

Rejoicing, Praying and God's Will

We should assume that a Christian has a deep desire to seek the will of God (if not, we should assume that the moniker "Christian" needs some serious investigation). Once a follower of Christ is developing a maturing desire to follow God's will in his or her daily life, something precious happens: fulfilling that desire to please God becomes wonderfully pleasing to the Christian's soul!

When the Holy Spirit gave Paul the words of the first Thessalonian letter, He chose to end with some amazing words – three verses that are very short yet are all-encompassing,

¹⁶ Rejoice always;

¹⁷ pray without ceasing;

¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

v. 16 - Rejoice when and how often? "Always!"

v. 17 - Pray when and how often? "Always!"

v. 18 - In how many things give thanks? "In everything!"

I find it truly amazing how all-encompassing this triplet truly is. But we should all recognize the marvelous connection interwoven herein. Don't miss that depth of the interplay between giving thanks, praying and rejoicing!

"But my lot in life if not very conducive to praying," one might assert. But that is part of the point here – "in everything give thanks!" When we give thanks only in the wonderful times, we are ignoring that call. When we give thanks in everything and pray without ceasing, then and only then do we experience the rejoicing! When, and only when life is marked by giving thanks and daily life is steeped in prayer do we partake of the type and the depth of rejoicing that God has planned for those who follow Him in this whole process.

Paul then finishes the letter with a few other admonitions that put the finishing touches on our sanctification and Christians' interaction. Step up to the plate and find the depth of rejoicing that God has planned for you!

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