

Personal Development

[1 Thes.5:16-18]

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Three present imperatives

Present continuous action

Reinforced by modifiers (each emphatic) –

Always

Without ceasing

In everything

I. Rejoice Always, 16

Order: *“Always rejoice”*

- What? Rejoice: only sinners may be miserable – (guilt)
 - Christian is grateful for God’s blessings
 - Physical blessings prove God’s concern
 - Mt.5:45
 - Spiritual blessings cost more than we can know. Ac.8:39

Order: *“Always rejoice”*

- What? Rejoice:
- Who? Persecuted Christians (3:3-4)
 - Spiritual blessings surpass tragedies.
Hab.3:17-19
 - Blessing: **what brings us closer to God...**
 - Mt.5:11-12
 - Ro.5:3
 - 2 Co.6:10
 - Col.1:24
 - Hb.11:34

Order: *“Always rejoice”*

- What? Rejoice:
- Who? Persecuted Christians (3:3-4)
- Why?
 - Grumbling (12-13), impatience (14), retaliation (15) . . . bring gloom
 - Joy is ¹contagious, ²optimistic
 - Gal.5:22, fruit of Spirit...
 - Ac.27:...22...25...36
 - Grief is sign of unbelief (4:13)
 - Christians are going home (4:17)

Order: *“Always rejoice”*

- What? Rejoice:
- Who? Persecuted Christians (3:3-4)
- Why? Grumbling (12-13), impatience (14), retaliation (15) bring gloom, pessimism
- When? Always, at all times (6x in 1 Th.)
 - Phil.1:12-16; 3:1-8, lost all, yet . . .
 - Ph.4:13 – not based on circumstances
 - Christians smile through tears

Vine: grounds for Christian's joy

- Lord, Ph.3:1; 4:4
- His power, Lk.13:17
- His resurrection, Mt.28:8
- His ultimate triumph, Jn.8:56
- Our salvation, 2 Co.8:2
- Our enrollment in heaven, Lk.10:20 . . .

**Springs of joy flow
beneath passing sorrows**

Vine: list of occasions for Christian's joy

- Hearing gospel, Ac.13:48
- Receiving the Lord, Ac.8:39
- Preaching of the gospel, Ph.1:18
- Conversion of sinners, Ac.15:3
- Manifestation of grace, Ac.11:23
- Meeting with believers, Ro.15:32
- Triumph of truth, 1 Co.13:6

Paul, the sufferer,
rejoices in Christ

Joy is the byproduct
of obedience

I. Rejoice Always, 16

II. Pray Without Ceasing, 17

Order: *Without ceasing, pray!*

- Paul set the example, 1:2
 - He did not literally pray without ceasing
- Without ceasing: constantly (not nonstop prayers): regularly, in all circumstances
 - Night and day
 - Laboring night and day, 2:9
 - Praying night and day, 3:10

Order: *Without ceasing, pray!*

- In letters, Paul breaks into prayers (3:11-13). Neh.2:4-5
- Pray when . . .
 - a. things go well. 1:2
 - b. persecuted. Dn.6:10; Ro.5:3
 - c. hurting. Job. Ac.2:44-45
 - d. burdened with concern. 1 Th.3:9-10.
Elijah, 1 K.17-18:41-46 (Ja.5:17-18)
- Main goal: not to improve what we have, but ourselves – what we are, what we do...

I. Rejoice Always, 16

II. Pray Without Ceasing, 17

III. In Everything,
Give Thanks, 18

Order: In everything, give thanks

- *IN, not FOR*
- “*What about Eph.5:20?*”
 - “Always believers can and should give thanks because there is never a moment when they are not under the watchful eye of Jehovah whose very name indicates that His mercies are unchangeable and will never fail” – Hendriksen

Order: In everything, give thanks

- *IN, not FOR*
- “*What about Eph.5:20?*”
 - “The Christian will always find some cause for thanksgiving...painful experiences... must bring us spiritual benefits such as driving us closer to God to seek His protection...” – Lenski

Order: In everything, give thanks

- *IN, not FOR*
- *“What about Eph.5:20?”*
- Context: things we now possess
 - Ep.3:9, created all things... Sin?
 - Ga.5:4, fall from grace... “Thank God?”

Order: In everything, give thanks

- It is easy to give thanks for blessings, not for suffering.

“Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face”

- Jehoshaphat, 2 Chr.20:21
- Ja.1:2
- Ac.16:23...25

Thankful in everything . . .

¹Regardless of circumstance

²Because of spiritual profit it may give

Gn.37 . . . 50, the end reveals the blessings

- Ac.5:41

- “God wants me to be happy”

For this is the will of God (cf. 4:3)

- This is how God wants us to live . . .
Constant joy ... prayer ... thanksgiving
- Lk.18:1, Then He spoke a parable to them,
that men always ought to pray and not lose
heart

“No healthy Christian ever chooses suffering; he chooses God’s will as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not”

Summary

- Three goals for a genuine church –
rejoice, pray, give thanks
- Christians are not a sad, gloomy people

Third Century man, awaiting death, wrote...

“It’s a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians – and I am one of them.”