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I Thessalonians 5:16-18

16. "Rejoice always;
17. pray without ceasing;
18. in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

In many of the personal Bible studies I have with people, a reoccurring question is: "What is God's will for my life?" God's answer to this question for everyone in Christ Jesus comes in today's Scripture passage. The Lord's will for us is threefold: first, we are to rejoice always; second, we are to pray without ceasing; and third, we are to give thanks in everything.

As Christians we are to know that all things work together for good. Therefore James commands us in his letter to "consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials (or problems), knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1:2-4 So in good times, as well as bad, we are to rejoice always.

God also wills that we keep in constant communication with Him through prayer. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes this possible. Romans 8:26-27

supplies the following insight: “The Spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” Of course God knows what we want and need, even before we ask. But He is glorified by our asking and depending on Him. So God’s will for us in Christ Jesus includes praying at all times.

And thirdly, God’s will for you and me is that in everything we are to give thanks. Jesus always gave thanks to God, His Father, and so should we. Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.” One time when Jesus was particularly frustrated with the people He was ministering to, He cried out to His Father in Heaven, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to babes.” Matthew 11:25

And not only for Jesus, but in everything we are to give thanks. Therefore we must consciously look for things to be thankful about and dwell on them. One young evangelist several years ago proposed that thanksgiving is one of the ways we can overcome sin in our lives. But irregardless, thanksgiving lies at the heart of an abundant life. And it is God’s will that we have life

and have it abundantly. So says Jesus in John 10:10.

As we go into the holiday season, let us not lose sight of God's will for each and every one of us. This becomes so important as things get busier. Thanksgiving is to focus our giving of thanks, the celebration of Christ's birth causes us to rejoice in Him all the more. So let our prayers abound, and arise to God as a fragrant aroma in our celebrations and times of introspection.