

TITLE AND NUMBER: 6. Rejoice always!

REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24



Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (verses 16-17)

LOOKING FURTHER: Psalm 13, Habakkuk 3:17-18, Philippians, James 1:2-4

What does this Bible passage tell us?

Paul writes to a young church, who are still working out what it means to live as followers of Christ.

Paul uses the words "**always**" and "**continually**". Most of us would want to change Paul's words to "*sometimes*, or in *some* circumstances." That would be more acceptable. Are *always* and *continually* reasonable expectations of us? Surely not!

Notice Paul never says the word "unless" - rejoice always, unless...; give thanks in every circumstance unless.... So, has he asked us to do the impossible? Can we face the awful situations we find ourselves in each day and be joyful, even give thanks in them?

Paul says "yes, you can." He was often in prison, so he knew what it meant to be there, but his life was still one of continual worship, joy and thankfulness. Why? Because of what Christ had done for him. Because of the opportunity it gave him to preach the Good News. Joy and thankfulness are not about our feelings but are a decision we make. God is our power, our strength. We are not alone - we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.



Reflections:

- Start your day today with giving thanks to God for all the good things he has given or done for you. How has this changed the way you felt about the way the day played out?
- Praying continually is not about spending all your time with words of prayer on your lips but recognising your dependence on God and being aware of his presence. How can you deliberately make prayer a bigger part of your life?
- How might you think and live differently if you lived with the belief that God works all things for your good?

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

