FAITHFUL WHILE WE WAIT

A Five-Day Devotional Through 1 Thessalonians 5

As Christians, we await the return of Jesus Christ with hope.
While we wait, we are called to encourage one another, live faithfully,
and trust in the God who is sanctifying us.

Read · Reflect · Respond · Pray

DAY 1 OF 5

Living in Expectation of Christ's Return

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

The Thessalonian church eagerly awaited the return of Jesus Christ. They didn't know when he would return, but they lived with the expectation that he would.

Nearly two thousand years later, we find ourselves in the same position. We know Christ will return, but we don't know when.

Paul compares the return of Christ to a thief coming in the night. However, he reminds believers that they are children of the light, not of darkness. Rather than living carelessly, Christians are called to remain spiritually awake, faithful, and prepared.

Our readiness for Christ's return begins with our salvation through him. We don't earn our salvation by our good works. Instead, because Christ has died for us, we are called to live as people who belong to him.

The question isn't simply whether we believe Jesus will return, but whether that belief changes the way we live today.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How often do you think about the return of Jesus Christ?
2. If you knew Christ would return tomorrow, what would you change about how you're living today?
3. How should the hope of Christ's return influence your priorities?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Identify one area of your life that you've been neglecting spiritually. Make a deliberate effort to honor Christ in that area today.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the hope we have in the return of your Son. Help me to live each day with an eternal perspective, remembering that my life belongs to you. Strengthen my faith and guide me to live in a way that honors you. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAY 2 OF 5

Encouraging and Building One Another Up

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:12–14

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Christianity was never intended to be lived in isolation. Throughout Scripture, believers are instructed to love, encourage, support, and care for one another.

Paul reminds the Thessalonian church to respect their spiritual leaders, encourage the discouraged, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.

Notice that Paul doesn't tell us to treat everyone in exactly the same way. Some people need correction, others need encouragement, and others need someone to stand beside them through difficult circumstances.

As Christians, we should seek to understand the needs of those around us.

Think about the people in your church. Some may be struggling with their faith, some may be experiencing personal hardships, and others may simply need someone willing to listen.

Are we taking time to care for these people, or are we so occupied with our own lives that we overlook them?

God has placed us within the body of Christ for a reason. We are called not only to grow in our own faith but also to help others grow in theirs.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Do you find yourself becoming impatient with other believers? Why?
2. Is there someone in your church who could benefit from your encouragement or support?
3. How can you better honor and support those who lead and serve your church?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Reach out to someone in your church. Encourage them, ask how they're doing, or offer to help them with something they're facing.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the brothers and sisters you have placed in my life. Give me patience, understanding, and love for those around me. Open my eyes to those who need encouragement, and help me to serve others as Christ has served me. Amen.

DAY 3 OF 5

Responding to Evil with Good

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:15; Matthew 5:38–39; 1 Peter 3:9

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:15

We've all experienced moments when someone has wronged us.

Maybe someone at work treated you unfairly. Perhaps a friend said something hurtful, or someone acted selfishly toward you.

Our natural response is often anger, frustration, or a desire to retaliate.

But Paul tells the Thessalonians not to repay evil with evil. Instead, they are to pursue what is good, not only toward fellow believers but toward everyone.

This instruction reflects the example of Jesus Christ.

When Christ suffered, he did not seek sinful retaliation. Even while being crucified, he prayed for those responsible for his suffering.

As followers of Christ, we're called to reflect his character in our own relationships.

This doesn't mean ignoring wrongdoing or pretending that injustice doesn't exist. It means refusing to let another person's sinful actions determine our own behavior.

When someone wrongs us, we have an opportunity to demonstrate the love, patience, and forgiveness that Christ has shown us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you typically respond when someone treats you unfairly?
2. Is there someone you're holding bitterness or resentment toward?
3. How could you demonstrate Christ's love toward someone who has wronged you?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Think of someone who has frustrated or hurt you. Pray for that person, and consider a practical way you can respond with kindness instead of resentment.

PRAYER

Father, I confess that I often struggle to respond with patience and forgiveness when others wrong me. Remind me of the mercy and grace you have shown me through Jesus Christ. Help me to overcome evil with good and to reflect your love in my relationships. Amen.

