

REJOICE ALWAYS!

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus! (**1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18**).

Yesterday was a beautiful day, the breeze was blowing just enough to keep things cooled down outside so that we could enjoy my daughters thirtieth birthday. What a day of rejoicing!! And as I blessed the food that day, my heart was filled with gratitude for God's faithfulness in my life. Now I am not saying that it has always been sunshine and roses, but in that moment my heart was so full of gratitude that I realized that no matter what I have been through in my life God, has been faithful to me!! My children and my grandchildren were gathered in my kitchen and in that moment I knew the compassion and faithfulness of my Lord and it flowed over me.

In **1 Thessalonians**, Paul says to "**Rejoice always.**" Surely he doesn't mean when times are hard, when we get a bad report from the doctor or when we have just lost a loved one?? How can we rejoice in circumstances like that?? I think that the key phrase in this scripture is **PRAY CONTINUALLY!!** When we pray, when we have a relationship with our Lord, I believe that is when we can rejoice and give thanks in all things. When our hearts are so full of gratefulness to God for all he has done and for His faithfulness to us, we cannot help but rejoice!! It is a completely different mindset than what we are used to.

In the church today we have forgotten how to pray, we have forgotten why we are even in church. We have become more like a social club than a powerful force for Jesus!! Church has become a place where we come in and get a warm fuzzy and we go home. There is no worship, there is no ministry, there were no healings or deliverances, no one giving their life to Christ! And the saddest thing of all is there is no HOLY SPIRIT!! Just a good gushy feeling that only lasts until the end of the day and the rest of the week we struggle and fret and go back to being the same as we were before. Then next Sunday we do it all over again. Wow, how far we have slipped down the slippery slope of lethargy and self-centeredness. We have put rejoicing in the Lord on the back burner, along with our prayers and thanksgiving!!

The last part of this scripture should be an alert to the church!! **For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus!!** To rejoice, to pray continually and to give thanks is actually GOD'S WILL FOR US!! What a revelation!! In the church today people are always looking for their purpose..... in this scripture your purpose is spelled out to you!! Everything else is a perk from God!! A gift!! A blessing!!

Our Lord is more concerned about our relationship with Him than anything else!! He knows how much we need to be in constant communion with Him in order to be able to stand strong and courageous in this world. He knows that in order to rejoice always we must know our Creator....the One who loves us with a love that we cannot even begin to understand.

Sometimes in the beautiful moments we are reminded of the hard times we have come through and we look around and realize how faithful our God has been. That His will IS to make Himself known to us. So, as we rejoice, pray, and give thanks, His faithfulness and His goodness come shining through!! We must never forget that we have a Savior that walks with us through the hard times, through the loss, through the bad reports! That is why we rejoice!! That is why we pray!! That is why we give thanks in all things!! Because Jesus is with us!!!

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS,
OH GOD MY FATHER,
MORNING BY MORNING NEW MERCIES I SEE.
ALL I HAVE NEEDED THY HAND HAS PROVIDED,
GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS, LORD UNTO ME!

REJOICE, PRAY, GIVE THANKS, FOR THIS IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS!!!

REJOICE ALWAYS!!!