

# Give Thanks

**GIVE THANKS** - IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS FOR THIS IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

IN EVERYTHING - The Greek word for "everything" is "pas" which means no exceptions. There is a silver lining to every cloud. God is with us whatever befalls us (Heb 13:5). It is God's will that we find joy in prayer in Christ Jesus in every condition of life.

As Ruth Bell Graham well said "We can't always give thanks FOR everything, but we can always give thanks IN everything."

Job is a prime OT illustration of the supernatural response of thanksgiving even in the face of overwhelming troubles (If you are experiencing trials and afflictions [and most of us are!] read Job 1:13-20). IN the midst of his manifold afflictions, Job declared, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21) And in the end "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee... And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning," (Job 42:5, 12) "Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful." (James 5:11)

Gratitude is always a God-honoring attitude.

For all the heartaches and the tears,

For gloomy days and fruitless years

I do give thanks, for now I know

These were the things that helped me grow!

—Crandlemire

Ephesians 5:20 says "ALWAYS (all times) giving thanks for ALL THINGS in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." How is this possible? Certainly it is not possible in my NATURAL inclination! But it is possible by God's SUPERNATURAL provision. In other words, what is IM-possible, is HIM-possible! Paul had just commanded us to continually "BE FILLED with the Spirit." (Eph 5:18). What "fills you" will "control you" and in this case He enables us to accomplish supernaturally what we cannot accomplish naturally.

As John Piper asks "How can we not be thankful when we owe everything to God?"

Indeed, he who thanks God for His mercies shall never want a mercy for which to thank, for "Every stream should lead us to the fountain." (M. Henry)

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,

When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,

Count your many blessings, name them one by one,

And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

-- J Oatman

Ray Pritchard writes that "The foundation of gratitude is the expectation of nothing. If one expects nothing then anything is bonus. If one expects more than he receives, then he is disappointed. We are so prone to complain because roses have thorns than to give thanks because thorns have roses! "In everything give thanks." How do we do this in a practical sense? First, thank him for your blessings. Second, thank him for how he has helped you in your trials. Third, thank him for his presence every day. Fourth, thank him for his promises for the future. As a Christian, our whole life is to be one great, "Thank you, Lord." This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us."

We should be ready to give the Lord thanks

For blessing as well as for test;

Hearts that are thankful is all that He asks;

Let's trust Him to give what is best.

—Bierema

If you pause to THINK, you'll have cause to THANK. God's GIVING deserves our THANKSGIVING.

Paul exhorts us "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, GIVING THANKS (present tense = continually, as our habitual practice) through Him (Christ Jesus) to God the Father." (Col 3:17) How is it possible to live a life of continual thanksgiving? As Jerry Bridges says we must "first renounce all confidence in our own power and then rely entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit. We must be ENABLED, not merely HELPED. What's the difference? The word HELP implies we have some ability but not enough; we need someone else to supplement our partially adequate ability. By contrast, ENABLEMENT implies that we have no ability whatsoever. We're entirely powerless. We can do nothing (cp Jn 15:5). But when by faith we renounce self-sufficiency and embrace reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, we receive divine empowerment, enablement, and strength for personal transformation and ministry." In short, the Holy Spirit enables us to continually manifest an attitude of gratitude.

Andrew Murray - A joyful, thankful life is what God has destined for us, is what He will work in us -- what He desires, that He certainly does in those who do not withstand Him, but receive and suffer His will to work in them.

Notice that in 1Thes 5:16 (Rejoice always) and 1Thes 5:18 we see the combination of joy and giving thanks which Paul also links in Colossians 1:11-12 in the phrase "Joyously giving thanks to the Father." Paul's association of thanksgiving (**eucharisteo**) and joy (**chara**) is not surprising as both words are related to the the same Greek root (**charis**) which is our word "**grace**." Indeed grace is the foundation for saints enabled by the Spirit to "joyously give thanks" when the circumstances are not very joy filled! And remember the lost world is watching. Will I respond naturally or supernaturally. The former draws attention to me, but the latter brings glory to the Father (Mt 5:16)! The secret to abounding joy is a Spirit wrought, grace based gratitude attitude. Remember, when you can't change the wind, allow the Spirit to enable you to adjust your sails!

Thanksgiving is the vibration of the soul's heart-strings under the soft touch of God's benevolence.

F F Bruce - Ingratitude is one of the features of pagan depravity in Ro 1:21 (For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or GIVE THANKS; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.); the children of God are expected (and enabled by the Spirit) to "abound in thanksgiving" (Col 2:7; Col 3:15, 17, 4:2; Eph 5:4,20)

J. C. Ryle - Thankfulness is a flower which will never bloom well excepting upon a root of deep humility.

Warren Wiersbe - An attitude of gratitude is a wonderful weapon against unbelief, disobedience, a hard heart, and a bitter spirit. Instead of complaining about what we don't have, let's be thankful for what we do have, because God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him... We can't control the circumstances of life, but we can control how we respond to them. That's what faith is all about, daring to believe that God is working everything for our good even when we don't feel like it or see it happening. "In everything give thanks" isn't always easy to obey, but obeying this command is the best antidote against a bitter and critical spirit. The Scottish preacher George H. Morrison said, "Nine-tenths of our unhappiness is selfishness, and is an insult cast in the face of God."

Hiebert - When we realize that God works all things out for good to those who love Him and are yielded to His will (Ro 8:28, Ge 50:20), thanksgiving under all circumstances becomes a glorious possibility "He who can say 'AMEN' to the will of God in his heart will be able to say 'HALLELUJAH' also."

Consider what the Lord has done

For you and those you love;

Then give Him thanks with hearts of praise

For blessings from above.

--Sper

We don't need more to be thankful for, we need to be more thankful.

God grant us the Spirit wrought grace to emulate **Matthew Henry's** high standard who wrote in his diary the day he was mugged "Let me be thankful first because I was never robbed before; second, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed." Beloved, one of the best marks of spiritual maturity is the ability to give thanks when it is difficult!

G. K. Chesterton was once asked what was the greatest lesson he had ever learned to which he replied "The greatest lesson I have learned is to take things with GRATITUDE and not take them for GRANTED." Chesterton added that "You say grace before meals. All right But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, walking, playing, and grace before I dip the pen in the ink." Thanksgiving is faith in action.

Thanksgiving to God comes (super) naturally when we count our blessings. We would much less apt to protest the command to give thanks in EVERYTHING if it were our habit to give thanks in ANYTHING. Empowered by the Spirit, we need to focus on our "haves," not our "have-nots." As the psalmist says "Bless (praise) the LORD, O my soul, and FORGET NONE of His benefits;" (Psalm 103:2). Indeed, praise to God comes naturally when we count our blessings.

