

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Message

1. 14 We urge you, brothers and sisters, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek what is good for one another and for all people. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit, 20 do not utterly reject prophecies, 21 but examine everything; hold firmly to that which is good, 22 abstain from every form of evil. [1 Thess 5:14-22, NASB]
2. Different translations of 1 Thes 5:18
 - a. How about we read this altogether, will read the verse in different translations, said in similar but slightly different ways in hopes that by the end you would have it in memory, and begin to form a reaction towards the statement.
 - i. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus [NASB]
 - ii. give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. [ESV]
 - iii. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. [NLT]
 - iv. in every situation [no matter what the circumstances] be thankful and continually give thanks to God; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. [AMP]
 - b. Thanksgiving – expressing gratitude, showing appreciation.
 - c. **Summary:** Express gratitude to God, show appreciation towards God, and continually give thanks to God under all circumstances and every situation, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.
3. Our reaction
 - a. When we hear Paul command believers to “in everything give thanks, In all circumstances express gratitude towards God, in all situations, no matter what the circumstance continually gives thanks to God, we tend to think “but what about this kind of situation and circumstance?”
 - b. Does Paul and God really expect me to give thanks even during these kinds of circumstances?
 - c. Surely it would be reasonable, rational, and acceptable to NOT give thanks under certain circumstances and situations.
4. Disease/sickness, Death, Financial ruin, Sinned against us
 - a. Does God really expect me to be thankful during times of sickness?
 - b. Does God really expect me to be thankful during times of death?
 - c. Does God really expect me to be thankful during times of financial ruin?
 - d. Does God really expect me to be thankful when someone sins against me?
5. Diagram #1
 - a. When we have this line of questioning, it is under the premise that our thankfulness is dependent upon the condition of our circumstances like such a diagram.
 - b. That is our human tendency to, to base our happiness and thanksgiving upon the condition of our present circumstances.
 - c. However, the verse does not command us to be thankful “for” all circumstances but we are called to be thankful “in” the midst of all circumstances.
6. Diagram #2
 - a. So a more accurate diagram of this verse would be where our thanksgiving is not rooted in the condition of our circumstances but rooted in God, who He is, what He provides, and what He values. This is a shift in focus, where we are less occupied with conditions of our present circumstances, and paying more attention to God.
 - b. So In order for us to have continual thankfulness towards God, then our thanksgiving cannot be dependent upon our circumstances, but our thanksgiving must be based on God, who He is,

what He provides, and what He values.

- c. Let's cover some items that we can be continually thankful to God for, in every situation and in all circumstances.

7. Continually thankful for... (as believers)

- a. God's goodness, steadfast love, mercy, faithfulness, righteousness
 - i. [Psalm 100:4-5] Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courtyards with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name 5 For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting And His faithfulness is to all generations.
 - ii. [Psalm 118:1] Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy [steadfast love] is everlasting
 - iii. [Psalm 119:62] At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules.
- b. God's provision, giving strength, our shield, victory over sin, unshakeable kingdom
 - i. [Psalm 28:7] The Lord is my strength and my shield, in him my heart trusts, and I am helped, my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.
 - ii. [1 Cor 15:57] Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through Lord Jesus Christ
 - iii. [Hebrews 12:28] Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;
- c. God's people [fellow believers]
 - i. [1 Corinthians 1:4] Thanks to God always because of grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus (continually thankful towards those who fail to live up to what they know)
 - ii. [1 Thess 1:2] We always give thanks to God for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;
- d. Everything created by God
 - i. [1 Timothy 4:4-5] For everything created by God (e.g. food, marriage) is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

8. Recap of what we've covered so far

- a. Summary: Express gratitude to God, show appreciation towards God, and continually give thanks to God in all circumstances and in every situation.
- b. We are commanded to be continually thankful to God "in" all circumstances not "for" all circumstances, where our thankfulness is based in God, who He is, what He provides, and what He values.
- c. Continually thankful for...
 - i. God's goodness, steadfast love, mercy, faithfulness, righteousness
 - ii. God's provision, giving strength, our shield, victory over sin, unshakeable kingdom
 - iii. God's people [fellow believers]
 - iv. Everything created by God
- d. Cover some points that would be helpful in our process to be continually thankful to God

9. Believe God is good

- a. It requires us to trust that God is good. His will, His motive, His ways, His judgment, His discipline are all good.
- b. Challenge with this is that in the beginning there's not personal subjective experiences of this yet (at least not aware), but we often hear or read of the testimonies who were before us of how God has been faithful and good towards them.
- c. Biographies, reading the bible, attending Christian gatherings - encouraging --- we can be encouraged in the faith through other people's experiences.

