

## Grateful Hearts: Living in the Overflow (1)

### The Foundation of Gratitude

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

**Big Idea:** Gratitude is God’s will for every believer.

**Theme:** Gratitude isn’t a seasonal choice but a continual lifestyle.

**Application:** Develop daily habits of thanksgiving regardless of circumstances.

**Introduction:** Thanksgiving is more than a holiday—it’s a habit of the heart. Charles Spurgeon said, “*Thanksgiving is one of the best ways to keep yourselves in spiritual health.*” Paul commands: “*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances...*” (1 Thess. 5:16–18). Gratitude is the foundation of a thriving Christian life—living “in the overflow” of God’s grace.

#### I. Gratitude is God’s will: (v. 18a)

**A. The command:** “*Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you.*”

1. God **wants** us to be thankful—it’s part of our identity (Rom 1:21).
2. Think of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11–19)—only one returned to thank Jesus.

#### B. For Our Good:

1. Gratitude benefits our *spiritual health*—“the loving prescription of the Great Physician.”

**Wiersbe:** “*An attitude of gratitude is a wonderful weapon against unbelief and bitterness.*”

2. When we thank God, we trust His goodness even when we lack something.
3. Refusing thankfulness is living outside God’s will; obeying it aligns us with His heart.

#### II. Gratitude in all circumstances: — A continual choice

**A.** Paul says “**in everything give thanks.**” Gratitude is not reserved for sunny days.

1. We don’t thank God *for* evil, but *in* the middle of it (Rom 8:28).
2. We thank Him for His presence, strength, and purpose.

**B. Corrie ten Boom:** Thanked God even for fleas in a concentration camp—later realized those fleas kept guards out so women could worship freely.

**C. Alexander Whyte:** On a gloomy day prayed, “*We thank Thee, O Lord, that it is not always like this.*”

**D.** Gratitude requires the Holy Spirit’s help; a thankful heart is a mark of a Spirit-filled believer (Eph 5:18–20).

#### III. Gratitude transforms our perspective:

**A. Joy and Worship:**

1. Gratitude fuels joy (“*Rejoice always*”). Thankful people are joyful people (Neh 8:10).

2. “*We’re not joyful then grateful—we’re grateful, and that makes us joyful.*”  
**Charles Stanley:** “*That’s why ungrateful people are so grumpy.*”

#### B. Peace and Resilience:

1. “*Pray ... with thanksgiving*” (Phil 4:6–7) brings God’s peace.
2. **Adrian Rogers:** the devil’s “seeds of discouragement” can’t grow in a thankful heart.
3. **Ruth Graham:** “*Worship and worry cannot live in the same heart.*”

#### C. Humility and Dependence:

1. Every good thing is a gift (James 1:17; 1 Cor 4:7).
2. **Piper:** “*You can’t be thankful and boastful at the same time.*”
3. “*God gives grace to the humble*” (James 4:6).

#### D. Witness to Others:

1. Gratitude shines in a complaining world (Matt 5:14–16).
2. Psalm 34:1 – “*I will bless the Lord at all times.*”
3. A grateful believer becomes a bright light that glorifies God.

#### IV. Cultivating a lifestyle of gratitude:

**A. Thankful Prayer:** Begin every prayer with praise (Col 4:2; Phil 4:6). Keep a *gratitude journal*—write three blessings daily (Psalm 103:2).

**B. Thank God When It’s Hard:** Choose gratitude in trials (Heb 13:5). Sing songs of thanksgiving—“Blessed Be Your Name” reflects 1 Thess. 5:18.

**C. Express Thanks to Others:** Encourage people and give God credit publicly (2 Cor 9:11).

**D. Guard Against Complaining:** Replace grumbling with gratitude (1 Cor 10:10).

Reframe frustration: “Thank You Lord, that I have work to do ... a home to clean”

**E. Remember the Cross:** The greatest reason for gratitude—salvation through Christ.

“*Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*” (2 Cor 9:15). The Greek word *eucharistia* (thanksgiving) comes from *charis* (grace).

Pastor Martin Rinkart (1636) wrote “*Now Thank We All Our God*” during plague and war—he focused on God’s love, not circumstance.

**Conclusion:** God’s will is that we live with **grateful hearts**, not just on Thanksgiving Day but every day. Gratitude is the foundation of a vibrant Christian life—bringing joy, peace, humility, and witness.

Let’s practice “thanks-living” Start each morning by thanking God. End each night recounting His faithfulness. Turn complaints into praise.

*If you have Jesus, you always have a reason to be thankful. “This is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*