M B Babcock encourages us "Be on the lookout for mercies. The more we look for them, the more of them we will see. Blessings brighten when we count them. Out of the determination of the heart, the eyes see. If you want to be gloomy, there's gloom enough to keep you glum; if you want to be happy, there's gleam enough to keep you glad. Better to lose count while naming your blessings than to lose your blessings by counting your troubles."

David Cooper writes that "Thanksgiving delivers us from a victim mentality and gives us a victor's mentality. I once read that nothing can help the person with the wrong mental attitude, and nothing can stop a person with the right mental attitude. And the right mental attitude to overcome our obstacles and win our battles is thanksgiving."

Missionary Benjamin Weir was held hostage in Lebanon and imprisoned under miserable conditions for 16 months. In his first interview after his release, he was asked how he spent his time and how he dealt with boredom and despair. His answer stunned the reporters. He simply said, "Counting my blessings." "Blessings?" they responded. "Yes," he explained. "Some days I got to take a shower. Sometimes there were some vegetables in my food. And I could always be thankful for the love of my family."

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?

Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?

Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,

And you will be singing as the days go by.

—Oatman

ILLUSTRATION - Thankfulness seems to be a lost art today. A ministerial student in Evanston, Illinois was part of a life-saving squad. In 1860, when a ship went aground on the shore of Lake Michigan. Edward Spencer waded again and again into the frigid waters to rescue 17 passengers. In the process his health was permanently damaged. Some years later at his funeral, it was noted that not one of the people he rescued ever thanked him.

ILLUSTRATION - As Pastor H A Ironside was about to begin his meal in a restaurant, a man approached and asked if he could join him. Ironside invited him in to sit and as was his custom, he bowed his head in prayer. When he opened his eyes, the other man asked, "Do you have a headache?" Ironside replied, "No, I don't." The other man asked, "Well, is there something wrong with your food?" Ironside replied, "No, I was simply thanking God as I always do before I eat." The man said, "Oh, you're one of those, are you? Well, I want you to know I never give thanks. I earn my money by the sweat of my brow and I don't have to give thanks to anybody when I eat. I just start right in!" Ironside said, "Yes, you're just like my dog. That's what he does too!"

ILLUSTRATION - A woman had a parrot who always complained about everything. It was Thanksgiving Eve, and she was preparing the Thanksgiving meal. The parrot complained about everything as she worked. Finally, she had heard enough. She took him out of his cage and opened the refrigerator to put him in to punish him, "You'll stay in the refrigerator until you cool off and get control on your tongue," she said as she put him in and closed the door. The parrot was stunned. Shivering, he caught a glimpse of the Thanksgiving turkey, skinned, legs pointing upward from the pan. The parrot said to the turkey, "Good heavens, man! What did you say?"

### **"In Everything Give Thanks!"**

Mid sunshine, cloud or stormy days,

When hope abounds or care dismays,

When trials press and toils increase

Let not thy faith in God decrease—

'In every thing give thanks.'

"All things we know shall work for good,

Nor would we change them if we could;

'Tis well if only He command;

His promises will ever stand—

'In every thing give thanks.'

"He satisfies the longing heart,

He thwarts the tempter's cruel dart,

With goodness fills the hungry soul,

And helps us sing when billows roll.

'In every thing give thanks.'"

--Author Unknown

As David a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22) said "I will GIVE THANKS to the LORD according to His righteousness, And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High... I will GIVE THANKS to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Thy wonders... Therefore I will GIVE THANKS to Thee among the nations, O LORD, And I will sing praises to Thy name... The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall THANK Him... Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, And GIVE THANKS to His holy name... I will GIVE THANKS to Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Thy name forever... With my mouth I will GIVE THANKS abundantly to the LORD; And in the midst of many I will praise Him... I will GIVE THANKS to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, And my soul knows it very well." (Ps 7:17, 9:1, 18:49, 28:7, 30:4, 86:12, 109:30, 139:14)

Father grant by Your Spirit through Christ Jesus that we might be enabled to be "imitators of those (like David who continually gave thanks to You and) who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb 6:12) Amen

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON

### GIVING THANKS

David steadfastly affirmed...

I will bless the Lord **at all times**. His praise shall **continually** be in my mouth. (Psalm 34:1)

**Spurgeon comments: I will bless the Lord at all times.** He is resolved and fixed, **I will** (**Ed**: God won't force us to choose thankfulness. It comes down to a choice, but even that choice is motivated by His indwelling Spirit as in Php 2:13-note); he is personally and for himself determined, let others so as they may; he is **intelligent in head** and **inflamed in heart** -- he knows to Whom the praise is due, and what is due, and for what and when.

To **Jehovah**, and not to second causes our gratitude is to be rendered. The Lord hath by right a monopoly in His creatures praise. Even when a mercy may remind us of our sin with regard to it, as in this case David's deliverance from the Philistine monarch was sure to do, we are not to rob God of His meed (a fitting return or recompense) of honour because our conscience justly awards a censure to our share in the transaction. Though the hook was rusty, yet God sent the fish, and we thank Him for it.

**At all times, in every situation, under every circumstance, before, in and after trials, in bright days of glee, and dark nights of fear.**

He would never have done praising, because never satisfied that he had done enough; always feeling that he fell short of the Lord's deservings.

Happy is he whose fingers  
are wedded to his harp.

He who praises God for mercies

shall never want a mercy for which to praise.

To bless the Lord is never unseasonable. **His praise shall continually be in my mouth**, not in my heart merely, but in my mouth too.

**Our thankfulness is not to be a dumb thing; it should be one of the daughters of music. Our tongue is our glory, and it ought to reveal the glory of God.**

What a blessed mouthful is God's praise! How sweet, how purifying, how perfuming! If men's mouths were always thus filled, there would be no repining against God, or slander of neighbours.

