feel we know her as we have been her prayer warriors - and she has set an example for us. Jeannie has been battling cancer of the red blood cells. We have known her to have good days and bad, improvements and setbacks. But what we know best about Jeannie is that nothing dampens her faith that God is good, God is with her, and God will see her through. The positive attitude with which she lifts praises to God, even in the most difficult of situations, has been a shining example to all of us. She has shown us that she understands just what is meant by this scripture.

Reading Bible commentaries on this scripture helped me in trying to understand this for myself. In MacLaren's commentary on this subject, he makes the following analogy: "To rejoice, to pray, to give thanks, are easy when circumstances favour, as a taper burns steadily in a windless night; but to do these things always is as difficult as for the taper's flame to keep upright when all the winds are eddying round it." We all know that giving thanks in the challenging times is difficult, but it helps to put it in this perspective: "...the essence of it [prayer] is to have heart and mind filled with the consciousness of God's presence, and to have the habit of referring everything to Him, "

The beauty of Jeannie's attitude is that, although she has challenges, and may well feel some turmoil, she turns to God to maintain her inner peace. As MacLaren states, "one part of a man's nature may be steadfastly rejoicing in the Lord, whilst the other is feeling the weight of sorrows that come from earth. The paradox of the Christian life may be realized as a blessed experience of every one of us: a surface troubled, a central calm; an ocean tossed with storm, and yet the crest of every wave

flashing in the sunshine.” We are grateful to see that brightness illustrated in the example she has set in praying without ceasing.

## **WEEK TEN (DECEMBER 6–12)**

### **Day 341: December 6, 2020**

**Full Plan: Philemon 1–25**

**Abbreviated Plan: Philemon 1–25**

In Philemon, we are reminded of how disruptive God’s grace can be. It can unsettle dysfunctional relationships and reset them in love and reconciliation. In what way does your desire to follow Jesus put you at odds with others and the world, who don’t understand the way of Jesus?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **Day 342: December 7, 2020**

**Full Plan: Hebrews 1:1–3:19**

**Abbreviated Plan: Hebrews 1:1–3; 2:10–18**

Hebrews 1-3 poses and answers these questions: Do you want to understand who God is? Look at Jesus. Do you want to know who Jesus is? Read the Scriptures. Do you want to understand the Scriptures? Rely on the Holy Spirit. Do you want to rely on the

Spirit? Listen and believe in God.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **Day 343: December 8, 2020**

**Full Plan: Hebrews 4:1–6:20**

**Abbreviated Plan: Hebrews 3:1–6; 3:12–19; 4:1–2**

Hebrews 4-6 describes Jesus as our high priest, who reconciles us with God through his dual, human/divine nature (5:1-10) In Jesus, God is transcendent enough to remind us that we are not God, and imminent enough to remind us that we are not alone.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **Day 344: December 9, 2020**

**Full Plan: Hebrews 7:1–9:28**

**Abbreviated Plan: Hebrews 7:1–28**

Hebrews 7-9 says that Jesus is the high priest whose self-sacrifice fulfilled the sacrificial requirement for our salvation. A modern way