



Thursday, June 2, 2022 ▫ Read 1Thessalonians 5:16–22

Questions from the Scripture text: What ought believers to do always (v16)? What without stopping (v17)? In how many things do what (v18)? Why? What does v19 say not to do? What does v20 say not to do? What are believers to do with all things (v21a)? So they can do what with which things (v21b)? And what with which other things (v22)?

Having given final instructions about loving one another (v12–15), what are the apostolic team’s final instructions about loving the Lord? 1Thessalonians 5:16–22 looks forward to the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that loving the Lord in everyday life should be continually joyous, obedient, and holy.

As the apostolic letter to the Thessalonian church comes to its conclusion, the Spirit gives us a flurry of commands, with even more rapidity than what we saw in vv12–15. Those instructions dealt with loving interaction with our fellow members. Now these deal with loving interaction with the Lord. It’s a sort of reverse-order treatment of the two great commandments. In the verses before us now, we have some rapid instructions to shape a life in which we love the Lord our God with all our heart.

What is “God’s will for my life” (v18b)? To obey His instructions. And **what happy instructions they are!**

Literally happy. “Rejoice always” (v16). This sounds a lot like Philippians 4:4’s “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Abbreviating it to “rejoice always” doesn’t change the meaning much. The only cause for joy that cannot be interrupted is the Lord Himself. Joy is the second-listed aspect of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22. The perpetually joyless “Christian” isn’t just spiritually unwell. He’s disobedient. The source of his joy is in the wrong place.

Pray unceasingly (v17). Christians are to be slow to speak with one another. But we are never to stop speaking to God. A believer who is continually mindful of his God and Savior will not only have continual cause for joy, but also continual recourse to God in prayer. His God is always near to hear his cries, praises, confession, intercession, etc. **Whatever the results of praying seem to have been, the believer never gives up, because God is still there, and God is still his Savior.**

Give thanks in everything (v18). Is God working all things according to the counsel of His will (cf. Eph 1:11)? Is the counsel of that will to work all things together for good to those who love God [because they have been] called according to His purpose (cf. Rom 8:28)? Then there is no situation in the believer’s life in which he is not able to give thanks. But this is a command. There is no situation in the believer’s life in which he is not *commanded* to give thanks. **To be unthankful would be to be unmindful of God.** It’s a violation of the first commandment and the kind of willful ignoring of God against which the wrath of God is revealed (cf. Rom 1:18, 21).

What else are we to obey? Whatever God says. **Every Word of Scripture must be taken seriously** (v20). Treating something that the Spirit says as unimportant is to quench Him (v19). Instead, we should get to know our Bibles so well, and take the preaching of the Word so seriously, that by Holy Spirit prophecy we are literally able to test everything in our lives (v21a). God defines what is good and evil, and **we must learn how to “test” things by His Word.** We are to do this not only so that we can understand correctly, but **so that we can live correctly.** The point of being able to identify what is good is so that we can hold fast to it. The point of being able to identify what is evil is so that we can abstain from it.

Yes, **the Christian life is largely a life of joyously, thankfully interacting with God Himself. But it is also a life of obeying God in our interactions with everything else.**

What sort of experience is it to live constantly before God? How should such a life be lived?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us when our joylessness and thanklessness expose that we are thoughtless of you. Fill our lives with that joy and gratitude that comes from remembering You. And make us measure and respond to all things in accordance with Your Word, for we ask it through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB “What Blessedness” or TPH409 “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

First Thessalonians chapter 5 verses 16 through 22. These are God's words. Rejoice always Pray without ceasing and everything. Give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. They're not. Quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies test all things. Hold fast. What is good abstain from every form of evil?

So far the reading of God's inspired and and Aaron twerd.

So in the previous passage, he had given us, the apostle, I've given us by the spirit, instruction for how to interact with believers who are in a different levels of spiritual maturity and of different character. Strengths and weaknesses, loving our brother as Christ has loved us or loving our neighbor.

As ourself in particularly our neighbor in the church. Who is our brother and then the section before that he had encouraged us to live, not as those who belong to this world. But we belong to the next Not as those who belong to ourselves but who belong to God.