**If we continually rolled this dainty morsel under our tongue, the bitterness of daily affliction would be swallowed up in joy.**

God deserves blessing with the heart, and extolling with the mouth --

**good thoughts in the closet  
and  
good words in the world.**

**So how does one emulate and exercise this Davidic attitude of gratitude?...**

**Through Him** (through Christ, our Great High Priest - see study of through Him = through Christ) then, let us **continually** offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips (What does this imply? As physical fruit is borne by abiding, so spiritual fruit is borne by us abiding in Christ and His Spirit in us - Gal 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note, Jn 15:5) that **give thanks** to His Name. (Hebrews 13:15-note)

**Chrysostom** - gave a practical illustration of this heroic temper by repeating (this attitude of gratitude), as he died in the extreme hardships of an enforced and painful exile. ([Quoted by James Moffatt in 1Thessalonians 5 Commentary](#))

**See Related Resources on a thankful spirit... :**

**Exposition of Ephesians 5:20** (Eph 5:20)

**Exposition of Philippians 4:6** (Php 4:6)

A great many Christians although familiar with this command, have looked on it as a sort of counsel of perfection which is out of reach of most of us mere mortals. We offer our own practical paraphrase of Paul's command saying something like "in most things give thanks" or "in some things give thanks" or "give thanks when you feel like it"! Let's be honest, there are times when the thought of giving thanks is the farthest thought from our mind. We would rather grumble and/or complain. And often we have a "legitimate" (in the world's way of looking at things) reason to gripe. And so we arrive at a "spiritual stalemate" because we really don't want to do what Paul is commanding. It is at times like this what we need to remember the basic spiritual "law" that God never asks us to do something that He doesn't enable us to accomplish. Thanksgiving is often an act of sheer faith. Our intellect says "get upset and complain." But the Spirit says, "give thanks in all things and at all times." If we respond to the Spirit in faith (God allowed it and He will cause it to work out for good) and genuinely give thanks (not legalistically but enabled by amazing grace), we are blessed. We will cease fretting and a beautiful joy and confidence in God sets in. Admittedly this describes the ideal response, and yet one that is within the reach of every believer because we all possess the Spirit and access to just the necessary amount of grace.

The opposite of **giving thanks in all things** is grumbling or murmuring, an attitude and response Paul addressed in his letter to the Philippians...

**Do** all things (how many? Just try to accomplish this naturally!) without grumbling or disputing; **15** (Paul explains why this response is so important) that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, **16** holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. (See **notes** Philippians 2:14; 15; 16)

**Comment:** Notice that "non-grumbling" is not optional and is not just a suggestion. Paul is commanding "non-grumbling" to be the believer's continual response [present imperative]! Remember that when you murmur about your circumstances, in the final analysis, you are murmuring against the One Who has designed every circumstance of your life. So when the urge to murmur comes over you [the old **flesh** will always urge you in that direction - see Gal 5:17-note], remember that you need to view the adverse circumstances with eyes of faith and an eternal perspective [cf 2Cor 4:16, 17, 18], asking the question "Is God still on the throne?" Then make the volitional choice to "Give thanks in everything!"

**Thanksgiving** is also an excellent antidote for anxiety or worry as we deduce from Paul's famous command in Philippians...

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (see note Philippians 4:6)

**Robert Morgan** illustrates this spiritual dynamic...

When her children were rebelling against the Lord, Ruth Bell Graham found herself occasionally torn apart by worry. One night while abroad, she awoke suddenly in the middle of the night worrying about her son. A current of worry surged through her like an electric shock. She lay in bed and tried to pray, but she suffered from galloping anxiety, one fear piling upon another. She looked at the clock and it was around three o'clock. She was exhausted, yet she knew she would be unable to go back to sleep. Suddenly the Lord seemed to say to her, "Quit studying the problems and start studying the promises."

She turned on the light, got out her Bible, and the first verses that came to her were these, Philippians 4:6,7. As she read those words, she suddenly realized that the missing ingredient in her prayers had been thanksgiving. "... in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

She put down her Bible and spent time worshipping God for Who and what He is. She later wrote, "I began to thank God for giving me this one I loved so dearly in the first place. I even thanked him for the difficult spots which had taught me so much. And you know what happened? It was as if someone turned on the light in my mind and heart, and the little fears and worries that had been nibbling away in the darkness like mice and cockroaches hurriedly scuttled for cover. That was when I learned that worship and worry cannot live in the same heart. They are mutually exclusive." (In Everything Give Thanks)

**James Moffatt** wrote the following regarding 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - To comment adequately on these diamond drops would be an outline a history of the Christian experience in its higher levels.

To the natural man who lives for this present world Paul gives a startling injunction. As usual though Paul does not command them to do something he did not model for them as testified by numerous passages...

**Ro 1:8** (note) First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

**1Cor 1:4** I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,

**Ep 1:16** (note) do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;

**Php 1:3** (note) I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

**Col 1:3** (note) We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

**Philemon 1:4** I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers

**In everything** (3956) (pas) (first in the Greek for emphasis!) means **no exceptions!** Every situation. All times. Every circumstance. Good. Bad. Happy. Sad. This all inclusive emphatic adverbial phrase lifts this admonition above the level of natural practice or possibility. The previous two commands are continuous as to time (always) and this one is universal in scope.

**Really Paul, this is not humanly possible!** To which Paul would probably reply **"You're right. It's not. It's only superhumanly possible!"** Okay I see it now -

## It's impossible!

But it is...

## Him-possible!

And so we're not surprised to see the attitude of gratitude associated with a Spirit filled (controlled, enabled) saint for in the context of Eph 5:18-note, Paul lists one of the "indicators" of Spirit filling writing that he or she is...

always (Same word as in 1Th 5:18 = pas = everything, no exceptions) giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father (Eph 5:20-note)

As alluded to at the beginning of this note, Paul said give thanks *in* everything not *for* everything. Paul is not calling us to be

thankful **for** the rebellious kids, or **for** the terminal illness, etc. The preposition is **in** all things. **In** the midst of all things, we can give thanks because God's indwelling Spirit will enable us to do so. Doing so is an expression of our trust in His Sovereignty and Faithfulness, that He will never test us beyond what we are able to endure! (1Cor 10:13-note).

God is sovereign and is over all adversity and all prosperity. The upshot is that everything that is allowed into our lives either from His hand directly or is filtered through His hands of perfect love and infinite wisdom. And so we can give thanks in everything because He is still on the throne and is in control. He El Elyon: Most High God, Sovereign Over All

**William Law** wrote in 1729 in his famous book [A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life](#) wrote that...

If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and all perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it to a blessing. Could you, therefore, work miracles, you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit, for it heals with a word speaking, and turns all that it touches into happiness

**Richison** makes a distinction that...

There is a difference in giving thanks "**for**" everything and "**in**" everything. If we gave thanks "for" everything that would mean that we give thanks for the Devil and his plan for the world!