10. Present circumstances are just present circumstances
 - a. Preface: some people go through really difficult things during their lifetime. And in no way do I mean to belittle their suffering, or make light of it with what I am about to say.
 - b. What I mean by this statement is that we are often tempted to believe that our present circumstances are more than just our 'present circumstances'. When we go through difficult circumstances like the ones I mentioned earlier, the temptation is to believe that those circumstances are all that matter.
 - c. Present life circumstances (suffering, momentary affliction), unworthy to be compared to what God has in store for us in the next life. (Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18)
 - d. So then may we see "present circumstances" just as "
11. What is the alternative? If not thankful for God, then what?
 - a. Preface - perhaps an extreme black/white, but it helps convey the point.
 - b. When we are not in a constant state of thankfulness towards God, then what other options are we left with?
 - i. Thankfulness that is dependent upon the condition of our current circumstances
 - ii. Present circumstances become all that matter
 - iii. Anxiousness, anxiety, unrest
 - iv. Grumbling, complaining, discontent
 - v. In search of relief from difficult present circumstances, oftentimes through disobedient / unrighteous means
 - c. What happens if we are not continually thankful to God?
 - i. Unthankfulness towards God <-> anxiousness, anxiety <-> grumbling, complaining <-> distrust in God <-> disobedience / unrighteousness
 - ii. When we are not continually thankful towards God, then it provides room for focusing on present circumstances, fixating on finding relief and/or escape from our situation; gives room for grumbling and complaining and most likely will be disobedience, unrighteousness around the corner.
12. For this is the will of God (thankfulness <-> trust <-> obedience)
 - a. Previously in 1 Thes, the will of God was referenced concerning sanctification, and abstaining from all kinds of sexual immorality. Here the will of God is referencing "in everything give thanks".
 - b. When we think of God's will for us, we often think of sanctification, holiness, God's commandments, His righteousness, seeking to do good to one another as the will of God. So then how does continual thankfulness to God tie into the rest of those things?
 - c. Always giving thanks towards God, maintains the perspective of God that
 - i. 1) trusts that He is good
 - ii. 2) who God is, what He provides and what He promises outweigh the "present circumstances"
 - iii. 3) then it is always appropriate, reasonable, and in our best interest to practice obedience to God
 - d. Grumbling, discontentment <-> distrust in God <-> disobedience to God's commands
 - i. Just like how we have shown where there is grumbling against God, discontent towards what He has provided, then in all likelihood, then there is distrusting of Him and disobedient to His commands.
 - e. "In everything give thanks" <-> trust in God <-> obedience to God's commandments
 - i. In the same way where there is continually thankfulness towards God then there is a trusting that He is good no matter the present circumstance, and where there is trust in

God, there is obedience to His commands.

13. Jesus giving thanks

- a. When Jesus was with his disciples at the last supper, He knew that his death was imminent, the cross was coming and with it the betrayal of his disciples during persecution; Jesus knew what was coming, losing the presence of God, experiencing the penalty of sin. In the midst of all of this, when Jesus knew that all these things were about to happen. What did He do?
 - i. Broke bread and gave thanks to God. (Luke 22:19, Matthew 26:27, Mark 14:23)

14. Prayer from Thomas a Kempis

- a. To conclude, I will read a prayer that you all covered last week.
- b. O Lord, help me have a tender heart to the truths in Your word which need to be applied to my life. Teach me to walk according to Your Holy Scriptures, and lead me down the path of living up to what I know. Grant me the wisdom to understand and live according to Your will. Give me the eyes and heart to see and ponder – with reverential awe and sincere appreciation – Your general and special blessings **so that my thanks-giving will be worthy of the gift and the Giver.**
- c. In our unceasing prayers to God, may we practice to be thankful to God in all our circumstances, for His goodness and what He provides to us.