

## Choosing To Be Thankful

### I Thessalonians 5:18

In looking at this verse, Michael Kelley who works for Lifeway Christian Resources, wrote, *“Often we think of joy and gratitude in the realm of feelings. Either we feel joyful or thankful, or we don't. When we feel it, we do it.”*

If we are thankful only when we feel like it, is it from our heart or just emotions in the moment?

We tell our children to be thankful for their food, clothes, bed, house, etc. and Paul tells us it is the will of God to be thankful in everything (18).

Can we make a choice to be thankful even when we do not feel like it?

Let's look at this verse:

#### I. **“In everything give thanks” (18a)**

How strange that Paul would say *“In everything...”* How can this be?

##### 1. *“for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (18)*

If it is the will of God, then it is right and it is profitable for our lives, and it will help fulfill the purposes of God in our lives.

If some people would realize it is God's will and they would begin to give thanks every day, it would change their lives helping them to see life a different way.

The words *“in Christ Jesus”* mean this is something a believer/follower of Jesus Christ can do through Jesus' help. Don't expect your lost co-workers to do this.

We do somethings because we feel like it, other things because we understand it is right whether we feel like it or not.

**Job** lost all of his children, his possessions, and most of his servants. Do you think he felt like worshipping God?

No. But beyond his feelings he knew it was right and he still wanted to. He did not worship because everything was good around him but because God was worthy of praise even though things were bad.

It is the will of God that “in everything [we] give thanks.”

Another reason we can give thanks in everything is:

##### 2. **God is always at work in our situations.**

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* (Romans 8:28)

Some of the words in this verse will help us to see important truths:

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

\* All things are not good but God can work them together for good for those who love Him according to His purposes, not ours.

Read illustration in *Jacob's life* by John Phillips, (Exploring Romans, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, 1969, p.134)

There is something God is teaching us through Paul's writings. Look at this comparison between this passage in I Thessalonians 5 and Philippians 4:

I Thess. 5:16-23

1. **Rejoice** always (16)
2. **Pray** without ceasing (17)
3. Give **thanks** (18)
4. The God of **peace** Himself (23)

Philippians 4:4-7

1. **Rejoice** in the Lord always (4)
2. In everything by **prayer** (6)
3. With **thanksgiving** (6)
4. And the **peace** of God... (7)

Which one of these is missing or lacking in your life?

If we will **rejoice, pray, and give thanks**, the **God of peace** will work in our lives.

## BRINGING IT HOME:

Are you going through hard times? Do you choose to give thanks to God beyond your feelings?

Are you trusting Him to work through these hard times according to His purposes in your life?

Are you giving thanks to God in the good times as well, not forgetting the Giver of all your blessings?

The Lord instructs us today, *"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*