Neither do we give thanks necessarily "after" everything. It does not require much faith to trace the hand of God with the benefit of hindsight. However, it takes faith to accept one's lot with gratitude in the midst of circumstances... we need to have the attitude of Samuel in 1Samuel 3:18,

Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, 'It is the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him.

Whatever comes in our lives comes in by the will of God, otherwise, He would prevent it. God mixes with His divine compound the bitter and the sweet, the good and the bad, in appropriate proportions so that they work together for good. God knows just the right amount of sunshine and rain. He measures out these things with great precision... ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#))

God designs all circumstances for the benefit of the believer. God thinks about your limitations. He knows the proper proportions of adversity that are right for you. We should not concern ourselves with the portion given to someone else. God works in each person's life differently.

He custom designs the structure of their circumstances by divine design. God knows the straw that will break the camel's back. He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear, but He wants a tested product. Engineers of today's automobiles test drive prototypes so that they know what these cars can tolerate. God wants to bring out the best in us...

God's providential plan for our lives includes all contingencies. God foresees every circumstance that comes into our lives. Not only does He foresee everything that happens to us, but He providentially plans or allows each situation that comes into our lives.

There is no substitute for understanding the will of God for our suffering. Nothing can come into our lives unless the Lord allows it. God must put His initials on everything that comes into our state of affairs. We may give thanks through tears.

Our obligation is to believe God's Word about these matters. The Bible teaches God's providential care of His creatures throughout the Scriptures. ([1 Thessalonians 5:18b](#))

**Montgomery** writes that Paul commands a "duty not dependent on gratifying times or circumstances. They must practice thanksgiving in every circumstance." (And remember is we are filled with the Spirit "duty" is not a drudgery but a delight!)

There is a silver lining to every cloud. God is with us whatever befalls us, as was so beautifully recorded by **William Cowper** ([John Piper's description of his life](#) or [Audio version](#)) in his hymn...

[God Moves in a Mysterious Way \(play\)](#)

[God Moves in A Mysterious Way with Lyrics](#)

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs, and works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take, the clouds ye so much dread,  
Are big with mercy, and shall break In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace;  
**Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face.**

His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.

As **John Piper** asks "How can we not be thankful when we owe everything to God?" (A Godward Life)

**Give thanks** (2168)(**eucharistéo** [word study] from **eucháristos** = thankful, grateful, well-pleasing - Indicates the obligation of being thankful to someone for a favor done <> in turn from **eú** = well + **charizomai** = to grant, give.; English - Eucharist - root of these words is **charis** = grace) means to show that one is under obligation by being thankful. To show oneself as grateful (most often to God in the NT).

**Moulton and Milligan** note that **eucharistéo** originally meant "do a good turn to" or "oblige," and in late Greek passed readily into the meaning "be grateful," "give thanks". Giving thanks is the quality of being grateful, with the implication of also having appropriate (Spirit filled) attitude.

This meaning is common in diplomatic documents in which the recipient of a favor reciprocates with assurance of goodwill. It is also used to express appreciation for benefits or blessings. Giving thanks was an important component of Greco-Roman reciprocity as demonstrated by a copy of a letter written by the Emperor Claudius to a Gymnastic Club expressing his gratification at games performed in his honour. The word eucharista was also common on ancient inscriptions.

**Thanksgiving** expresses what ought never to be absent from any of our devotions. We should always be ready to express our grateful acknowledgement of past mercies as distinguished from the earnest seeking of future mercies.

**TDNT** writes that "We first find **eucharistos** in the senses "pleasant" and "graceful." **Eucharistéo** means "to show a favor," but this imposes a duty of gratitude and the meaning "to be thankful" or "to give thanks" develops. We also find the sense "to pray." The Greek world held thanksgiving in high esteem. With the ordinary use we find a public use (gratitude to rulers) and a religious use (thanksgiving to the gods for blessings). Thanks are also a constituent part of letters." ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

Don't miss the fact that **give thanks** is in the **present imperative** which calls for this to be our habitual attitude and action! The **active voice** means that this is a personal choice (enabled by grace and the Spirit) we each must make continually.

**Spurgeon** admits that "I have not always found it easy to practice this duty; this I confess to my shame. When suffering extreme pain some time ago, a brother in Christ said to me, "Have you thanked God for this?" I replied that I desired to be patient, and would be thankful to recover. "But," said he, "in everything give thanks, not after it is over, but while you are still in it, and perhaps when you are enabled to give thanks for the severe pain, it will cease." I believe that there was much force in that good advice. (**Ed note:** I agree but would add that even if the pain doesn't cease, one's heart assumes a proper perspective to pain).

**Paul** writes to the saints at Colossae - "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus **giving thanks** (present tense) through Him (Christ Jesus) to God the Father. (see note Colossians 3:17)

The access we have is provided is through Him "by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh (He 10:20-note).

**F F Bruce** comments that "Ingratitude is one of the features of pagan depravity in Ro 1:21 (*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened*); the children of God are expected to "abound in thanksgiving" (Col 2:7-note; cf. Col 3:15, 17, 4:2-see notes Col 3:15, 17; 4:2; Eph 5:4,20-see notes Ep 5:4, 20). ([Bruce, F F: 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated. 1982](#))



**Hiebert** - The Christian should meet adverse circumstances of life not with a spirit of stoic resignation but with a spirit of unflinching gratitude. Paul and Silas had exemplified this spirit when imprisoned at Philippi (Acts 16:25). Such an attitude is made possible only by the grace of God. It can become a vital reality only when the truth of Ro 8:28-note is experienced. When we realize that God works all things out for good to those who love Him and are yielded to His will, thanksgiving under all circumstances becomes a glorious possibility "He who can say 'Amen' to the will of God in his heart will be able to say 'Hallelujah' also." It is typical of a life of unbelief that it lacks thanksgiving (Ro 1:21-note), but a life united with God in Christ Jesus is characterized by a spirit of thanksgiving ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book. 1996](#))

**Barnes** notes that believers...

can always find something to be thankful for, and there may be reasons why we ought to be thankful for even those dispensations which appear dark and frowning. Chrysostom, once the archbishop of Constantinople, and then driven into exile, persecuted, and despised, died far away from all the splendours of the capital, and all the comforts and honours which he had enjoyed, uttering his favourite motto -- glory to God for all things. Bibliotheca Sacra, i. 700. So we may praise God for everything that happens to us under his government. A man owes a debt of obligation to him for anything which will recall him from his wanderings, and which will prepare him for heaven. Are there any dealings of God towards men which do not contemplate such an end? Is a man ever made to drink the cup of affliction when no drop of mercy is intermingled? Is he ever visited with calamity which does not in some way contemplate his own temporal or eternal good? Could we see all, we should see that we are never placed in circumstances in which there is not much for which we should thank God. And when, in his dealings, a cloud seems to cover his face, let us remember the good things without number which we have received, and especially remember that we are in the world of redeeming love, and we shall find enough for which to be thankful.

