



Your Worship War
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
May 8, 2022

BI – We are called to worship God with our whole hearts, which means even when we don't feel like it

Mother's Day thoughts ¹-

My mother taught me RELIGION: When I spilled grape juice on the carpet, she instructed, "You better pray the stain will come out of the carpet."

My mother taught me LOGIC: From her decisive words, "Because I said so, that's why."

My mother taught me FORESIGHT: "Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

My mother taught me IRONY: "Keep laughing, and I'll give you something to cry about."

My mother taught me about STAMINA: "You'll sit there 'til all that spinach is finished."

My mother taught me about WEATHER: "It looks as if a tornado swept through your room."

My mother taught me THE CIRCLE OF LIFE: "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."

My mother taught me about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION: "Stop acting like your father!"

My mother taught me about ENVY: "There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have a wonderful Mom like you do!"

Prayer – Thanks for the gift of our mothers Blessing of mom's

Those who's its tough – the mom's not here with them – grace and comfort there

Intro – What makes you happy?

Its easy to praise God to rejoice, to be thankful in our prayers when life is going great.

¹ [All Time Best Mother's Day Sermon Illustrations by SermonCentral - SermonCentral.com](http://SermonCentral.com)

But what about when's its not.

It's a whole lot harder to want to rejoice when life is falling apart.

It's a whole lot hard to be thankful, when our world might be crashing down into a big pile of flames.

It's sometimes beyond hard to want to pray, when we are exhausted and we just don't feel like it.

Sometimes we just don't feel like being thankful, rejoicing and praying, we're not in the mood. And yet in that moment is when we need to be just as much as when we fill like it.

Job – naked come in and naked go out – blessed by the name of the Lord

We live in this dichotomy. We want to worship, we know that's what God wants from us because of who He is. Worship is our response to who He is and what He has done for us.

And yet there is also the reality of life, there are plenty of times I just don't feel like, or even want to do something because of circumstances that have happened in life. And yet Paul gives us several commands in the verses that we are looking at today.

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¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray constantly, ¹⁸ give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus

The verses from our passage today are really ones that focus on our Creator, the commands contained in them are actions that bring our focus on God, and really are about us responding to Him in worship.

And all of these actions are God's will for you.

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God's Will For You | 1 Thessa 5:18b

for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus

We know that the Bible, God's word is the guide print for our lives. God has given us the principles, laid out for us to live our lives according to His commands.

You often hear discussed in Christian circles, this concept of God's will. And what the discussion really centers around, is wanting to know God's plans, His desires for us. Sometimes we really want to know specifically what He would like us to do in certain circumstances. We seek God and pray to find His will or desires in different circumstances that we come our way in life. There's different aspects of God's will that we could exam, such things as His sovereign will verses His permissive will, but we could spend the whole sermon just looking in that area, it's very deep subject to try and understand in theology.

Sometimes, if we're being honest, wouldn't be much easier if God just told us what need to. Like if there was a 1st book of Scott, with God's plans for my life. Go work at this job, marry this person, live in this state, which college sport teams to root for <cough asu>, etc.

But here in the later half of verse 18, Paul gives one of those rare moments when God does make it clear, this is what His will or desires for us are.

Paul concludes the verse with the phrase, **for you in Christ Jesus**. Paul uses this phrase through the New Testament dozens of times to refer to those who are believers, who have put their faith in the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross. Paul puts it this way in 2 Cor 5:17 ***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come.***

Those who have put their faith in Jesus are new creation, and God has desires, His preferred will for those who have put their faith in Jesus to follow. Paul states that ***this is God's will for you.*** The word for will comes from the Greek word Thelema (θέλημά- 2309²). It was the same word Paul used in 1 Thess 4:3, when He stated it is God's will for your sanctification. Paul connects this phrase God's will for us to the 2 preceding verses and the beginning of verse 18. There are three simple

² [Greek Concordance: θέλημά \(thelēma\) -- 41 Occurrences \(biblehub.com\)](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/2309.htm)

commands to understand, but that can be incredible hard to live out, that Paul tells us are God's desires for us to follow.

It may even seem that the following these commands is hard, impossible. However understanding the specifics behind the commands help to make this possible.

The first command that God gives us through the pen of Paul is to be

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Commands to worship -

Always Rejoicing | 1 Thessa 5:16

Rejoice always,

In the Greek the way this verse is constructed has some huge implications for emphasis of this point. Here's your Greek lesson for the day. In the koine Greek, the sentence construction is not as linear as ours is in the English. With our sentence construction we always have a subject and a verb, and the construction follows that pattern³. In Greek, the more important part of the sentence, of the emphasis of the sentence is put first.

