

# Exhort One Another

## Biweekly Newsletter



## Food For Thought

### John 6:35

“I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again.”

So, late as I am, I decided to shift directions at the last moment! Deviating from our mini-series based on *Hebrews 5:12–6:3* — in which we have but three topics left to cover, — in this issue we are going to discuss the topic of WORRY. (We'll resume our mini-series in the next issue.)

Of course we all know that worry is not very wise to indulge in; yet do we not, as humans, have a propensity to do such? Jesus (Yahusha) gave us several lengthy discourses on the futility of worrying. But there is also a good kind of “worry”; and we will get into that later. First, the words of Messiah:

### Pop Quiz

According to *Philippians 4*, under what circumstances was Paul content?

#### Answer to last issue's:

Abraham was 175 years old when he died.

#### Genesis 25:7, HCSB

“This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years.”

### Interesting Observation

When one thinks of worship nowadays, it's frequently in connection with praise music. But did you know that the origin of worship has to do more with one's posture than one's words? In *Psalms 95:6* the psalmist uses three words to describe the posture of the worshiper: Worship, bow down, and kneel. The word used for worship (*Shachah* – Strong's #H7812) is a verb that literally means “to prostrate oneself.” When we worship God, are we truly prostrate in our spirit before the King of Glory? ;)

### Memory Verse

#### 1 Peter 5:6-7

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your care on Him, because He cares about you.”

 **Matthew 6:24-25**

“No one can be a slave of two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves of God and of money. This is why I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

Why should we not worry about our life or body? Because no one can serve two masters. We cannot serve both God and money; which is nearly inevitable if our concern is for the things that money can buy, rather than trusting our Lord to provide.

 **Matthew 6:26-30**

“Look at the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? Can any of you add a single cubit to his height by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? Learn how the wildflowers of the field grow: they don't labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these! If that's how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won't He do much more for you—you of little faith?”

Reaffirming his Father's love toward us, Jesus reminds us that even the small creatures of the earth are cared for — let alone we who are adopted as Yahuah's own children!

 **Matthew 6:31-34**

“So don't worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

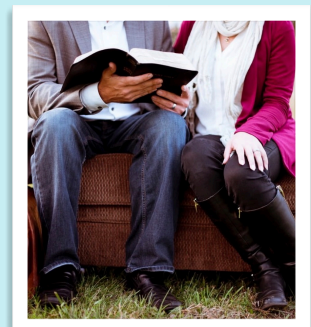
And circling back around to the original point (not serving two masters), he reminds us that the idolaters indeed seek after these material things, but that our heavenly Father cares for our bodily needs. Rather, our principal concern should be with following Yahuah our Lord, and He will provide for our material needs according to the riches of His lovingkindness towards us. “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” he says, “And all these things will be provided for you.” Our

## CONVERSATION STARTER

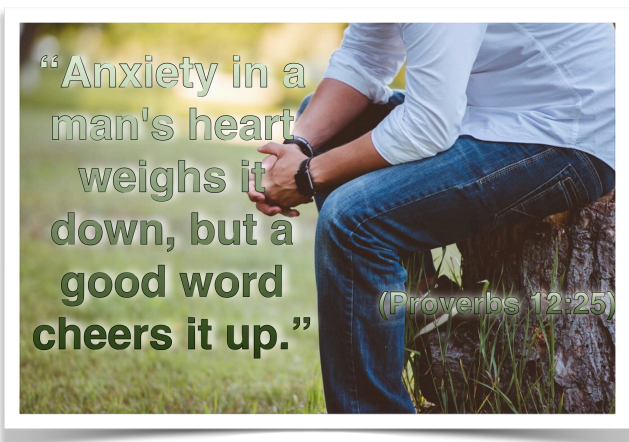
Paul told the elders of the church in Ephesus that day and night he had not stopped warning each one with tears. How can we show that same depth of love and care for our fellow believers? How can we feel that same urgency to preach the word and exhort each other to follow the narrow path and act on it? Do we love one another enough to be *that* deeply concerned for one another's soul?

**Acts 20:31**

“Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.”



goals in life should be to dwell on the things of God, not the things of this world. Why waste our lives



worrying, when we could be doing the “good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them”? (c.f. *Ephesians 2:10*). Surely He who clothes the grass with the splendor of the wildflowers can be trusted with providing for those trifling needs we have, such as food and raiment.

The apostle Paul reminded us of the same thing, urging us to think about the things of God, rather than worrying; saying that in so doing, the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

#### **Philippians 4:6-8**

“Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise—dwell on these things.”