For this is the will of God. That is, that you should be grateful. This is what God is pleased to require you to perform in the name of the Lord Jesus. In the gift of that Saviour he has laid the foundation for that claim, and he requires that you should not be unmindful of the obligation. (cf note Hebrews 13:15). (Barnes' Notes on the New Testament)

**J Vernon McGee** writes that **give thanks in everything** means...

in all circumstances, not just once a year, but all the time. This "is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." If you come to me and ask what is the will of God for you, I can tell you three specific things that are the will of God for you: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in everything. That is the will of God for you. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#) )

**Gary Delashmutt** writes that...

The New Testament teaches that gratitude is related to spiritual health in two different ways. We'll use a medical model to explore this ...

(1) Gratitude is a "thermometer" that indicates the state of your spiritual health. A thermometer is a tool that tells you whether you have one of the symptoms of physical illness (fever). It is not a medicine. You don't put the thermometer in the freezer and then stick it into your mouth to break your fever. You put it in your mouth and it tells you if you have a fever. In the same way, the presence or absence of gratitude in your dealings with God is one of the most reliable indicators of your spiritual health. This is because it (along with serving love) is the normal and natural result of personally understanding and receiving God's grace. Grace means charity—a gift to the undeserving.

(2) Gratitude is a "medicine" that promotes your spiritual health. Gratitude is not a feeling that dictates your choices; it is a choice that affects your feelings. This is what Paul is emphasizing in this passage. Most of the New Testament passages on gratitude are imperatives, addressed to our volition rather than to our emotions. He is not prescribing for us how we must feel; he is calling on us to choose to rejoice and thank God on the basis of what is true--regardless of how happy or thankful we may feel.

This is a key insight into biblical spirituality. It involves our feelings and experiences, but it is not rooted in them, because they are fallen and broken and unreliable. It is rooted in God's truth and our choice to express faith in the truth, often in spite of what we feel. This is why the notion that it is unspiritual to thank God unless you feel grateful is false. Choosing by faith to thank God in spite of intense feelings of depression, disappointment, anxiety, etc. is deeply spiritual. This is why if you wait until you feel grateful to thank God, you will feel less and less grateful. But if you choose to thank God regardless of how you feel,

you will feel more grateful more often. It is in this sense that gratitude is a key step of faith (along with serving love) that unleashes God's blessing into your experience. ("Grateful servants are happy people.").

**Wiersbe** wrote...

An attitude of gratitude is a wonderful weapon against unbelief, disobedience, a hard heart, and a bitter spirit. "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thes 5:16-18). Instead of complaining about what we don't have, let's be thankful for what we do have, because God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him. (Bible Exposition Commentary Old Testament)

We can't control the circumstances of life, but we can control how we respond to them. That's what faith is all about, daring to believe that God is working everything for our good even when we don't feel like it or see it happening. "In everything give thanks" (1Thes. 5:18) isn't always easy to obey, but obeying this command is the best antidote against a bitter and critical spirit. The Scottish preacher George H. Morrison said, "Nine-tenths of our unhappiness is selfishness, and is an insult cast in the face of God." (Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament)

(Commenting on Psalm 146:1, 2 Wiersbe writes) God gives us life and breath (Acts 17:25), so it is only right that we use that life and breath to praise Him (Ps 150:6). To receive the gifts and ignore the Giver is the essence of idolatry. The writer promised God he would praise Him all of his life, and certainly this is wise preparation for praising Him for eternity (Ps 104:33). To live a life of praise is to overcome criticism and complaining, to stop competing against others and comparing ourselves with them. It means to be grateful in and for everything (1Th. 5:18; Eph. 5:20) and really believe that God is working all things together for our good (Ro 8:28). A life of praise is free from constant anxiety and discouragement as we focus on the Lord, who is mentioned eleven times in this psalm. (Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament)

**Steven Cole** highlights the importance of our willingness to submit to God and to trust God if we are to truly give thanks in everything - David writes (Ps 86:12), "I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart." Similarly, right after telling us to pray without ceasing, Paul says (1Th. 5:18), "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." We cannot give thanks to God from the heart unless we are **submissive** to His sovereign hand in our circumstances and we **believe** that He is working even our trials together for our ultimate good.

**BBC** wrote that even the "Pagans who recognized that Fate or some god was sovereign over everything acknowledged that one should accept whatever comes or even give thanks for it. For Paul, those who trust God's sovereignty and love can give thanks in every situation. (Bible Background Commentary)

**Disciple's Study Bible** - God's will is that we gratefully acknowledge His hand in all circumstances, not for all circumstances. Circumstances change; God does not. The Christian has an obligation to remain aware of God's goodness regardless of appearances. Continuous prayer involves an attitude of openness to God in all situations and a practice of talking to God about all situations.

**Merrill Unger** wrote that **thanksgiving** is "A duty of which gratitude is the grace. This obligation of godliness is acknowledged by the universal sentiment of mankind; but as a Christian grace it has some blessed peculiarities. It is gratitude for all the benefits of divine Providence, especially for the general and personal gifts of redemption. The very term most in use shows this; it is charis, which is the grace of God in Christ, operating in the soul of the believer as a principle and going back to Him in gratitude: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2Cor. 9:15). The ethical gratitude of Christianity connects every good gift and every perfect gift with the gift of Christ. Moreover, it is a thanksgiving that in the Christian economy, and in it alone, redounds to God for all things: in everything give thanks. This characteristic flows from the former. The rejoicing that we have in the Lord, and the everlasting consolation we possess in Him, makes every possible variety of divine dispensation a token for good. The Christian privilege is to find reason for gratitude in all things: "for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians. 5:18). ([Unger, M. F., Harrison, R. K., Vos, H. F., Barber, C. J., & Unger, M. F. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**James Smith** - 1Chr 16:7, R.V. Prayer Study No. 8.

This Psalm is a compilation from three others. 1Chr 16:8-22 consists of first 15 verses of Psalm 105:23-33, quotations from Psalm 116:34-36 from Psalm 106.

David drew attention—

1. To Works of God (1Chr 16:8, etc.).

2. To Majesty of God (1Chr 16:23, etc.).

3. To Mercy of God (1Chr 16:34).

This latter is sweetest note of all. The chief work not to *pray*, but to *praise*. In everything give thanks. When He took the cup He gave thanks.

