

A GRATEFUL HEART BUILDS A FAITHFUL LIFE



PRECEPT

ROMANS 5:3-5

³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that trouble produces endurance. ⁴ endurance produces character, and character produces hope. ⁵ And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

¹⁶ Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

PROMISE

We are to give thanks in all circumstances. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us to give thanks in all circumstances, not "for" all circumstances. Evil, injustice, and cruelty exist every day in this world. Despite all of these, Scripture never instructs us to give thanks for them but to give thanks in them. As followers of Jesus, we are not immune to the trials, pains, difficulties, and sufferings of life. In fact, life can be very brutal at times. It can be extremely difficult to give thanks to God in such times. Through the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we can give thanks in all circumstances for a several reasons.

In Paul's letter to Thessalonica, he gave three victories or manifestations of a mature Christian; one whose faith is deep and strong, the one who truly understands his/her identity in Christ. This person must be joyful, prayerful, and thankful. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 to always be joyful. The uniqueness of Christian joy lies in its emergence under adverse circumstances. The Thessalonian Christians had already suffered with joy, the challenge is for this joyful outlook to become constant. From a human perspective, they had every reason not to be joyful—persecution from outsiders and friction among themselves. Yet in Christ, they are to be more and more joyful.

Romans 5:3-5 says, *"³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that trouble produces endurance. ⁴ endurance produces character, and character produces hope. ⁵ And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us."* It is a matter of perspective, a matter of right understanding. Whatever we are facing in life, in good times and in bad times, we can be joyful! All because we know how God dearly loves us. Then Paul continues in his letter, verse 16 says to never stop praying. Intimate unceasing prayers are the only way to cultivate a joyful attitude in times of trial. "Continually" does not mean nonstop praying. Rather, it implies constantly recurring prayer, a settled attitude of total dependence on God. In times of trials, times of troubles and problems in life, we should be aware of God's constant presence in our lives. Lastly, verse 18 tells us to be *"thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."* There are no such things as bad circumstances for a Christian because of God's constant supervision or God's constant presence. We do not need to worry about our past mistakes and whatever lies ahead in the future because we belong to Christ. We can be thankful in all circumstances if we believe that God causes all things for our good, if we acknowledge Him in all our ways, and if we give our all to Him. We are not to offer thanks to God only occasionally or only when great things are happening; instead, we are to give thanks in all circumstances. Even when we experience trials, we can give thanks for God's presence, His understanding, and His comfort.

PRACTICE

1. In All Circumstances. What is the difference between giving thanks for all circumstances and giving thanks in all circumstances? How does giving thanks in all situations transform your attitude and perspective?

2. God's Faithfulness. When you go through difficulty and hard times, how can you move your heart toward giving thanks in your trials and pain? How has God been faithful to you during a very challenging season?

PRAYER

I. Discipleship

- Pray that we will heed to the calling of making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

II. North Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the north groups: Ocampo and Ico.

III. South Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the south groups: Drapeza and Tablan.

IV. East Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the east groups: Domingo and Torres.

V. West Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the west groups: Solidum and Fabregas.

VI. Young Couples Life Connections

- Pray for these couples as they lead the young couples' groups: Oliveros, Imperial and Gumasing.

VII. Young Once Life Connections

- Pray for our coordinators Rene & Lita Alipao as they lead this group.