We see this verse, in most English translations, its translated as Rejoice Always, but in the Greek the words are flipped, it actually reads always rejoice. The emphasis is not just on rejoicing, but more importantly on how often we are to be doing it or the frequency with which we are to be rejoicing. In this case Paul says it clearly – we are to be always rejoicing. The verb for rejoicing is an imperative verb, which means of for us this is command, not a suggestion.

We need to be rejoicing always. Sometimes its hard to rejoice, to have joy it seems. Life is chaotic, we are busy, and yet we are commanded to have joy, this is God's will for us. Maybe it be helpful to unpack what rejoicing looks like from a biblical perspective.

The word for rejoice means to be glad (χαίρω- **chairó 5463 : to rejoice, be glad**) , be its literally meaning from the Greek construction carries this idea *of properly, to*

³ [Basic English sentence structure | Wordy](#)

*delight in God's grace ("rejoice") – literally, to experience God's grace (favor), be conscious (glad) for His grace.*⁴

This definition helps us to frame rejoicing and joy in a different light. Its easy to be glad when good things are coming our way, but when that changes so can to our disposition. But when we focus our rejoicing not on the circumstances in which we find ourself, but rather to be delighting in God's grace, to see Him as the focus, it becomes much easier then to rejoice.

Happiness, the emotional state is determined by our mood, is life going great for us. If not, we are not happy. There is a difference between happiness and joy. Our joy in not found in our circumstances because then its dependent on if we are happy or not, but instead when we bring our focus back to God, we can be rejoicing in all circumstances, no matter if we things are going awesome for us, or not.

What did you just say rejoice when things are going bad – yes I did.

There are so many different examples of people in Scripture who have had their world fall out from around them and they respond to devastating circumstances with joy.

Think about the example provided by the church itself in Thessalonica. They were a young church, but they have suffered greatly for putting their faith in Jesus. *Later, when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he said they “welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering” (1:6), and that he brought the gospel to them “in the face of strong opposition” (2:2)*⁵ Sometimes it was by their very neighbors who were bringing the persecution. 1 Thess 2:14 tells us that - ***since you have also suffered the same things from people of your own country.*** And yet in the midst of this suffering for Jesus, Paul commends them for enduring these things, back in 1Thessa 1:3 for this. They've gone through all these things and he tells them to now rejoice. If anyone had a right to be made and not be happy, it would be them. But instead they are told to rejoice.

⁴ [Strong's Greek: 5463. χαίρω \(chairó\) -- to rejoice, be glad \(biblehub.com\)](#)

⁵ [Northern Seminary | Impossible Goals? – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#)

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This is literally living out James 1:2-3. Here James writes ***Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.***

Paul commended this group for their endurance, because of the testing of the faith they had endured by their neighbors.

This wasn't something that Paul just preached but was also something that Paul lived out in his own life. In Acts 16, while on the second missionary journey, Paul and his mission team come into a town where they preaching. The town wasn't too happy about the teaching Paul was giving, it was going to affect their profit margin. Some of the merchants seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the town officials. The town magistrate ordered them stripped and to be beaten with rods. Ouch!. Then they were put in jail. It was a rough day. And they were still awake at night Luke records. Humanly speaking, we probably would have been trying to sleep, or at the least rest in the most comfortable position possible after that kind of circumstance.

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Not Paul and Silas – Luke records (Acts 16:25) ***Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*** They were just beaten and put in jail, and yet they were singing, they were rejoicing. This is because their joy was not coming from their circumstances, but in knowing who their creator was.

So the question becomes, how do we rejoice always? What does that look like in our context.

First, think back to the definition of rejoicing, or to be glad in the graces that God has lavished on us. There many verses that speak to the spiritual blessings that we have because of the grace shown to us by God. The first chapter of Ephesians gives us some. Eph 1:3-14. He choose us before the world was created, He adopted us into His family. We have forgiveness of sins, and we have an inheritance. Paul goes on more. There is much to rejoice in that isn't dependent on our circumstances and how we are feeling.

Second we need to yield to the Holy Spirits influence in our lives. We need to walk in the Spirit as Paul would say. (Gal 5:22). One of the Fruit of the Spirit is Joy!

Walking by the Spirit is yielding daily to the Spirit influence in our live and choosing to rely on Him in all situations.