DAY 4 OF 5

Rejoice, Pray, and Give Thanks

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18; Philippians 2:17–18

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Life doesn't always go according to our plans.

There are seasons when work becomes overwhelming, relationships become difficult, finances create stress, or the future seems uncertain.

Yet Paul gives three remarkable instructions: rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances.

These instructions weren't written to people living comfortable, trouble-free lives. The Thessalonian Christians were experiencing persecution and hardship because of their faith.

Paul wasn't telling them to pretend that suffering didn't exist. He was reminding them that their joy and hope rested in something greater than their circumstances.

Our joy comes from Jesus Christ and all that he has accomplished for us. Through him, we have forgiveness, salvation, and the promise of eternal life.

Prayer allows us to bring our struggles, concerns, and thanksgiving before God. Gratitude reminds us of his goodness even when life becomes difficult.

We may not always be thankful *for* our circumstances, but we can still give thanks *in* them because God remains faithful.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When you face difficult circumstances, is your first response prayer, frustration, or something else?
2. What reasons do you have to rejoice in Christ, regardless of your circumstances?
3. What are three things you can thank God for today?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Set aside three moments throughout the day to pray: once in the morning, once during the afternoon, and once before bed. During each prayer, thank God for something specific.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the salvation and hope I have through Jesus Christ. Help me to find joy in you rather than depending on my circumstances. Teach me to turn to you continually in prayer and to recognize your goodness in every season of life. Amen.

DAY 5 OF 5

Faithfully Doing His Work

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:19–24

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:24

Throughout his letter, Paul encourages the Thessalonian Christians to remain faithful to God.

He instructs them to encourage one another, pray, give thanks, avoid evil, and hold firmly to what is good.

These are instructions we are still called to follow today.

But there is something important about the way Paul concludes these instructions.

He reminds believers that God himself is the one who sanctifies them and that the God who has called them is faithful.

Our Christian lives aren't sustained by our own strength or ability. It is through Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit that we are able to grow in holiness and obedience.

> *Charles Spurgeon once said: "We are never in better trim for seeing our Master than when we are faithfully doing his work."*

As we await the return of Jesus Christ, we should seek to faithfully carry out the work he has placed before us.

That means actively pursuing holiness, encouraging others, serving our churches, resisting temptation, and growing in our knowledge of God's Word.

Yet we must always remember that our salvation and our hope ultimately rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The Thessalonian church received a letter filled with thanksgiving and encouragement because of the faithfulness God was producing in them.

Imagine receiving a letter from Paul about your own Christian life.

Would it be a letter of thanksgiving and encouragement? Would he recognize your love for fellow believers, your faithfulness in difficult circumstances, and your desire to serve Christ?

Or would there be areas of your life where he would need to call you to repentance and renewed obedience?

Whatever areas need growth, remember that God is faithful. He has not abandoned the work he is doing in those who belong to Christ.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. If Paul were writing a letter about your Christian life, what might he commend, and what might he challenge?
2. What is one area of your life where you need to pursue greater holiness or obedience?
3. How does knowing that God is faithful to sanctify you encourage you to continue growing?

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

Review what you've learned over these five days. Choose one specific practice you want to continue developing, whether that means encouraging another believer, spending more time in prayer, studying Scripture, or intentionally turning away from a particular sin. Commit that area to God in prayer and take one practical step toward growth today.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for the work you accomplished on the cross and for the salvation we have through faith in you. Thank you that you have not left us to grow in holiness by our own strength. Continue your work in me through the Holy Spirit. Help me to faithfully serve you, love others, and turn away from sin. May my life glorify you as I await your return. Amen.

A Closing Reflection

Throughout these five days, we've considered how Christians are called to live while awaiting the return of Jesus Christ.

We are called to remain watchful, encourage one another, respond to evil with good, rejoice and pray in all circumstances, and faithfully follow Christ.

These aren't merely instructions to follow. They are expressions of a life transformed by the Gospel.

As we continue to await the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, may we trust in the God who is faithful to sanctify us, and may we encourage one another and build each other up.

"He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."

1 Thessalonians 5:24 (ESV)