And now he returns to that theme of loving the Lord. Our God, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and the will of God. It turns out is to interact with God. Most of us are many of us. I'm afraid often when we're thinking about what is God's will for my life.

We want to know, what decisions and interactions should I make about or with this world. What choices of vocation or activity, should I have in in this world? That's what we're thinking about often when we say, what is the will of God earlier? He said this is the will of God for you.

Sanctification. He said that earlier in the letter now he says this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you and he's just given three commands that actually have nothing to do. With our circumstances, They are modified by always in verse 16 and without ceasing in verse 17 and in everything in verse 18.

So it actually doesn't matter what your circumstances are. That's actually it ought to be liberating to us because we are often confused about what the best thing is to do. There's a lot easier to figure out what a wrong thing is to do The Bible, forbids, it or a right thing that is to do the Bible commands it.

But then we have that wide array of options of things that are within the commands of God and not prohibited by the law of God. And we have to figure out what the best thing is to do. And we say, we know, what do I do and we don't have a specific instruction for that.

We have to exercise wisdom which is also taught and fed by the Bible and so forth, but God's will for us, primarily has to do with Him, not our circumstances, Whatever the wisest or best thing is to do. There are three things that we should always do one rejoice.

How, how can we, who have been made by God, who redeemed by God, and have fellowship with God? And I are being preserved by God for God, to be eternally blessed in Him. How could we ever stop rejoicing? Well, the answer is easy. You, and I know it because you and I do it continuously.

We're forgetful of him, we're not mindful of him. And so it doesn't say exactly the same thing as Philippians, 4 verse 4, but it means exactly the same thing Rejoice in the Lord. Always, Of course, it's in the Lord. If it's always, it has to be in the Lord.

It's not dependent upon circumstances, it's dependent upon him, and he always is, and he's always there and he's always good and he's always powerful, He's always wise. And so rejoice, rejoice, always, it's one thing that's God's will for me, that corrects me. There are many times where I'm trying to figure out, what's best or why isest.

Right, course of action to take and I grow anxious over it and I need to remember that whatever else is best or wisest. One thing is right for sure. And that is to rejoice happen. The second one of these commands and always interacting with God, always being mindful of him, always loving him acknowledging him knowing him interacting with him, is to pray.

Pray, without ceasing yes. One thing to to let our lack of wisdom and knowledge about what to do. Rob us of joy by being unmindful of God. But when we are mindful of God, not only do we rejoice over the fact that we are His, but then we avail ourselves of the fact that we are.

His as James chapter 1, says, if anyone likes wisdom, let him ask God and let him not doubt as God, not with us as God. Not doing all things for our good. Is it? Not is intention to bring us at last into the fullness of that blessedness, which Christ deserved for us.

Because God loved us so much that He gave Christ to earn it for us. So, the two together, You don't rejoice, because you've got everything, figured out You rejoice because you have God, and then you ask Him for help And you keep asking him for help as long as you are needy, which means you never stop asking him for help because you're always needy.

And so for 17 says, pray without ceasing. But if you're praying to someone who is the himself, the answer to our prayer, and he himself will do, whatever is the necessary or best, and he will give us whatever we need. In order to know him and serve him, then prayer comes with Thanksgiving.

Very similar to Philippians chapter 4, where he goes on from rejoice. Always, let your reasonable in this be known to men because God is at hand. He's there he's with you and then an old thing. Do not be anxious for anything. But in all things by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving, make your request known to God.

God is the kind, the kind of God is the one whom you address, you make requests and and you you give thanks for the fulfillment of the request even as you're making it. And so if we're being continually mindful of God and therefore, the reason for our joy can't be taken away from us nor continually mindful of God and mindful at the same time of our neediness.

And so we pray without ceasing. We should also in everything. Give. Thanks. Not only because God is doing exactly as is needed and as best for us, but he's also giving us to be able to do exactly as we need to do. And so that's the will of God in Christ Jesus, for us, always to be mindful of him.

Well, what does that mean for making our decisions? It means that when we come to God and we're asking for wisdom, we need to remember that. He's already given us. This great treasure trove. This great stockpile of wisdom, do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophecies. Now we think of prophecies as you know, some weirdo that the whole world knows is out of his mind and has got himself.