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This is important for us, is a command, part of the will of God for us. That's why Paul says in Phil 4:4 ***Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice***

The next verse 17, Paul moves to the second command found in this group of three and It refers to our prayer life.

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Constantly in Prayer | 1 Thessa 5:17

pray constantly

We are told to constantly pray. Again in the Greek construction, the words are flipped from the way they are translated into English. The emphasis on the word constantly, with it found at the beginning of the verse and the word for prayer. Constantly in the Greek (ἀδιαλείπτως – 89⁶)- *carries this idea of properly, nothing left between, i.e. without any unnecessary interval (time-gap)*⁷.

*It is helpful to know that the word translated “without ceasing” was used of a hacking cough. A person with a bad cough doesn't cough continuously, but often and repeatedly. It was also used of repeated military attacks. An army would attack a city but not succeed. They would regroup and attack over and over until they won the victory.*⁸

The idea is that prayer is constant. Not that our life is marked by perpetual kneeling but rather as a way of life marked by a constant attitude of prayer.⁹

The next word is the short two word verse is pray. The word Paul uses here is the common word for prayer found through out the New Testament (προσεύχομαι- *proseuchomai*). It means to pray but actually is a compound word

⁶ [Strong's Greek: 89. ἀδιαλείπτως \(adialeiptós\) -- incessantly \(biblehub.com\)](#)

⁷ [Strong's Greek: 89. ἀδιαλείπτως \(adialeiptós\) -- incessantly \(biblehub.com\)](#)

⁸ [Lesson 20: Three Impossible Commands \(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18\) | Bible.org](#)

⁹ John MacAuthor Commentary – Thessalonians pg 187

that carries the idea of ¹⁰ to face towards a direction/someone and to speak out loud. It means bring our life before God. It encompasses all aspects of prayer – submission, confession, adoration, thanksgiving, intercession, etc. Its bring all aspects of our life to God.

So where to we start? How can we develop a habit of prayer without ceasing.

The first thing is that we need to make it a priority. Something that is a priority must be something that is done with intention. It shouldn't be something that we only do when we sit down for meals and when we are about to fall asleep at night. Those a great places to start if you don't. But that's just a beginning not an ending point.

Get up in the morning and start your day by reading the Bible. As part of this time, spend some moments in prayer for what you just read. Ask God to help you apply it to your life.

As your going through out the day, there are plenty of moments where we can just pause and pray. If you get busy and its just not on your radar. We have these cool devices that you can set in reminders. Literally schedule reminders to yourself to pray through out the day until you get in the habit that you don't need them.

If your struggling with the content of what to put into your prayers. Do a study on prayer in the New Testament. There is so much given on how to pray, the word for prayer is used 86 times!

Jesus himself offers us the Lords Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount as a model guide for prayer (Matthew 6:9-14)

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Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. ¹⁴ "For if you forgive

¹⁰ Strong's Greek: 4336. προσεύχομαι (proseuchomai) -- to pray (biblehub.com) prós, "towards, exchange" and 2172/euxomai, "to wish, pray") – properly, to exchange wishes; pray – literally, to interact with the Lord by switching human wishes (ideas) for His wishes as He imparts faith ("divine persuasion)

others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. ¹⁵ But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

In here we can see many things that Jesus tells us are of concern to the Father. We need to be seeking God's will, that His Kingdom will come. We can spend time confession for the sins that we've committed against God and against other people. We all have needs – God wants to know them. That's why He tells us to cast our cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7).

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Paul offers some thoughts on the content of prayer as well in a letter that he wrote to Timothy. In 1 Tim 2:1-2 he tells Timothy ***First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.***

Paul gives us the different forms of prayer there in verse 1. He tells us that we should be making petitions (requests), intercessions for all people. Even thanks is to be given for everyone. He then turns towards a specific group of people to be praying for. For kings and those in authority. We have many different levels of authority in our lives. And we are called to be in prayer for them. The base level includes those we interact with on a daily basis, our bosses at work, teachers at school. The list extends up to national level authorities, including the one fully in charge, the king. In the case of Paul, the Roman emperor, a guy named Nero, who wasn't a particularly nice guy. We are called to pray for a leader, no matter who or what party is in power in the White House and Congress.

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James (the half brother of Jesus) gives us some thoughts in the last chapter of his book. James 5:13-20

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises

James makes it clear, if you're not doing great and suffering, then pray. If life is going great, then sing praises, a form of worship, and that includes prayer as well.

