

Grow and Discern Resource Sheet

Series: *Formed for the Future, Faithful for Now*

Date: 8/3/25 **Title:** Rejoice, Pray, and Be Thankful “True Holy Living” **Text:** 1 Thess 5:16-18

We all our trying to figure out the simplest ways to live our lives as Christians. In this passage, Paul sums up to the Church of Thessalonica what the Christian life should know for. Paul gives the church three simple traits that marks that Christian life. After pouring out his deep affections for the church, he wanted to ensure they knew how to live out their faith clearly and simply.

Key Sermon Points

Introduction

Throughout the letter, Paul demonstrates to the church the life of joy, prayer, and thankfulness:

- **Paul Thanks for them & constantly prays for them & lets them know who they are in God (1:2&4)**
- **Paul identifies where they have been placed & he constantly thanks God for them, and they bring him much joy (2:12-13 & 19).**
- **Paul thanks God again for them, prays earnestly, and they bring him Joy (3:7-10)**
- **Paul reminds them that they have Holy Spirit (4:8)**
- **Paul tells them they are appointed for salvation, not wrath (5:9)**

1. Rejoice (5:16)

Firstly, to rejoice or to have joy is not any worldly happiness. In the bible, “rejoice” often signifies deep, heartfelt joy and gladness, going beyond simple happiness. Read Psalm 16:7-11, joy arises from spiritual and divine truths of Christ. It is both a command and a natural response to God’s goodness and faithfulness. Joy is rooted in Christ, not in external circumstances, which is linked to hope and eternal life. Additionally, to rejoice or have joy is more than an emotion. It is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Therefore, it is more like a character trait. In essence, to rejoice or have joy suggests a theological understanding that it is discovered in our relationship with Christ through faith.

2. Prayer (5:17)

Secondly, our first instinct is to legalize prayer time. With this thought, we misplace the relational aspect of us and God in Christ. In his book “Hearing God”, Dallas Willard emphasizes that prayer is a fundamental aspect of developing a conversational relationship with God. Willard defines prayer as “honest exchange between people who are doing things together”. This implies a dynamic, two-way interaction, not just a one-sided presentation of requests. It involves sharing thoughts, fears, and desires and being open to God’s guidance and correction. Prayer is about deepening our relationship with God. We should find any every opportunity to pray for others and ourselves. Not because it is the Christian thing to do, but because it’s part of our relationship.

3. Be Thankful in all Circumstances (5:18)

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I know this one can be a difficult for all. God calls us to be thankful because he has chosen us. Romans 8:28, “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose”. Again, we should look for moments to be thankful for what is going on in our lives because no matter what God is with us and working. Look at Hebrews 12:28, “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe,. For our God is a consuming fire”. We are in the kingdom of God, which cannot be shaken. Thus, whatever is going on around us is being used for our good!

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between happiness and rejoicing? Why does God calls us to rejoice always?
2. How is our prayer life? Based on the definition of prayer used, how can we strengthen our prayer life?
3. How can we produce a heart of Gratitude? Why is this important?