**"In Everything Give Thanks!"**

"Mid sunshine, cloud or stormy days,  
When hope abounds or care dismays,  
When trials press and toils increase  
Let not thy faith in God decrease—  
'In every thing give thanks.'

"All things we know shall work for good,  
Nor would we change them if we could;  
'Tis well if only He command;  
His promises will ever stand—  
'In every thing give thanks.'

"He satisfies the longing heart,  
He thwarts the tempter's cruel dart,  
With goodness fills the hungry soul,  
And helps us sing when billows roll.  
'In every thing give thanks.'"

—Selected

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**A Lost Art (Our Daily Bread)** - Thankfulness seems to be a lost art today. Warren Wiersbe illustrated this problem in his commentary on Colossians. He told about a ministerial student in Evanston, Illinois, who was part of a life-saving squad. In 1860, a ship went aground on the shore of Lake Michigan near Evanston, and Edward Spencer waded again and again into the frigid waters to rescue 17 passengers. In the process, his health was permanently damaged. Some years later at his funeral, it was noted that not one of the people he rescued ever thanked him.

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In his book FOLK PSALMS OF FAITH, Ray Stedman tells of an experience H. A. Ironside had in a crowded restaurant. Just as Ironside was about to begin his meal, a man approached and asked if he could join him. Ironside invited him to have a seat. Then, as was his custom, Ironside bowed his head in prayer. When he opened his eyes, the other man asked, "Do you have a headache?" Ironside replied, "No, I don't." The other man asked, "Well, is there something wrong with your food?" Ironside replied, "No, I was simply thanking God as I always do before I eat."

The man said, "Oh, you're one of those, are you? Well, I want you to know I never give thanks. I earn my money by the sweat of my brow and I don't have to give thanks to anybody when I eat. I just start right in!"

Ironside said, "Yes, you're just like my dog. That's what he does too!" (Ray Stedman, Folk Psalms of Faith)

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In a sermon at Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, Gary Wilburn said: "In 1636, amid the darkness of the Thirty Years' War, a German pastor, Martin Rinkart, is said to have buried five thousand of his parishioners in one year, and average of fifteen a day. His parish was ravaged by war, death, and economic disaster. In the heart of that darkness, with the cries of fear outside his window, he sat down and wrote this table grace for his children:

**'Now thank we all our God**

**With heart and hands and voices**

**Who wondrous things had done**

**In whom His world rejoices.**

**Who, from our mother's arms,  
Hath led us on our way  
With countless gifts of love  
And still is ours today**

Here was a man who knew thanksgiving comes from love of God, not from outward circumstances. (Don Maddox)

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Scottish minister **Alexander Whyte** was known for his uplifting prayers in the pulpit. He always found something for which to be grateful. One Sunday morning the weather was so gloomy that one church member thought to himself...

Certainly the preacher won't think of anything for which to thank the Lord on a wretched day like this.

Much to his surprise, however, Pastor Whyte began by praying...

We thank Thee, O God, that it is not always like this.

That's the habitual attitude of gratitude Paul is calling for in all of God's children, beloved. Gratitude is an attitude that like all spiritual disciplines, needs to be consciously developed and deliberately cultivated in the dependence on the Holy Spirit and the grace in which we stand. There are some practical steps that can cultivate the gracious attribute of gratitude. For example, you can make thanksgiving a priority in your prayer life (Col 4:2-note) rather than focusing only on petitions and requests. There may even be blessed times when your prayer time consists of nothing but gratefulness to the Almighty. You can always thank Him for the various wonderful aspects of your salvation (adoption & sovereign care, forgiveness, inheritance, the gift of His Spirit, freedom from sin's power and Satan's authority, etc) Have you had any prayer times like that recently? And you can thank Him for the "smaller" blessings of life, those things we all too often take for granted. You can ask Him to make you very sensitive to grumbling and mumbling complaints which are the polar opposite of a thankful spirit. You can utilize spiritual songs (Ep 5:20-note) to cultivate an attitude of thankfulness, allowing the words of a wonderful hymn to lift your eyes and heart in a way that nothing else can. Thank people who bless you in even the smallest ways. It will complete your enjoyment of the blessing, and it will increase your capacity to thank God. Reflect on and serve those less fortunate than you. This will remind you of how gracious God has been to you, how far He has brought you, and how much He has blessed you—which will in turn motivate you to be grateful to God.

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**Give Thanks!** (READ: Leviticus 23:15-22) - At harvest time it's natural to thank God for the bounty of His blessings. The Feast of Weeks in ancient Israel, established in Leviticus 23, was a week of joyous celebration and feasting in gratitude for the harvest (Dt. 16:9, 10, 11, 12). Even today as farmers gather their crops, many give thanks to the Lord for the abundance of their harvest.

But what if untimely and persistent rain keeps the farmer from getting his machines into the fields and harvesting the ripe grain? What if a sudden hailstorm flattens the corn? Or a summer drought dries up the fields?

The apostle Paul wrote, "In everything give thanks" (1Th 5:18). That may sound unrealistic. But think about it. The Jews were instructed to celebrate the Feast of Weeks whether the crops came in or not. Likewise, we are to give thanks to the Lord "in everything." After all, our praise is to God, not to a barn full of hay or a crib full of corn.

Yes, we can give thanks. We can do so whether the day goes smoothly or we meet aggravating problems. We can be grateful if we're rich or poor, when we're feeling well or if our health fails. In every circumstance, we can affirm God's goodness and discover reasons to give thanks to Him. After all, our gratitude is to Him and for Him. — David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Consider what the Lord has done  
For you and those you love;  
Then give Him thanks with hearts of praise  
For blessings from above. --Sper

**We don't need more to be thankful for,  
we need to be more thankful.**

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**A Flat Thanks** - The day before Christmas became a thanksgiving day for my family. The station wagon was packed with kids and travel stuff for the 400-mile trip to Grandma's. As is our custom, before leaving we asked God to protect us on the road. He did,

but in an unusual way.

As we were cruising down I-75 in Ohio, we ran over some debris in the road. It made a lot of noise, but did no damage—or so we thought. With every passing mile we figured that the crisis had passed. When we pulled off the expressway for gas a few miles later, though, we were in for a deflating surprise. I felt a sickening, sloppy feeling in the front of the car. Both front tires had gone flat.

