

# REJOICE ALWAYS

By John Richardson

## SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

*[16] Rejoice always, [17] pray without ceasing, [18] give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

## OBSERVATION

This short section of Scripture flows within the final remarks from Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus. The previous few verses point to loving leaders, caring for those in need, encouraging the lazy, and asking justice/good toward everyone. In the conclusion, prayer is woven into the writer's thoughts, expressing that relationship between man and God is needed in life.

- “Rejoice” is not a word that people use currently, but the author uses it for the path of relationship with one another—the relationships that believers have as they enjoy the fact that they have been brought into the faith family called “church.” Rejoicing is not fabricating happiness; it develops out of the abundance of good in God. One is able to do good toward others because God has done infinite good to them. Rejoicing always is a choice by believers to continually praise God no matter the circumstance (v. 16).
- Having affections stirred by God and spilling over in joy provides the path to ceaseless prayer. Prayer is not only an action that a believer takes, it is the response to God each day. The means of promoting believers' joy is prayer. Understanding the ongoing difficulties in this life, one can choose to fall into crippling apathy or pursue joyful prayer. Joyful prayer will cost time and energy but not to the measure of heartache of attempting life without communion with God (v. 17).
- The final encouragement is to give thanks to God for every circumstance. It is more difficult to obey this Word in some circumstance than others. People experience a wide array of circumstances that challenge the very core of their faith, and God gives understanding in each moment that life on earth is not worth one's heart. If a believer wonders the will of God, it is to love others (vv. 12-17) and live in joyful gratitude toward God. The church has the reason and purpose to live a life of joy/thanks based on God's affections rather than current events. Events provide the means to worship God rightly (v. 18).

# **OBEDIENCE**

An ongoing life of joy and gratitude results from conscious decisions each day. A believer can worship each day knowing that God is working in and through them for His glory and their good.

- Seek joy in places/events that usually press you into despair. A life of joy starts with consistent choices to look toward God.
- If a believer lacks joy, one can find it again through prayer to God. Seek to drop moments of prayer throughout the day, beginning with planned events and then unplanned.
- Seeking God's will for most believers is like chasing a huge event, while the Word points to ordinary daily obedience. Look for ways to live in joy, pray often, and thank God every day.

# **PRAYER**

Ask God to give you joy as you spend time with Him. Pray for understanding in every situation to see the ways you can thank God. Tell God you will make time between prayers less each day.