

**Exhortations to Godliness**  
**“LIVE THANKFULLY”**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:18**

**Theme:** Believers are to bless God for His grace in their lives in every circumstance.

**Introduction .**

**I. THE OFFERING OF THANKSGIVING - “... *give thanks* ...”**

**A. It Is Commanded of the Believer**

1. Paul completes this first triplet of commands regarding the pursuit of godliness by saying that we should “*give thanks*” [εὐχαριστεῖτε] - (Pres. Mid. Imperative).
2. The term conveys the idea of “blessing” [εὖ] the “grace” [χάρις] that has been provided by God.
3. It means to “to show that one is under obligation”<sup>1</sup> because of the benefits or blessings” provided - cp. **Psalm 136:1-3; Colossians 3:17.**
4. It is part of what it means to walk worthy of the Lord - cp. **Colossians 1:10-12.**

**B. It Is Consistent with Belief**

1. “*giving thanks*” is so foundational for the believer, that to fail to do so is a mark of the unbeliever - cp. **Romans 1:21; 2 Corinthians 4:15.**
2. It is part of the response of the heart that has been transformed by the very grace that we are commanded to “bless” as generated by the Holy Spirit - cp. **Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 2:7.**
3. When the early church assembled, one of the foremost pursuits was to join together in thanksgiving to the Lord for His grace - **1 Corinthians 14:16-17.**
4. “*giving thanks*” is one of the elements that enables us to combat the influences of our flesh - cp. **Ephesians 5:3-4.**
5. It is the inevitable result of the favor of God in our lives - cp. **2 Corinthians 9:10-11.**

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<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., [\*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature\*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 415.

6. When the lepers failed to “*give thanks*” to Jesus for healing them, Jesus was disappointed – cp. **Luke 17:12-18**.

## II. **THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THANKSGIVING** - “*in everything ...*”

### A. **The Constancy of Our Thanksgiving**

1. The occasion for our responsibility to “*give thanks*” is “*in everything*” [ἐν παντί]
2. Since there is never a point in life where God’s favor is not being showered upon us, there should never be a time when we are not blessing God for His grace.
3. As Paul demonstrated throughout his life – thanksgiving was a constant activity, not only the grace he personally received, but for the witness of God’s grace in others’ lives – cp. **Romans 1:8; Ephesians 1:15-16; Philemon 4**.
4. Essentially, this phrase “*in everything*” is all-inclusive – there is nothing for which we are unable to give thanks ...

### B. **The Circumstances of Our Thanksgiving**

1. Of course, to be able to “*in everything give thanks,*” a person must be devoted to seeing the grace of God in everything.
2. The key to this is to recognize that the Lord is working through all of our circumstances for the purpose of enabling us to bring Him glory – cp. **Romans 8:28**.
3. “He who can say ‘Amen’ to the will of God in his heart will be able to say ‘Hallelujah’ also.”<sup>2</sup>
4. God works, in only ways that a Sovereign God can, to blend tribulations, blessings, distresses, encouragements, diseases, and opportunities into an advancement of His glory in our lives – **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**.
  - a) He exhorted us to “*give thanks*” when we are encountering what would produce anxiety – cp. **Philippians 4:6**.
  - b) He “*gave thanks*” for the privilege of the ministry – **1 Timothy 1:12**.

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<sup>2</sup> Hogg and Vine, p. 190.

5. "It is a duty that is not dependent upon gratifying circumstances."<sup>3</sup>

### III. **THE OBLIGATION FOR THANKSGIVING** - *"for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

#### A. **The Purpose for Thanksgiving** - *"... for this is God's will for you ..."*

1. God's will is that we express gratitude for His will.
2. It must be recognized that *"for this"* refers not simply to the obligation to "give thanks" but to all of the commands here:
  - a) "Rejoice always"
  - b) "Pray without ceasing"
  - c) "Give thanks in everything"
3. There is to be no time in which the believer sets himself against the will of God in their lives and therefore these commands are "all inclusive."
4. It is never *"God's will"* for us to struggle with His will - He desires that we see that will as "good and acceptable and perfect" - cp. **Romans 12:2**.
5. These things are as inherent to the will of God in our lives as is our abstaining from sexual immorality - cp. **1 Thessalonians 4:3**.

#### B. **The Pattern for Thanksgiving** - *"... in Christ Jesus."*

1. Of course, without Christ Jesus and His grace, we have no basis for any of these constant pursuits of godliness.
2. Christ is the pattern and source of the ability to *"give thanks in everything"*
  - a) He gave thanks before miracles - **Matthew 15:36; cp. John 6:23; Luke 11:41**.
  - b) He gave thanks before His death - **Matthew 26:27**.
3. Paul's command here is not that you "must do it because it's God's will," but "knowing it is God's will, you can do it!" - cp. **Philippians 2:13**.

**Believers are to bless God for His grace in their lives in every circumstance.**

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<sup>3</sup> Hiebert, p. 242.