We weren't happy with having to replace the tires, but we were thankful for God's care. Thankful that we didn't have an accident. Thankful that the tires stayed inflated until we got off the expressway. Thankful for the tow truck sitting at the gas station. Thankful that a repair shop was open. We were thankful for God's answer to our prayer.

Our trials were nothing compared with what the apostle Paul endured. Yet he gave thanks to God, and he said we should be thankful "in everything." Any day can be thanksgiving day, even when things go wrong.— Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

We should be ready to give the Lord thanks  
For blessing as well as for test;  
Hearts that are thankful is all that He asks;  
Let's trust Him to give what is best. —Bierema

**If you pause to think,  
you'll have cause to thank.**

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**Everyday Blessings** - Missionary Benjamin Weir was held hostage in Lebanon and imprisoned under miserable conditions for 16 months. In his first interview after his release, he was asked how he spent his time and how he dealt with boredom and despair. His answer stunned the reporters. He simply said, "Counting my blessings."

"Blessings?" they responded.

"Yes," he explained. "Some days I got to take a shower. Sometimes there were some vegetables in my food. And I could always be thankful for the love of my family."

We can understand why the reporters were astonished. It's hard for most of us to be consistently thankful for the commonplace blessings that make life pleasant and comfortable--the unfailing supply of our daily needs, the provision of food and shelter, the companionship of friends and families. There are times when we may even forget the wonderful mercies of God's redeeming grace.

Paul and Silas, though they were beaten, thrown into prison, and placed in stocks, were still "singing hymns to God" (Acts 16:25). May we learn from them, and from Benjamin Weir, to count our blessings no matter what our circumstances. We have many reasons to rejoice. — Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?  
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?  
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,  
And you will be singing as the days go by. --Oatman

**Praise to God comes naturally  
when you count your blessings.**

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**Thanks For Fleas** - Corrie ten Boom was an inspiration and challenge to thousands of people after World War II. Hearts were stirred and lives changed as she told with moving simplicity about God's sufficiency to meet her needs, even as a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp.

Not only was the camp filthy, but there were fleas everywhere. Corrie's sister Betsie, who was imprisoned with her, insisted that 1

Thessalonians 5:18 was God's will for them: "In everything give thanks." But giving thanks in a flea-infested place seemed unrealistic to Corrie—until she realized why the guards didn't come into their barracks to make them stop praying and singing hymns. They wanted to avoid the fleas! So, the prisoners were free to worship and study the Bible. The fleas, yes, even the fleas were agents of grace, and something to be thankful for.

What are some of the "fleas" in our lives? They aren't the big difficulties, but the petty annoyances. They are the little trials from which we can't escape. Is it possible that they are one of the ways the Lord teaches us spiritual lessons and helps us to increase our endurance?

When we are tempted to grumble, let's remember the fleas and give thanks. —Vernon C. Grounds [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For all the heartaches and the tears,  
For gloomy days and fruitless years  
I do give thanks, for now I know  
These were the things that helped me grow! —Crandlemire

**If you pause to think,  
you'll find cause to thank.**

### **FOR THIS IS GOD'S WILL IN CHRIST JESUS: touto gar thelema theou en Christo lesou eis humas**

**For (gar)** is a term of explanation which should always prompt a pause to ponder.

**Take a moment and do a survey of some Scriptural passages related to God's will**(interrogate with the **5W'S & H** [for many of the passages it will be important to check the **context**] and write down your observations/applications in your devotional notebook) - Mt 6:10-note, Mt 7:21-note, Mt 12:50, 26:42, Mark 3:35, Jn 4:34, 6:40, 7:17, Acts 13:22, 21:14, 22:14, Ro 12:2-note, Eph 5:17-note, Ep 6:6-note, Col 1:9-note, Col 4:12-note, 1Th 4:3-note, 1Th 5:18-note, Heb 10:7-note, He 10:36-note, He 13:21-note, 1Pe 2:15-note, 1Pe 4:2-note, 1Jn 2:17-note, Ps 40:8-note, Ps 143:10-note

**For (gar)** introduces an explanation, in this case Paul explains why all saints should be motivated to continually be grateful. According to **Hiebert** the preposition **for (gar)** "introduces the fact that this triplet of commands is justified because of God's will for the readers."

**Hiebert** goes on to comment on **this** (touto) that "There is some uncertainty as to the intended scope of **this**" (touto). Is it to be restricted to thanksgiving alone, or does it include all three injunctions?... The context favors this inclusive reference. Rejoicing, prayer, and thanksgiving form a trio that are closely related and must not be separated in practice. If the dove of Christian joy is continually to mount upward, it must fly on the wings of prayer and thanksgiving." ([Hiebert, D. Edmond: 1 & 2 Thessalonians: BMH Book, 1996](#))

**Guzik** comments that "After each one of these exhortations - **rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks** - we are told to do them because it is the will of God. The thought isn't "this is God's will, so you must do it." The thought is rather "this is God's will, so you can do it." It isn't easy to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks, but we can do it because it is God's will. ([Ref](#))

**This is God's will** - Paul was not teaching that we should thank God **for** everything that happens to us, but **in** everything. Even in evil circumstances, we can still be thankful for God's presence and for the good that He will accomplish through the distress.

**Will (2307)(thelema** from **thelo** = to will with the **"-ma"** suffix indicating the result of the will = "a thing willed") generally speaks of the result of what one has decided. One sees this root word in the feminine name "**Thelma**." In its most basic form, **thelema** refers to a wish, a strong desire, and the willing of some event. (**Note:** See also the discussion of the preceding word **boule** for comments relating to thelema).

**Zodhiates** says that **thelema** is the "Will, not to be conceived as a demand, but as an expression or inclination of pleasure towards that which is liked, that which pleases and creates joy. When it denotes God's will, it signifies His gracious disposition toward something. Used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure. ([Zodhiates, S. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament. AMG](#) )

**Thelema** - 62x in 58v - Mt 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31; 26:42; Mark 3:35; Luke 12:47; 22:42; 23:25; Jn 1:13; 4:34; 5:30; 6:38, 39, 40; 7:17; 9:31; Acts 13:22; 21:14; 22:14; Ro 1:10-note; Ro 2:18-note; Ro 12:2-note; Ro 15:32-note; 1Cor 1:1; 7:37; 16:12; 2Cor 1:1; 8:5; Gal 1:4; Ep 1:1-note, Ep 1:5-note, Ep 1:9-note, Ep 1:11-note; Ep 2:3-note; Ep 5:17-note; Ep 6:6-note; Col 1:1-note, Col

1:9-note; Col 4:12-note; 1Th 4:3-note; 1Th 5:18-note; 2Ti 1:1-note; 2Ti 2:26-note; He 10:7-note, He 10:9-note, He 10:10-note, He 10:36-note; He 13:21-note; 1Pe 2:15-note; 1Pe 3:17-note; 1Pe 4:2-note, 1Pe 4:19-note; 2Pe 1:21-note; 1Jn 2:17; 5:14; Rev 4:11-note. **NAS** = desire(1), desires(1), will(57).

