

Grace Keys I Thess. 5:16-18

Truth: As the believer daily learns to rejoice, pray, and give thanks, a spirit of humility, grace, and compassion will overcome that person. In this we truly have the life and love of the Lord Jesus Christ and are able to manifest it to those around us.

1. Rejoice over and over again (I Thess. 5:16).

One of the best ways to open ourselves to the heart of God and His grace comes through joy.

What is joy? The Greek word means to be glad; a state of happiness. A believer's joy is always rooted in the resurrected Savior. "A Christian's joy does not spring from his circumstances, but from the blessings that are his because he is in Christ".³ For the believer, joy is grounded in the experience of redemption through Christ and also God's future redemptive work (Rom. 8:23; 12:12).

What should we rejoice in?

- In the Lord (Phil. 3:1) - Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.
- In the gospel (Acts 13:47-48) - For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.
- In the truth and spiritual growth (III John 3-4) - For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- Being partakers of Christ's sufferings (I Pet. 4:13) - But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Truth: The believer who often rejoices discovers the blessings that are his because he is in Christ. This grace key is rejoicing over and over again wherein one finds the fullness and richness of His Savior.

2. Pray continually (I Thess. 5:17).

Paul's language is indicative of a person who has a spiritual life preoccupied with the presence of God. The believer's life then is in a continual state of readiness to worship, pray, and have communion with God.

Truth: Constantly worshipping and praying leads to both a grace-filled and grace-giving life.

³ Constable, T. L. (1985). [1 Thessalonians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 708). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. In every thing give thanks (I Thess. 5:18).

We are to give thanks *in* every thing and not *for* every thing. Even in the difficult times of life we must summon the Christ-ordained power and Spirit-filling to express gratitude to the Lord.

John Poole writes: "We are not to give thanks when we fall into sin, for that we ought not to pray for; yet if we have the pardon of it, or get any good by it, we should then give thanks: and so may be said concerning affliction; we are to give thanks in every condition, either of prosperity or adversity" (https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_thessalonians/5-18.htm).

Thanksgiving for God's mercy declares that what we are experiencing comes or is allowed by God. There is value in these experiences and thanksgiving truly teaches us God's goodness. This then is praise to our God and is His will.

Why should be thankful in every thing?

- **Because God is using the circumstance in your life and the lives of other people.**
- **Because God is sovereignly in control of your life.**
- **Because God wants to demonstrate grace and mercy in time of need.**
- **Because of the spiritual growth that should inevitably result.**
- **Because God is glorified in our gratefulness.**

Truth: Thankfulness through life's circumstances places our focus upon God and not the challenges of life. This does not remove the ups and downs of life, but it allows our fixation to be on the "God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph. 4:6)."

Further thoughts from John Gill on I Thess. 5:17: "But the meaning is, that believers should be daily, and often found in the performance of this duty; for as their wants daily return upon them, and they are called to fresh service, and further trials and exercises, they have need of more grace, strength, and assistance, and therefore should daily pray for it; and besides certain times both in the closet, and in the family, in which they should attend the throne of grace, there is such a thing as mental prayer, praying in the heart, private [pouring forth] of the soul, which may be sent up to heaven, while a man is engaged in the affairs of life. The Ethiopic version renders the words, "pray frequently"; do not leave off praying, or cease from it through the prevalence of sin, the temptations of Satan, or through discouragement, because an answer is not immediately had, or through carelessness and negligence, but continue in it, and be often at it; see Luke 18:1. These words are opposed to the practice of such, who either pray not at all, or, having used it, have left it off, or who only pray in a time of trouble and distress, and bear hard on those who think they should not pray but when under the influences of the Spirit, and when his graces are in a lively exercise: the reason for this rule of praying with frequency and constancy is, because the saints are always needy, they are always in want of mercies of one kind or another, and therefore should continually go to the throne of grace, and there ask for grace and mercy to help them in time of need"

(https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_thessalonians/5-17.htm).