Pray always.

The point of all of this is, take all aspects of our life to God in prayer in a constant process.

Paul concludes these set of three commands with one final one focused on being thankful.

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Thankful in All Circumstances | 1 Thessa 5:18a

give thanks in everything;

With changing a bit, the way this verse is constructed in the Greek is the same as the other 2, with the first word being not the command to be thankful, but with the frequency being the focus. Very simply the Greek here says in all (**pas: all, every**)¹¹, In all of life's circumstances this command applies.

We are to give thanks or to be thankful. Thankfulness means that we (εὐχαριστέω- **eucharisteó: to be thankful**¹²) *properly, acknowledging that "God's grace works well," i.e. for our eternal gain and His glory; to give thanks – literally, "thankful for God's good grace."*

In Eph 5:20 Paul puts it this way - ***giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,***

Give thanks for God's grace in all circumstances. That's an easy thing to do when our life is going great, it's a whole lot harder to do when life is turned up side down. But this goes back to the very concept we talked about at the beginning of the sermon. There are dichotomies that we find ourselves in quite often. What we are called to do, and what we feel like doing. We may not feel like be thankful in the moment because we are focusing our the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

I'm willing to be if Paul and Silas has just been focused on the situation that they had found themselves in Acts 16, after they had been beaten and then thrown in

¹¹ [Strong's Greek: 3956. πᾶς \(pas\) -- all, every \(biblehub.com\)](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/3956.htm)

3956 /pás ("each, every") means "all" in the sense of "each (every) part that applies." The emphasis of the total picture then is on "one piece at a time." 365 (ananeóō) then focuses on the *part(s)* making up the whole – viewing the whole *in terms of the individual parts*.

¹² [Strong's Greek: 2168. εὐχαριστέω \(eucharisteó\) -- to be thankful \(biblehub.com\)](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/2168.htm)

jail. It would have been incredible hard to be thankful for that moment, and to want to sing praises to God. And yet they did that, why? Because they moved their focus of their circumstance and back to God. When making that shift, they were able to find something to praise God for even while literally in jail.

One of my favorite characters from the Old Testament is Joseph. We actually just started studying Him in with the Students this past weekend. He's narrative is found in the very first book of the OT, in Genesis, chapters 37-50. In the very first chapter we meet him, we find that his brothers hate him. Hate him to the point that they want to murder him. As far as life goes, that's not some super great circumstances to find yourself in. By the end of the chapter 37, the brothers have backed down from wanting to murder him, to just instead selling him for measly some of silver. He is sold into slavery, separated from everything he has known and shipped to a foreign country. His life is radically altered. Joseph's thought process isn't recorded here. I wonder what he was thinking? But we find out decades later he finds away to praise God and show thankfulness for this terrible act inflicted on him by this brothers. He's talking to his brothers in the last days of his life and says

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¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people. (Genesis 50:19-20)

If we focus on just the circumstances of life, we can find many things to grumble and complain about. We need to shift out focus back to God.

It can be challenging to be thankful for the situations and circumstances that life can bring us at times, but we can still find ways to be thankful by understanding that God is divinely sovereign over it all. He is there with us through the good, the bad, and the ugly circumstances of life. Nothing can separate from God's love (Romans 8:39).

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Apply It...

We've covered a lot this morning in some very short verses. What does it look like for us to try and live this out, to apply it to our lives?

Seek to God's Will – remember the very end of verse 18? Paul tells us that these commands (Rejoice Always, Constantly Pray, and Give Thanks Always) are God's will for us. Are you seeking to do God's will for your life. Living out these commands is really an act of worship towards God. We are responding to everything that He has done for us.

-We are to rejoice always – recall joy is found not in our circumstances but in the goodness and grace of God.

-We are to pray always – in all things there is something we can thank God for.

Those of us whose mothers are still living – have you prayed for her lately?

-Give Thanks – in all circumstances there is something that we can be thankful for. Are you thankful for the Mother that God has given you?

Examine Your Heart/Your Motivations – Is hard to want to be joyful? Have you thought about why? Is hard to be thankful? Have you asked God to help you figure out why

There could be any number of reasons that get us off of worship of God.

-Forgetfulness of who He is – or maybe we don't know Him that well

-Self focus – Is our focus on ourselves and our circumstances or is it on Him?

-I don't feel like it – There are quite a few times we feel that. But recall this goes back to our focus again on our circumstances or on who our Eternal Creator and sustainer are.