Also see *Psalms 27:10, 94:19, 95:7, 142:4-5; Nahum 1:7; Luke 12:15-34; Philippians 4:12; 1 Timothy 6:5-11*.

What a blessing that we can trust our Heavenly Father!

But let's move on to talk about another kind of worry: godly concern.

#### **Hebrews 10:23-25**

“Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. **And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works\***, not staying away from our *worship* meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

\*Emphasis added.

Also see *Romans 10:1; Proverbs 29:10; Matthew 25:34-46; Acts 20:31; Hebrews 3:12-14*.

We are supposed to care for the spiritual (and physical; cf. *James 2:14-17*) wellbeing of others, being concerned lest anyone should fall short of the goal. We ought also to be concerned for our own souls, constantly striving to ensure that we are, in fact, in the faith; that we are keeping God's commands; that we are “running the race,” “fighting the good fight,” “keeping the faith,” (paraphrased; cf. *2 Timothy 4:7*).

#### **1 Corinthians 10:12**

“So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall.”

 **Philippians 2:12**

“So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Also see *Psalms 90:12; Proverbs 4:26, Hebrews 4:1, Luke 13:23-27.*

This ‘fear,’ ‘worry,’ or ‘concern,’ (whatever you would like to call it) is a *good* thing; similar, yet different, from the worldly and *wrong* type of worry that we looked at earlier.

But what does this all boil down to? What ties these two very different kinds of “worry” together? To worry in a worldly way is to focus on material things that won’t last, but to be concerned about the salvation of others – and ourselves – and how we walk out our belief (faith) in God is to focus on the things of God: the heavenly things. One is focusing on the *here and now*, while the other focuses on the better rewards *yet to come*.

To sum it up with a single passage:

 **Colossians 3:2**

“Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth.”

How reassuring it is to trust that our heavenly Father will provide for our needs in the present life and be able to put our time, energy, and thought into that which is of greater and eternal benefit! What will last for only a moment is hardly worth worrying about. Can worry change anything? No. We are not idolaters that we should seek after the material things, but rather *children* of the **Living God**, who will provide everything we need at the proper time.

With this in mind, may each of us come to “cast all our cares on the Lord, for he cares for us” (paraphrased; cf. *1 Peter 5:5-7*). May Yahuah give us the strength and ability to focus rather on how we serve Him, and exhorting others to press forward on the narrow road, taking care that how we live brings honor and glory to the One to whom it belongs, rather than to His enemy.

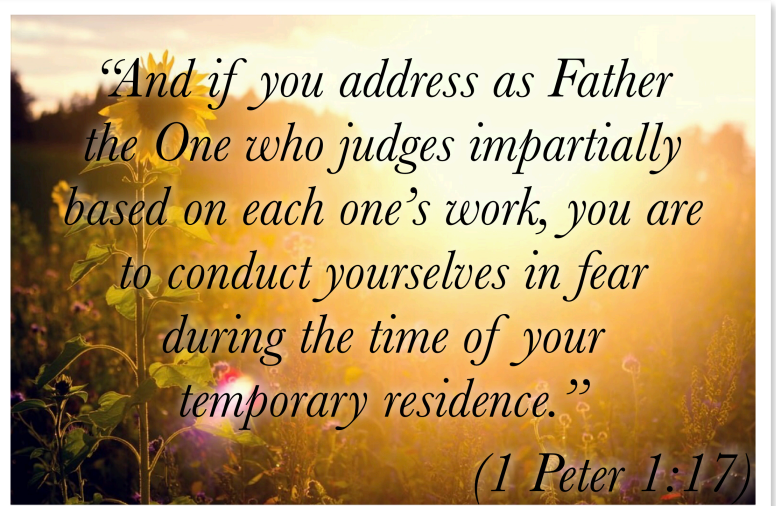
We are looking to a heavenly kingdom, just like Abraham and so many others (cf. *Hebrews 11*), and we can trust that Yahuah will care for our bodily needs just as he does our spiritual needs.

 **Hebrews 11:15-16**

“If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return. But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”

 **Philippians 4:19**

“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”





## Be Separate

### 1 Thessalonians 3:13

“May He make your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. Amen.”

Today’s Topic: **Keeping our Eyes Away From Evil (Part C)**

Today we are going to wrap up this topic, covering a few more ways that we can keep ourselves pure and separate from the world in what we look at. We are specifically going to talk a little bit about making godly choices in reading material, movies, and similar content.

