

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

What To Do When You Don't Know What To Do

WEEK 5

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, PURSUE PEACE INSTEAD OF PAYBACK.

Make sure that nobody
pays back wrong for
wrong, but **always**
strive to do what is
good for each other
and for everyone else.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:15, NIV

DAY 1

To strive for something means to put in your maximum effort to get it. Maybe for you, it's the hard work you put in to get a passing grade in chemistry, practicing to make the varsity team, or finally saving up enough money to get your first car.

In this letter to the Thessalonians, Paul is encouraging us to put in that same effort when it comes to doing what is good. Because Paul knew doing good was important not just for the benefit of ourselves, but for all people. And while we don't have to strive to be loved by God, one of the best things we can do because we're loved by Him is put in the effort to do what is good for all people in response to what He has done for us. **This week, look for an opportunity to do good for someone else. Whatever it takes, make every effort to make that good happen! Strive for it!**

So we can say with
confidence, "**The Lord**
is my helper, so I will
have no fear. What
can mere people do to
me?"

HEBREWS 13:6, NLT

DAY 2

Do you remember as a kid when you were scared of the dark? In the middle of that fear, sometimes the best thing in the world was knowing you weren't alone. If the dark wasn't going to go away, you at least wanted the assurance that someone was with you. Their presence may not have completely taken away any fears, frustrations, or worries you were dealing with, but just knowing they were around certainly helped.

The good news is, God's presence with us can do all that and more. When we go through trying times, difficult circumstances, or seasons we just don't understand, we can be encouraged simply because God promises to help us and be with us. We can be confident in that, and that confidence can help take away our fear. **Is there a circumstance in your life now where you need God's help and presence? Share it with Him today, asking Him to remind you that He is with you.**

“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

EXODUS 14:14, NIV

DAY 3

One of the most difficult things about being in situations where we don't know what to do is the feeling that we're completely and totally out of control. Sometimes we feel like if we could just do something, or say something, or had even just a little bit of control over something, then things would be different. But the reality is, sometimes things happen in life that just aren't in our control.

In those moments, it's important to remember that while we feel paralyzed or stuck, God is neither. Like this verse from Exodus tells us of how God fought for the Israelites, we serve a God who is deeply involved in our lives. He is fighting for good and working on our behalf; all He asks us to do is rest, believe, and trust in the fact that He will take care of us no matter what. **Today, sit still and memorize this verse as a way to remind yourself that God is with you and fighting for you.**

Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.

1 PETER 3:9A, NLT

DAY 4

Most of us would probably say that when someone hurts us, our first thought isn't forgiveness. Our initial reaction to being wronged is usually payback. We want things to be fair, and the only thing that feels fair in that moment is to pay back wrong with wrong.

In this verse, Peter—someone who would have known firsthand what it felt like to be treated poorly because of his faith in Jesus—tells us not to pay back the hurts and wrongs done to us with more wrongs, but with blessing. And honestly, that's no easy thing to do. But we can trust that when we choose blessing—when we offer forgiveness, pray for those who hurt us, and choose not to hold on to a grudge—it actually helps us. We get the benefit of letting old hurts go because we can move forward in freedom and not anger or resentment. **The next time someone wrongs you, take the time to pray for them. Ask God to bless them and help you take a step away from payback and toward peace.**

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

EPHESIANS 4:2, NIV

DAY 5

Choosing humility isn't easy. Responding with gentleness to someone who frustrates us isn't typically our initial reaction. And even patience with the people around us we like can be a struggle sometimes!

But Paul reminds us to do just that in our interactions with other people. He isn't just trying to make life difficult. Paul knows that when we live at peace with each other, we have peace inside of ourselves. And so fighting to love one another, and choosing humility and gentleness and patience isn't just something that helps the people who receive it. It helps us become more gentle, patient, humble, and loving people. If we want to show God's love to others—the kind of love He gives to us—we have to make every effort to lead with humility, gentleness, and patience. And the effort will be worth it when we see the difference it makes not just in our hearts, but in the hearts of those around us as well. **This week, make a list of ways that you can remind yourself to be more patient in your interactions with others.**