

BRIEF PERSPECTIVE ON THANKFULNESS

Read and reflect upon the wonderful words of the hymn penned by Joseph Scriven.

*What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.*

*Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.*

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WARMING UP

1. Is negative behaviour (e.g. complaining) contagious?
2. When was the last time we commended someone for their devotion to Jesus?

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read 1Thess 1

3. How did Paul describe the Thessalonian Christians in verse 3?
4. How was the Thessalonians' lives transformed (verse 6 & 9) and how did the transformed lives affected those around them (verse 7 & 8)?

Joy and rejoice - read 1Thess 5:16, Gal 5:22

5. What is the link between joy, being in Christ and fruit of the Holy Spirit?
6. If joy is one of the fruit of the Spirit and we desire joy in our lives, how does one live by the Spirit of God?

Prayerful - read 1Thess 5:17, Rom 12:12, Col 4:2

7. If the verse (1 Thess 5:17) does not mean 'head-bowed, eyes-closed posture 24/7', what does it mean?
8. How is the attitude of prayer cultivated?

Thankfulness/Gratitude - read 1 Thess 5:18

9. What is the difference between giving thanks for all circumstances and giving thanks in all circumstances?
10. What is the theological basis for cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving?

MOVING FORWARD

It is incongruent that a Christian community that bears His name does not know Him as the Head of the church.

Come to Him in humility, acknowledging our deep need for Him to forgive our sins, break the bondages in our lives, restore us to a right relationship, give us a hunger for His word, a dependence on the Holy Spirit, and compassion for the lost.

LIFE TOGETHER

A community who is abiding in Jesus Christ is characterized by joy and prayer. Make it our strong desire to want to come before the Lord in prayer.

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These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read 1Thess 1

3. How did Paul describe the Thessalonian Christians in verse 3?

The Thessalonians Christians had faith in Jesus that translated to works, love for Jesus that were evidenced by labor for Him, and hope in Jesus evidenced by patient endurance of suffering.

4. How was the Thessalonians' lives transformed (verse 6 & 9) and how did the transformed lives affected those around them (verse 7 & 8)?

They were transformed by the power of the Spirit that enabled them to live with joy as they imitated the Lord and the lives of the disciples. Practically, this can be seen by them forsaking their idols and turning to serve God. Only people who are transformed by Jesus can inspire other believers to change.

Joy and rejoice - read 1Thess 5:16, Gal 5:22

5. What is the link between joy, being in Christ and fruit of the Holy Spirit?

The person who is in Christ lives in dependence on the Holy Spirit. Practically, this person loves to spend time in God's Word, have an awareness of his own sins and inadequacies, which resulted in much prayer. Over a period of time, God changes this person and this person's life is characterized by a deep joy and restedness in Jesus.

6. If joy is one of the fruit of the Spirit and we desire joy in our lives, how does one live by the Spirit of God?

See the 'answer' to question 5

Prayerful - read 1Thess 5:17, Rom 12:12, Col 4:2

7. If the verse (1 Thess 5:17) does not mean 'head-bowed, eyes-closed posture 24/7', what does it mean?

There is a constant awareness of the presence of God. It is not just intercession and thanksgiving but rather an attitude of listening to what God is saying and giving words to what God has laid upon the person's heart.

8. How is the attitude of prayer cultivated?

A conscious decision to come before the Lord everyday. One's understanding of what life and prayer is shaped by what the Word of God says about everything. There is a nice tension between a deep awareness of sin & unworthiness and a deep sense of gratitude in what God has done for the person on the Cross. He lives life in deference to God and prefers the will of God to making decisions naturally.

Thankfulness/Gratitude - read 1 Thess 5:18

9. What is the difference between giving thanks for all circumstances and giving thanks in all circumstances?

The bible says to give thanks in all circumstances. This presupposes that we know God is sovereign and that He allows certain things to happen to us (even bad things).

10. What is the theological basis for cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving?

God is sovereign and He is in control. We believe His promises. Even if we do not understand why, we trust that everything will work out for our good in the ultimate