

## **Reflecting on 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28**

### **October 25, 2020**

**Introduction:** Paul closes out this epistle with a passionate prayer for the sanctification of the Thessalonian believers. From this prayer and the verses that follow it, we discover five aspects of sanctification:

1. The process of sanctification is not complete yet. (23)
2. Sanctification is complete when every part of your life is blameless. (23)
3. The process of sanctification continues until the coming of Jesus. (23)
4. God is the one who will accomplish your sanctification. (24)
5. The sanctified believer lives out his/her faith in unity and love for other believers. (25-28)

The challenge for this study is to *let God sanctify our lives*.

### **Questions from the Message:**

1. Which of the five aspects discussed in today's message made the biggest impact on you? Why?

2. If you had to identify one thing that you need to do differently this week as a result of what you heard today, what would it be?
3. Discuss the Biblical idea of sanctification. What is it? How does happen, and what is God's goal in this process?
4. These verses set the standard high in terms of the goal of sanctification. In verse 23, Paul prays that the Thessalonians would be sanctified completely, that their "whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless." How should this "high bar" affect the way we think about sanctification? When, in this life, is sanctification complete?

5. Sometimes Christians live as though their sanctification is already complete. What causes this attitude? Why do some Christians seem to grow to a certain point in their journeys of faith, yet fail to progress beyond that point? What motivations might help believers to continue growing?

6. In verse 24, Paul reminds us that God accomplishes our sanctification. However, in His wisdom, God also holds believers responsible for contributing to their growth in Christ. (Read 2 Peter 1:3-8 for more on this.) How do we maintain the balance between thinking our sanctification depends entirely on us (legalism) and thinking it is something God does to us without our participation (passivity)? In short, what does Biblical sanctification look like at a practical level?

7. It is quite significant that Paul requests prayer from the Thessalonian church (v. 25). Combined with his prayer for them, Paul presents an interdependence within the body of Christ. We all need each other's prayers. Work your way around the table, and share some ways you can pray for each other this week. Then finish this session by praying for each other!