

A True Attitude
of Gratitude
1Thessalonians 5:15-18

Look At Paul's Instructions in 1Thessalonians 5:18,N.I.V.

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Question: Honestly, how many of us have ever had problems struggling with this idea?

- **How am I supposed to act when negative things happen to me?**
- **As a Christian how am I supposed to be thankful in my situation as it is? (Ex. "My grown children are a mess!" "My marriage is a mess!" "My health/financial situation is a mess!")**
- **Am I supposed to be thankful since COVID, for instance, has ravaged our nation? "Paul, is that your, "take-home point?"**
- **How can I justify that, "all things work together for good," and COVID has taken my family members away?**

Observations

- I know that some cases of suffering, and even death, can be viewed as “a welcomed situation” due to the intense pain experienced
- I also know that sometimes our friends and acquaintances may pass suddenly with no warning or time to prepare for the incident (heart attacks, stroke, gun shots, car accidents)

But How Can We Ever Say That We Are Thankful for the Loss of a Loved One?

There are Circumstances in Life That Make Paul's Remarks In Verse 18 a Challenge

***But Are We Being Taught To be Thankful For Them?
(Even the Small Stuff)***

- What about the power at home going out and having no A.C. on a hot day or no heat when it's cold?
- What about having a flat tire on the highway with no spare or jack?
- What about your satellite dish not working on "game day?"
- What about going to the grocery store and there is no toilet tissue or bread on the shelf? (supply-chain problems)

Is There a Way That I Can Always Be Thankful As Paul Teaches?

“.....give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1Thessalonians 5:18

- Paul doesn’t say be thankful FOR all circumstances but IN all circumstances

There Is A Difference In Those Two Little Words

One says be thankful no matter *what happens* to me

But I can’t find a reason to be thankful for losing my parents

I can’t find a reason to be thankful for losing a leg, or an eye

I can’t find a reason to be thankful for a positive cancer biopsy

I can’t find a reason to be thankful for the gun violence that has swept our nation (the homicide rate of blacks is 10 times the rate of whites in this country)

First: We Must Read Correctly What Paul Is Telling Us



But I Can Be Thankful “In” All Circumstances

- In spite of my outward circumstances, what is “IN” me can still remain thankful

I have Christ in me and He is my HOPE, Psalms 39:7

I have Christ in me and He is my Provider, Matt 6:31-32

I have Christ in me and He is my Deliverer, Psalms 91:14

I have Christ in me who supplies ALL my needs, Phil. 4:19

I have Christ in me who Leads and Guides me daily, Psalms 23

Therefore Because of Jesus, I Can Be Thankful In All Things When I’m Not Thankful For All Things!

Secondly: Please Don't Justify Your Every Circumstance as Being "It's God's Will"

"give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

- Some of us will use scriptures like these to implicate God as the source of the problems that come against us

"It was God's will for me to grow up with bad influencers"

"It was God's will for me to have Diabetes, HTN., IHD,"

"Since God allowed me to grow up in an abusive home, I became an abuser!"

Some Believe That Our Immoral and even Improper Behavior Has Been Caused By Our Environmental Influences Which Are Controlled By the Will Of God

But God Says, “Don’t Blame Me!”

James 1:13-15

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

- Sin may come into our lives through many means, but it was never in God’s will for us to sin

Rather than that idea, James says that when we sin we, “*shoot ourselves in the foot*” with our own desires that we feel **MUST** be satisfied

Observations

- Many opportunities may come our way that are often not “in God’s will for our lives” but are a part of our “Free Moral Agency.”
- The Free Moral Agency of Man is explained by Moses in his Farewell Address to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 30:19,20

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice , and hold fast to Him.

- Parents if you choose righteousness blessings will follow
- If you choose destructive patterns, curses will follow

Point: It Was Never in God's Will For Us to Sin!

Question: If sin was in God's will, why would He suffer at great lengths to deliver us from it?

God's will : For all of us to live healthy and whole lives and be saved, 1Timothy 2:3-4

"This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

But When Man Sinned, It Messed Up God's Will/Intentions For Us

"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so then death passed upon all men; for all have sinned." Romans 5:12

- So sickness and death were brought about by man
- Cain started "homicide" in Genesis by killing his own brother

We Are Grateful That God Changes His Will for His Obedient Children; Example#1 is Hezekiah

2 Kings 20:1-2

In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord. Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes. And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

- Here is a child of God, who when faced with a terminal illness appealed to God with his "track record"
- Hezekiah believed that consistent righteous living could change the will/intentions of God for him. Do you believe this?




And Hezekiah Was Right!

2Kings 20:4-6

*Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him; “Go back and tell Hezekiah ... I have heard your voice and seen your tears ...
... I will add fifteen years to your life”*

We then are grateful to God that a consistently righteous life can alter our circumstances for our own good.





God Was Willing To Change His Will/Intentions For Abraham, His Servant; Classic Example #2; Genesis 18,19

- God was willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah, two wicked cities, from destruction, because of His relationship with Abraham
- Abraham had a nephew, Lot, who lived there with his family, and Abraham talked to God on their behalf; Genesis chapter 18
- He pleaded with God in Genesis 18:23

“Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked”

You Ever Talked to God on Behalf of Your Children/Health?

When You Do, Remember God Looks At Your Track Record!

Be Grateful That You Can Substitute Your Name and Your Situation for Lot’s and Hezekiah’s,

Acts 10:34, James 5:16





The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel **Acts 15:7**

Believe the Gospel **Acts 15:7**

Repent of Sins **Acts 17:30**

Confess Christ **Acts 8:37**

Be Baptized **Acts 8:38**