So, let’s begin! To jump into the precedent of scripture that I’ll be highlighting today, let’s hark back to a passage I referenced in Part A.

#### 📖 Isaiah 33:15-16

“The one who lives righteously and speaks rightly, who refuses gain from extortion, whose hand never takes a bribe, who stops his ears from listening to murderous plots and shuts his eyes to avoid endorsing evil— he will dwell on the heights; his refuge will be the rocky fortresses, his food provided, his water assured.”

Notice that the one who lives righteously and speaks rightly, *also* stops his ears to keep from hearing murderous plots and shuts his eyes to avoid endorsing evil. What does that make you think of? ... *Movies*, perhaps? Indeed, they are a tool in the hand of their makers, whether for good or for evil. Yet *overwhelmingly* they are used in ways which dishonor the Creator and

The one who lives righteously...  
...Who stops his ears from listening to murderous plots...  
...And shuts his eyes to avoid endorsing evil.

See Isaiah 33:15-16

give a false impression of reality, putting falsehood and imagination in place of scriptural truth and morality.

And beyond just theater entertainment, video games, books, or even social media, are all in the same category. Just like music, dance, or almost anything else, these things have the potential to be used for either God’s purposes, or His enemy’s; and in accordance with human nature, that is how they are used in *many* cases.

But do we often stop our ears, or shut our eyes when evil comes on the screen? Do we not instead have a tendency to excuse and dismiss what we absorb, rather than abhorring and rejecting it as the scriptures instruct us?

#### 📖 Proverbs 8:13

“To fear the LORD is to hate evil. I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct, and perverse speech.”

#### 📖 Romans 12:9, NKJV

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

Also see *Psalm 119:163, 97:10; Amos 5:14-15; Proverbs 1-31.*

Entertainment is often seen as harmless, but could it be that we are giving in to our flesh when we escape into, for instance, the latest action movie? With such scenes — even *obscene* — flashing before our eyes, we fill our heads with the very things we are admonished to purge from our own lives.

As a writer and avid reader myself, I can testify to the addictiveness of violence, romance (lust), and other sinful and temporal elements of books. One always wants to make it exciting; *enthralling*, even, which generally means delving into aspects that definitely would not be acceptable — before God or man — if done in real life.

*Interesting fact: the root word of “enthrall” is “thrall”, from Old Norse, referring to “thralldom” — that is, slavery.*

I have often found that what we write is a sort of reflection of ourselves; and if not already a reflection, it is something we begin to reflect. Even the villains of a story will impact one’s own life. “Garbage in, garbage out,” as the saying goes (and perhaps the inverse equally so). Remember that our imagination can pollute us, and chasing endless fantasies can undoubtedly be a stumbling block for us.

 **Psalms 73:7, NIV**

“From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits.”

 **Proverbs 12:20, KJV**

“Deceit *is* in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace *is* joy.”

 **Proverbs 12:11-12**

“The one who works his land will have plenty of food, but whoever chases fantasies lacks sense. The wicked desire what evil men have, but the root of the righteous produces *fruit*.”

We are supposed to bear good fruit (*Matthew 7:16-20*), fruit that is in keeping with repentance (*Luke 3:7-9*).

I heard it said once that in the case of movies, books, and other forms of entertainment, if God *allowed* you to engage in it, then it was clearly a temptation you could handle (based on *1 Corinthians 10:13*). However, examining the passage referenced, we can see that is exactly the opposite of what Paul meant!

 **1 Corinthians 10:12-14**

“So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall. No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape so that you are able to bear it. Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.”

Firstly, this chapter begins with a list of examples of disobedience that we are *not* to imitate. Ironically, it is mentioned in verse **6** that they are examples so that we will not even *desire* evil things, as they did. There is certainly no reason to watch many *movies*, for example, if there is no desire for the evil within them. So why watch them? Because there is desire. And *that*, my friends, is what we must conquer.

Secondly, this passage specifically calls out those who think they are standing firm. The moments when we are least aware of temptation are when we should most carefully guard ourselves against it.

Thirdly, Paul informs us that: (a) the temptations we encounter are common, not unique to ourselves, (b) God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear, and (c) He will also provide a way of escape.

Fourthly, he exhorts us to flee from idolatry.

Brethren, the aforementioned thought — that if God allows one to engage in an activity, then it is a temptation one can bear — is faulty. It makes the effects of temptation null, excusing every temptation one gives in to as hardly a temptation because ‘one was able to bear it.’ But Paul said that God would provide a way of escape, so that one doesn’t have to do what one is tempted to. It is true that we are *always* able to bear temptation (for God will not allow us to be tempted beyond the strength He grants us); but bearing it means **taking the route of escape** that God has provided, *not* giving in to the temptation and supposing it didn’t affect us!

