

**“How To Accomplish the Impossible in 3 short Words”**

Scripture:

*1 Thessalonians 5.16-18* to “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God *in Christ Jesus* for you.”

- “*Rejoice always...*”
- “*pray without ceasing*”
- “*give thanks in all circumstances*”

These three short verses, tucked at the end of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, are packed with rich theological meaning. They present a challenge for believers: how can we, as Christians, live lives marked by continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving? These are not just ideals; they are commands that are deeply connected to God's will for our lives.

**THE LANGUAGE:** <https://wiki.logos.com/Pronunciation>

### 1. "Rejoice Always" (v. 16)

**Greek Word:** *Chairo* (χαίρω)

- The verb *chairo* is in the **present imperative**, which means it's a command to be continually practiced. It's not just about experiencing happiness in good times, but a deeper, ongoing attitude of joy that transcends circumstances.
- *Chairo* is a joyful response to God's grace and a recognition of His goodness. It is not based on external circumstances but on the unchanging reality of God's presence and promises.

### 2. "Pray Without Ceasing" (v. 17)

**Greek Word:** *Adialeiptos* (ἀδιαλείπτως)

- The word *Adialeiptos* is another present imperative verb, emphasizing continuous, habitual action. It means to pray without interruption or without ceasing, but it doesn't necessarily mean a literal, 24/7 prayer time. Rather, it describes a life that is marked by an ongoing, unbroken attitude of communion with God.
- In the Jewish tradition, there were set times for prayer, but Paul encourages a life where prayer is woven into the fabric of everyday life — not just formal times of petition but an ongoing conversation with God throughout our day.

### 3. "Give Thanks in All Circumstances" (v. 18)

**Greek Word:** *Eucharisteo* (εὐχαριστέω)

- The word *eucharisteo* is also in the present tense, indicating a continual action. It means to express gratitude or give thanks, often in response to something good. However, Paul calls us to give thanks in *all* circumstances, not just the easy or joyful ones.
- The Greek phrase "in all circumstances" suggests that gratitude should be our constant response, regardless of what life throws our way. This is a radical command that invites believers to trust in God's sovereignty, even in suffering.

### **Is This Possible to Accomplish? And How?**

Paul's commands in verses 16-18 are undeniably challenging. Rejoicing always, praying continuously, and giving thanks in all circumstances seem almost impossible. So, **how** can we live this out?

#### 1. **Dependence on the Holy Spirit:**

- These commands are not meant to be accomplished in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers us to live in such a way. We can't manufacture joy, prayer, or gratitude on our own. It's the Spirit's work within us that makes this possible (Romans 8:26).

#### 2. **Understanding God's Will:**

- Paul says that this lifestyle is *God's will for us in Christ Jesus*. This means that these commands are not arbitrary; they are deeply connected to God's purpose for our lives. When we align ourselves with His will, He equips us to live in obedience.

#### 3. **Eternal Perspective:**

- We can rejoice always because we know that our ultimate hope is in Christ, who has secured our eternal future. We can give thanks in all circumstances because we trust that God is working for our good, even when we don't understand His plan in the moment (Romans 8:28).

#### 4. **A Life of Worship:**

- Each of these commands—rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks—are acts of worship. They are responses to God's love, and as we grow in our relationship with Him, these responses become more natural. Worshiping God, even in suffering, reorients our hearts and minds to His greater purposes.

### **Study Questions:**

1. How easy or hard, possible or impossible, do you find Paul's instruction in *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18* to "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

2. Which of the three rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, or giving thanks in all circumstances do you find the easiest? Which is the hardest for you?
3. Where is the balance between not denying our feelings and yet not living by feelings, but by faith? For example, see *Psalm 44*.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2044&version=ESV>

## **IN CHRIST:**

### **1. John 14:20**

*"In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."*

- Jesus speaks of the intimate relationship between Himself, the Father, and believers, indicating that believers are spiritually united with Christ.

### **2. Romans 8:1**

*"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

- Being "in Christ" means there is no condemnation for believers because they are united with Him in His life and work.

### **3. Romans 6:3-4**

*"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*

- Baptism into Christ symbolizes identification with His death, burial, and resurrection, signifying new life in Christ.

### **4. 2 Corinthians 5:17**

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."*

- Being "in Christ" means transformation—believers are made new, with a new identity and new purpose.

### **5. Ephesians 1:3-4**

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."*

- Believers are chosen "in Christ" before the foundation of the world and receive every spiritual blessing.

## **6. Philippians 3:9**

*"And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."*

- "In Christ" means finding righteousness not through our own works but through faith in Him.

## **7. Colossians 3:3**

*"For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*

- Believers' lives are "hidden with Christ" in God, emphasizing their security and spiritual identity in Him.

## **8. Galatians 2:20**

*"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

- The concept of being "in Christ" includes the believer's identification with Christ's death and His ongoing life within the believer.

## **9. 1 Corinthians 1:30**

*"And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption."*

- Christ is the source of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption for those who are "in Him."

## **10. Romans 12:5**

*"So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."*

- Believers are not only in Christ individually but are also part of the body of Christ, united with one another.

## **11. 2 Timothy 2:10**

*"Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."*

- Salvation is found in Christ, and all of God's promises are realized "in Him."

## **12. 1 Peter 5:10**

*"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."*

- The believer's calling to eternal glory is realized "in Christ," and God's work in them will establish them in Him.