

“Give thanks in all circumstances”

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

1 Thessalonians 5:17,18



Introduction:

To round off this series of three exhortations, Paul reminds the Thessalonians, not just to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, but also to **give thanks in all circumstances**. As shared on Sunday, it is not **for** all circumstances, but **in** all circumstances. It's not an easy ask, especially when we are in the middle of difficulties.

Thanksgiving is an essential part to being in the centre of God's will for our lives. Let's investigate what benefit might we received from practicing thanksgiving in every circumstance, and how might that happen.

Ice Breaker: As parents, we teach our kids to say “thank you”. Why do you think we do this?

Share:

- Thankfulness is a constant theme of Paul in his letters & in the writings of others. Why do you think he focuses on this essential element to knowing God's will? (read Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 1:12; 2:7; 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:4; Hebrews 3:15)
- John Piper believes that ... “thankfulness is an essential guardian of the soul”. (Ready Colossians 4:2) How might a thankful attitude “guard” our soul?
- What is the opposite of being thankful? How might this damage our soul?
- Read Romans 1:21. What are the implications of not living a thankful life? What is the context here, and why is thanksgiving important?
- Read Ephesians 5:4. How might thankfulness guard our relationships and daily interactions with other people?
- As a group, come up with 5 things that can come from an unthankful heart (more if you can think of them). Now think up 5 (or more) ways that we can be thankful to counteract those attitudes.
- Write a list of 10 things that you are thankful for. Turn them into prayers.

Bottom Line:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 presents a challenge to all of us who want to live in the centre of God's will, to daily conduct ourselves in the way God would have us live. As a final point of sharing, ask each other which of the three verses - **Rejoice always; pray without ceasing, be thankful in all circumstances** - did you find the most helpful or the most challenging. Pray with each other in regard to which one you would like to grow in, in particular (maybe all 3!).

Now What?

- Memorise “...give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18a NIV) & revise the other verses.
- Try and begin each morning, before you even get up, with rejoicing, prayer, and thanking God for the day ahead.