Giving in is letting temptation — and thus sin — overcome **you**; which is *not* bearing it. It is choosing sin over God... and yet, we are supposed to *flee* from such idolatry.

To return to what I said earlier about desire for evil being present in our choices of entertainment, we cannot forget the very nature of temptation. Temptation is *allowed* by God (c.f. [Job 1:7-12](#), [2:2-6](#); [Luke 22:31-32](#)), but not sent by Him. James describes it thus:

 **James 1:12-16**

“A man who endures trials is blessed, because when he passes the test he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God.” For God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn’t tempt anyone. But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desires. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death. Don’t be deceived, my dearly loved brothers.”



When we choose to do something we know is not holy in the eyes of Yahuah, we are letting ourselves be drawn away and enticed by evil desires, which leads to sin: the penalty of which is death. Compare that to this passage:

 **Psalm 7:14, 16**

“See, the wicked one is pregnant with evil, conceives trouble, and gives birth to deceit. [...16] His trouble comes back on his own head, and his violence falls on the top of his head.”

Do we *pass the test*, as James so aptly termed it, when we choose to watch a movie filled with violence, lust and adultery, hate and murder, thievery, covetousness, and so forth? How about reading a book with the same? Or playing video games? I am inclined to presume the effects of violent or sensual video games worse than that of movies (in a way), due to the fact that with a movie, the garbage is merely going into your head to come out at a later time; but with a video game, you are the one choosing to *act* on what you see, engaging in an imaginary world absent of morality. Same with writing a book, versus reading one. I won’t try to list everything we could

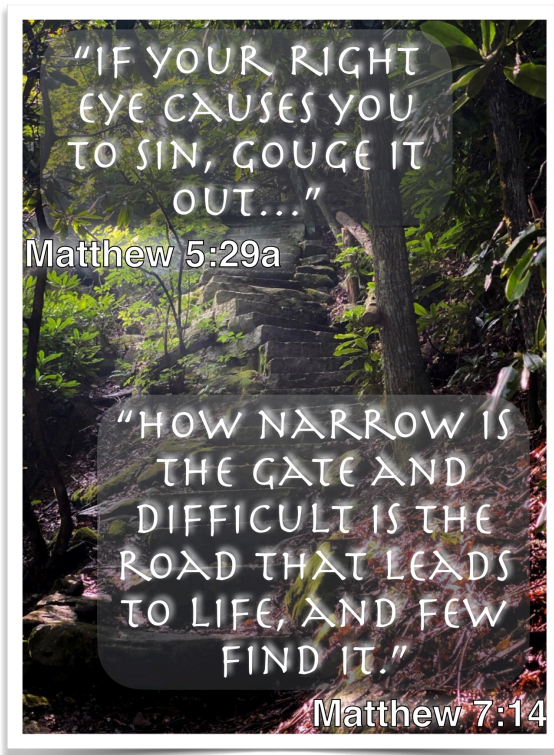


possibly be tempted to look at and, thus use to indulge our sin nature, but I think giving these few specific things ought to be enough to inspire each one of us to pay more careful attention to every area of our lives. Magazines, television, billboards... all of these are prime examples of evil being shoved into our lives and minds. Social media is a pretty obvious temptation, I think. And sadly, hard to control completely (should we choose to give it a place in our lives). But it goes without saying that we could probably do better with how we manage the temptations of social media. Scrolling through one's Facebook shouldn't be a constant scene of obscene language, sensual or violent posts, or anything else that dishonors the name of our Lord. Beside our own decisions of what media we choose to put before our eyes, I would encourage everyone to not be afraid of asking their friends to be more cautious and caring with what they post (or if not effective, consider whether their influence is worth being associated on such a platform).

We are blessed when we *endure* trials, not when we give into them. The concept of shutting our eyes to avoid seeing evil is probably one of the biggest trials we must face in this life and in our day. Perhaps even harder than taming the tongue.

We must remember that whatever we see is likely to become a part of us. We must not only look to *avoid* evil, but also guard our-

selves against whatever evil we may happen to see by accident. Capturing every thought.



📖 **1 Corinthians 10:3-5**  
“For though we live in the body, we do not wage war in an unspiritual way, since the weapons of our warfare are not worldly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, **taking every thought captive to obey Christ.**”  
\*Emphasis mine.

