

April 28, 2026



worldwide
day of prayer

**Rejoice,
pray,
and
give thanks**

Devotion of the day

— campus crusade for christ international —

Rejoice -
Pray -
Give Thanks

1 Thess 5:16-18

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Understanding the call: God's will for everyday life

When Paul writes to the Thessalonian church, he closes his letter with brief but powerful instructions. These believers were not living in comfort, they were facing social pressure, uncertainty, and suffering. Paul summarizes God's will for them in three short commands: rejoice, pray and give thanks. This is important. Paul doesn't describe God's will as a hidden plan that must be discovered. Instead, he describes a posture that must be lived. God's will is not first about location, career, or circumstance. It is about the formation of the heart in Christ.

These commands are continuous:

- Rejoice **always**
- Pray **continually**
- Give thanks **in all circumstances**



This language removes excuses. Even when we are overwhelmed by emotions we are called to hold tight to our anchor who is Christ. He is the only unchangeable one and we could bring our full range of emotions to stabilize it.

But how is this possible?

How can believers rejoice, pray, and give thanks in the midst of pressure and uncertainty? The answer unfolds when we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. By listening to the wider testimony of the Bible, we discover that God Himself provides the foundation for these commands and shows us how they are lived out in the life of faith.

HEBREWS 6: 19

"WE HAVE THIS HOPE AS AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL, FIRM AND SECURE. IT ENTERS THE INNER SANCTUARY BEHIND THE CURTAIN,"

Rejoice always: Joy rooted in remembrance

Joy in Scripture is not superficial happiness. It is confidence in God's character. Psalm 77 gives us insight into how this joy is sustained.

The psalmist begins in distress, overwhelmed and questioning. He makes a decisive shift:

"I will remember the deeds of the LORD... I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds."

Here joy begins as a choice before it becomes a feeling.

The psalmist recalls:

- **God's holiness**
- **God's uniqueness**
- **God's miracles**
- **God's power displayed among the people**

Rejoicing becomes possible when remembering becomes deliberate. When we dwell only on present problems, joy diminishes. When we rehearse God's faithfulness, joy is renewed.

Pray Continually: Living as a house of prayer

Isaiah 56:7-8

Paul's second instruction moves from inward posture to ongoing relationship: pray continually.

God's people are meant to be:

- A dwelling place of communion with Him
- A community centered around prayer
- A welcoming gathering for all nations

Isaiah 56 reveals the heart of God behind this command. The Lord declares, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." This statement reveals both identity and mission.

Prayer is not meant to be confined to religious moments. It is the atmosphere of dependence in which believers live. To pray continually means maintaining awareness of God's presence throughout daily life, at work, in conversation, in decision-making, in suffering.

Isaiah also reminds us that God is gathering people. Prayer aligns us with this gathering work. It expands our hearts beyond personal needs toward God's global purposes.

Give thanks in all circumstances: Trust in action

The final instruction completes the pattern: give thanks in all circumstances. Paul does not say “for all circumstances,” but “in” them. This distinction protects us from misunderstanding. Scripture does not glorify suffering. Instead, it calls us to trust God within it.

Gratitude flows from theological conviction:



If these truths are stable, then thanksgiving becomes possible even before outcomes change.

Gratitude is an act of faith. It declares that God is present and active, even when His work is not yet visible.

The unified life: Joy, Prayer, and Gratitude in Christ



These three commands are not separate virtues, they are interconnected movements of Christ-centered life.

- Remembrance fuels rejoicing
- Prayer sustains relationship
- Gratitude expresses trust

All of this is possible “in Christ Jesus.” Outside of Him, these commands feel unrealistic. In Him they become transformative. Christ secures our identity, gives us access to the Father, and assures us that suffering does not have the final word.

A life shaped by these truths becomes steady rather than reactive. It does not deny hardship, but it refuses to be defined by it. It remembers. It prays. It gives thanks.

This is not merely instruction for a moment. It is a lifelong formation. As we rejoice in God’s character, dwell in His presence, and trust His purposes , we live out His will in practical, daily faithfulness.

Unified Application: Living the formed life

If this is God's will in Christ Jesus, then these truths above must move from understanding to practice. A life of rejoicing, prayer, and gratitude does not happen accidentally, it is cultivated intentionally.

1

We cultivate remembrance.

We regularly recall what God has done in Scripture, in history, and in our own lives. Keeping record of answered prayers, sharing testimonies, and meditating on God's faithfulness strengthen joy at its root.

2

We develop a rhythm of continual prayer.

This means inviting God into ordinary moments, work, conversations, decisions, and struggles. Short prayers throughout the day build awareness of His presence. Corporate prayer strengthens our identity as a house of prayer and aligns us with God's gathering mission.

3

We practice deliberate gratitude.

At the end of each day, we can name specific reasons to thank God. In difficult seasons, we thank Him for His sustaining grace rather than waiting for circumstances to improve. Gratitude protects the heart from complaint and nurtures trust.

When remembrance shapes our thinking, prayer shapes our relationship, and gratitude shapes our response, stability grows within us. We become less reactive to circumstances and more rooted in Christ.

This is God's will, not merely that we survive the year, but that we be formed into a people who rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances.

And in Christ Jesus, this formed life is not only commanded. It is made possible.