

“No one Drifts into Excellence”

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

Varekai and the Icarian Games: No one drifts into gymnastic excellence—no one.

No one drifts into spiritual excellence—no one—not me and not you—no one.

The Truth: A life of spiritual excellence...demands great diligence in God’s commands.

A life of spiritual excellence demands great diligence in relation to *others*:

- Appreciate those who diligently labor among you:
- Esteem them very highly in love:
 - Why? Because of their work!
- Live in peace with one another:
- Admonish the unruly:
- Encourage the fainthearted:
- Help the weak:
- Be patient with everyone:
- Never repay evil with evil:
- Always seek after that which is good for everyone:

A life of spiritual excellence demands great diligence in relation to *circumstances*:

- Rejoice always:
- Pray without ceasing:
- In everything give thanks:
- Hold fast to that which is good:
- Abstain from every form of evil:

A life of spiritual excellence demands great diligence in relation to *God*:

- Do not quench the Spirit:
- Do not despise prophetic utterance:
 - Foretelling=telling what is going to happen before it happens. Test it!
 - Forthtelling=telling with authority what God has already said. Test it!
 - Examine everything carefully!

God’s questions for each of us today:

Am I willing to raise the standard of my spiritual diligence? If not, why not? If so, how?

“Walking Papers”

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk each day this week.

The Truth: A life of spiritual excellence...demands great diligence in God’s commands.

Please read: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 each day this week.

Please get on You Tube: Search for “Varekai and the Icarian Games.” Look at the video clip that comes up. Look at it in terms of a commitment to excellence. Think about the parallels between gymnastic excellence and spiritual excellence.

- **Today.** What is the prevailing stance toward leaders in the American culture? What is the stance toward leaders in the church that is commanded in this passage in 1 Thessalonians? Do you need to change anything in your stance?
- **Monday.** What do you need to do in order to “live at peace with everyone?”
- **Tuesday.** Do you know someone who is “fainthearted” (given to discouragement and fear) who needs encouragement from you? Are you fainthearted? If so, what can you do to get some encouragement?
- **Wednesday.** We are commanded to rejoice in all circumstances. Why would we do that? How do we do that? Do you need to change something?
- **Thursday.** To pray without ceasing involves at least three things: set times of prayer and an attitude of prayer in the continual presence of God and a “hacking-cough kind of prayer” in which all kinds of things catalyze us to pray. What do you need to do to be more faithful in one of these three?
- **Friday.** Are there ways in which you are quenching the Holy Spirit—saying no to things He is telling you to do? If so, what will you do?
- **Saturday.** In preparation for tomorrow please read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28.

Note for Connection Groups: The full study guide for small group and personal study is available at: www.cypressbible.org (Quick Menu / Connect / Sermon Based Small Group Material).