When I was learning to ride a bike, my mom warned me that wherever I looked was where my

handlebars would turn. Where I turned my head would determine the course of my travel. That is exactly what happens in life. When we choose to indulge our evil desire and look at what is unrighteous, we become more and more unrighteous in other areas of our lives. Conversely, if we choose to endorse only what is good — fixing our eyes on what is **true, holy, and just** — then we will yearn to be, and *will become*, more and more Christ-like in our lives.

I hope this three part discussion on *Keeping Our Eyes From Evil* has blessed you.

May Yahuah provide the discernment and fortitude to withstand the temptation to look at what is not honoring to Him, and give us a hunger for what is good and honoring to Him.

Remember, blessed is he who **endures** trials; not he who *crumbles* under them!



## Reader's Comments

“Worry is taking responsibility that does not belong to you.”

— *Ron Carlson*

“One thing to keep in mind is that sin will creep in through whatever door is open. If our weakness is in our eyes, we will undoubtedly find temptations in that area, but once we have let it in, it will work its way throughout our heart and mind and weaken our defenses in other areas as well.”

— *Μαρία*

“Happy Spring Everyone! This year let's “spring into action” and start paying more careful attention to our daily walk. See *1 Peter 1:13*.

— *The Editor*

## Guess The Context!

“May the name of God be praised forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. He changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals the deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.”

**Guess the context!** What book is this from? What is the surrounding passage about?

**Issue #3's** *Guess The Context* was *Job 23:11-12*, and the verse immediately preceding is... *Job 23:10*:

“Yet He knows the way I have taken; when He has tested me, I will emerge as pure gold.”

## To Wrap It All Up

Well, another issue finished!

For the *Food For Thought* section, I hope it has encouraged you to not give up hope in God our Provider (Yahuah Yireh); as well as to stir one another up to continue to walk the Narrow Path. Our earthly circumstances may be dark, even dreary at times, but we can trust God to provide for our physical and spiritual needs.

In the *Be Separate* section, this is the third and final part of “*Keeping Our Eyes From Evil*.” I know that the last issue may have seemed somewhat abrasive to some. But know that I sent it in love, and hope that it will encourage all of you to be pure regarding what you *look* at, not just what you *do* (even if it could be taken rather strongly).

### *2 Corinthians 7:9-11*

For even if I grieved you with my letter, I do not regret it—even though I did regret it since I saw that the letter grieved you, yet only for a little while. Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us. For godly grief produces a repentance not to be regretted and leading to salvation, but worldly grief produces death.”

While it is true that “no correction is enjoyable at the time”, we know that afterwards it “yields the fruit of peace and righteousness” (*Hebrews 12:11*). Even so, having been blessed countless times by the strong words of others, I will put my hope in the proverb, “Wounds from a friend can be trusted” (*Proverbs 27:6, NIV*).

Stand fast in the faith; throw off everything that hinders you and run the race that lies before you! (cf. *Hebrews 12:1-4*)

## Notes from the Editor

As a few final notes, I am well aware that I'm late... again. But the deadline matters less than living out what I write about, and thus I have had to shelve this issue for the last several weeks to put more pressing matters first. I am still trying to release each issue on time, but don't be surprised if I'm late now and then!

It has come to my attention, in reviewing previous issues, that the last issue — Issue #4 — was sent out with two major errors: it was missing a *Guess The Context!* box entirely; and in the *Live It!* box, I discovered that I had accidentally used the *verse reference* for *Psalms 101:3* and the *text of Colossians 2:5!* The *Live It!* box contains the text and reference for *Psalms 101:3*, this time; and the *Guess The Context* box includes the answer to Issue #3's *Guess The Context*. Hopefully that wasn't too confusing for everyone!

– The Editor

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*May our Lord Yahuah, bless you all.*

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

*Amen.*



### LIVE IT!

This week, let's challenge ourselves to live out *Psalms 101:3*. How can we strive to make this passage true for our own lives?

#### **Psalms 101:3**

"I will not set anything worthless before my eyes. I hate the practice of transgression; it will not cling to me."

Always Remember:

#### *1 Thessalonians 5:14-25 (NKJV):*

"Now we **exhort** you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is **good** both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in **everything** give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; **hold fast** what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify** you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is **faithful**, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us."



### Song of the Week

"The One"

by Aaron Shust

[YouTube](#) • [Apple Music](#)



### Bonus Song!

"Ani Yode'a (I Know)"

by Shilo Ben Hod

[YouTube](#) • [Apple Music](#)

\*Hebrew song, use English subtitles.