

“Constant Joy, Prayer, and Thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

Introduction

The Preceding Context of Congregational Love and Peace (verses 12–15)

Though continuing a theme of maintaining peace, the emphasis shifts from congregational peace to the inward peace of individual Christians. Compare Philippians 4:2–7.

Big Idea: It is always God’s will for Christians to rejoice, pray, and give thanks.

- I. Always rejoice.
 - a. This command assumes that the basis for Christian joy is unshakeable.

1 Peter 1:3–9
 - b. This command reveals that a joyful response is always possible.

2 Corinthians 6:3–10; Luke 6:20–23
 - c. This command denies that the Christian life is drudgery.

Romans 14:17
- II. Always pray.
 - a. This command assumes that we always have bold access to God’s throne.

Hebrews 4:14–16
 - b. This command assumes that we always have great need of God’s aid.

Psalm 105:4
 - c. This command implies that we must persist in faith that God will answer.

Luke 11:9–13; 18:1–8; James 5:16b–18
 - d. This command implies that we must resist distractions from prayer.

Ephesians 5:15–17

e. This command demands that we always maintain a godly sobriety.

1 Peter 1:13–16; 2:11; 3:7; 4:1–7; James 4:1–3; Psalm 66:16–20

III. Always give thanks.

Prayer naturally leads to and belongs with thanksgiving. (Colossians 4:2)

a. This command assumes that God’s goodness is active in each of our circumstances.

Romans 8:28–29; Ephesians 5:18–20

b. This command implies that we must notice God’s blessings.

Psalm 103:1–5

c. This command requires that we credit God for every good thing.

James 1:17

Concluding Reminders

1) Our justification in Jesus frees us from the guilt of our failures here.

Romans 4:4–8

2) Jesus’ example to us provides our pattern to imitate in joy, prayer, and thanksgiving.

Luke 3:21–22

5:15–16

6:12–13

9:18, 28–29

11:1; 10:21–22

3) Jesus’ gift of the Holy Spirit empowers us to bear this fruit more and more.

1 Thessalonians 1:6–7; Galatians 5:22–23; Ephesians 6:17–20; Jude 20–21; Zechariah 12:10; 13:1; Titus 3:4–7