A few followers whom he and they are addicted to the same drug and are about to commit suicide or get off by the FBI or whatever but that's not what

prophecies means. Prophecies means preaching's. Yes, sometimes, especially in the lead-up to Christ and especially when talking about the final completion of the coming of the kingdom of Christ, or the coming in its fullness.

I guess it's already come but it's already and not yet. Yeah, there are still future things that the Lord tells us, but mostly he tells us about himself who he is and he tells us about what he's doing and what he has done. And he tells us about who we are and what we're like, and what's wrong with us, and what he's done about that, and what he wants us to do and how we're able to do it.

The Bible is full of all of this instruction for us. That's what prophecies are. So and it says, do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophecies. It means don't treat your Bible as if it's of little value. That's what despise means to treat something as small to look down on it.

There's a little value. Says, no, your Bible value, your Bible value the words of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because the words of God, the words of the Spirit in the pages of Scripture, actually enables us to know what to do versus 21 and 22 explain what to do. With these prophecies test all things.

So we're actually supposed to use the Bible to figure out who we are and what we're supposed to be doing. There are things that when we test them by the Bible options that when we test them by the Bible they're good and so he says hold fast. What is good?

You identify something that the Bible teaches you is good like what we're doing now obviously is a good thing. He tells us to have family worship to discuss his word when we write when we lay down and when we rise up for about to lay down. So we're gonna have family worship.

When you find something that the Bible says is good. You cling to it. Don't be a hearer of the word only and not a doer of the word, That's to treat it as small and unimportant as something that is just there to satisfy intellectual curiosity, but it's not just there.

It's to satisfying intellectual curiosity. It's to hold before us. What is good? So that will cling to it, so that we'll do it zeal of life conviction of life. Self-discipline of life is being commanded here, but not just zeal in and of itself, and conviction, and self-discipline in, and of itself.

But zeal to do with the Bible, says conviction about what the Bible says, self-discipline about doing what the Bible says. This is why the Lord has spoken to us the secret things belong to the Lord, our God Deuteronomy 29:29. But the revealed things are for us and for our children, so that we may do them.

And then there are a bunch of things that are revealed the in orders that we would know things that are evil. There are things that the Bible. Absolutely forbids. There are things that the Bible teaches us are unwise and dangerous and self-destructive. And so whenever one of those things is identified to us by the Bible, we reject it completely.

We totally abstained from it. We don't play around with it, We don't say, well, all things are lawful for me. No. When the Corinthians were saying things like that, the Apostle said, well you got two other tests then is that helpful, Is it edifying to you? And to your brothers and does it bring to God the most glory possible that you can be offering to him right now and don't just make your decisions by well it's not positively forbidden, If you find out something as harmful or evil one, my fool that why mess with it.

And so responding to God, means rejoicing, praying, and being thankful, Lord, help us. That this would be the character of our life, but then the content of our life. If we're responding to God means living according to his word. Not treating scripture as an important altogether or as something just to be fought and talked about.

But as something that holds it before us, what is good? And what is evil. So cling to what is good and abstain from what is evil. So what's God's will God's will is for us to live in response to and fellowship with God. And then let's pray Our Father in heaven.

We thank you that you have given us. Good, instruction. We confess immediately that apart from your grace, we would not be able to do all these things. Joy is a fruit of your spirit praying calling upon you as Father or something. That your spirit produces an arts Thanksgiving as that, which we fail to do in ourselves.

We do not glorify you or give you things and therefore we need not only the righteousness of Jesus counted for us by faith. What worked out in us as we live by that faith. So please give us these lives of joy and prayer and Thanksgiving and then help us.

Lord help us to take your Bible seriously to commit the energies and efforts of our minds and hearts to understanding and the force of our will to doing according to that which we understand. So that we'll be those who are not without you and without hope but who have hope in you and have direction from you and therefore who live in light and not darkness and can see what is good and evil and who live according that to that way.

So help us, we pray in all of these ways so that you would be glorified as our God and it would be seen and known even by us and by others, who pay close enough attention that we live our lives in fellowship with you and response to you, grant it by your spirit, grant it from your son.

For we asking his name. Amen.