**Thelema** has both an objective meaning ("what one wishes to happen") and a subjective connotation ("the act of willing or desiring"). The word conveys the idea of desire, even a heart's desire, for the word primarily expresses emotion instead of volition. Thus God's will is not so much God's intention, as it is His heart's desire. It is God's gracious disposition.

Don't complain about thorns among the roses!

Be grateful for roses among the thorns! (Jas 1:2-note; Phil 4:6-note)

All the way my savior leads me;  
What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy,  
Who thro' life has been my guide?  
heav'nly peace divinest comfort,  
Here by faith in Him to dwell!  
For I know whate'er befall me,  
Jesus doeth all things well;  
For I know whate'er befall me,  
Jesus doeth all things well;  
Cheers each winding path I tread,  
Gives me grace for ev'ry trial,  
Feeds me with the living bread;  
Tho' my weary steps may falter,  
and my soul athirst may be,  
Gushing from the Rock before me,  
Lo! a spring of joy I see;  
Gushing from the Rock before me,  
Lo! a spring of joy I see;

All the way, my Savior leads me;  
Oh, the fullness of His love!  
Perfect rest to me is promised  
In my Father's house above:  
When my spirit, clothed immortal,  
Wings its flight to realms of day,  
This my song thro' endless ages:  
Jesus led me all the way;  
This my song thro' endless ages:  
Jesus led me all the way;

Do not meet adverse circumstances of life with a spirit of stoic resignation but with a spirit of unfailing gratitude. (Heb 12:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 see **notes** He 12:5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11 to help understand this powerful truth of God's discipline & its ultimate purpose... then with that perspective you can offer thanks in everything, even though you may feel or be experiencing sorrow. It is "Him-possible")

In Acts 16 Paul and Silas are in prison in Philippi and Luke records that "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." (Acts 16:25) Such an attitude is possible only by the grace of God and the empowering Spirit of God. As someone has said "He who can say 'Amen' to the will of God in his heart will be able to say 'Hallelujah' also."

**Ray Stedman** writes that "Twice in this letter we have had this phrase, "This is the will of God." We had it first in 1Thessalonians 4:3, where Paul says, "This is the will of God for you, that you know how to preserve your own body in moral purity." That is the will of God for your body! But here is the will of God for your spirit, your inner life -- that you "give thanks in all circumstances." If you want to do the will of God there are the two areas in which his will is clearly set out for you:

Moral purity for your body;  
Continual thanksgiving for your spirit.

**In Christ Jesus** - Christ Jesus Himself is the pattern and source of a life of habitual gratitude. Gratitude to God found its supreme manifestation in Christ's earthly life, and it is only in union with Him (see In Christ and also in Christ Jesus) that such a life is possible for the believer. This life is the product of the new life received from Him and is made operative in believers by the indwelling Holy Spirit. In his description of Spirit filled or controlled believers Paul wrote that they are "**always giving thanks for all things** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father (Eph 5:20note)

**Comment:** MacArthur commenting on Ephesians 5:20 writes that "To be thankful always is to recognize God's control of our lives in every detail as He seeks to conform us to the image of His Son. Nothing must grieve the Holy Spirit so much as the believer who does not give thanks. In King Lear (I.ii.283, 312) Shakespeare wrote, "Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend! ... How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" When God brings trials and difficulties into our lives and we complain and grumble, we question His wisdom and love as well as His sovereignty... The only person who can genuinely give thanks for all things is the humble person, the person who knows he deserves nothing and who therefore gives thanks even for the smallest things. Lack of thankfulness comes from pride, from the conviction that we deserve something better than we have. [[MacArthur: Ephesians](#)]

**James Denney** comments that...

The third of the standing orders of the Church is, from one point of view, a combination of the first and second; for thanksgiving is a kind of joyful prayer. As a duty, it is recognised by everyone within limits; the difficulty of it is only seen when it is claimed, as here, without limits: **In everything give thanks**. That this is no accidental extravagance is shown by its recurrence in other places. To mention only one: in Php 4:6 (note) the Apostle writes "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Is it really possible to do this thing?

There are times, we all know, at which thanksgiving is natural and easy. When our life has taken the course which we ourselves had purposed, and the result seems to justify our foresight; when those whom we love are prosperous and happy; when we have escaped a great danger, or recovered from a severe illness, we feel, or say we feel, so thankful. Even in such circumstances we are possibly not so thankful as we ought to be. Perhaps, if we were, our lives would be a great deal happier. But at all events we frankly admit that we have cause for thanksgiving; God has been good to us, even in our own estimate of goodness; and we ought to cherish and express our grateful love toward Him. Let us not forget to do so. It has been said that an unblessed sorrow is the saddest thing in life; but perhaps as sad a thing is an unblessed joy. And every joy is unblessed for which we do not give God thanks. "Unhallowed pleasures" is a strong expression, which seems proper only to describe gross wickedness; yet it is the very name which describes any pleasure in our life of which we do not recognise God as the Giver, and for which we do not offer Him our humble and hearty thanks.

We would not be so apt to protest against the idea of giving thanks in **everything** if it had ever been our habit to give thanks in **anything**.

Think of what you call, with thorough conviction, your blessings and your mercies, — your bodily health, your soundness of mind, your calling in this world, the faith which you repose in others and which others repose in you; think of the love of your husband or wife. Think of all those sweet and tender ties that bind our lives into one; think of the success with which you have wrought out your own purposes, and laboured at your own ideal; and with all this multitude of mercies before your face, ask whether even for these you have given God thanks. Have they been hallowed and made means of grace to you by your grateful acknowledgment that He is the Giver of them. all? If not, it is plain that you have lost much joy, and have to begin the duty of thanksgiving in the easiest and lowest place.

But the Apostle rises high above this when he says, **In everything give thanks**. He knew, as I have remarked already, that the Thessalonians had been visited by suffering and death: is there a place for thanksgiving there? Yes, he says; for the Christian does not look on sorrow with the eyes of another man. When sickness comes to him or to his home; when there is loss to be borne, or disappointment, or bereavement; when his plans are frustrated, his hopes deferred, and the whole conduct of his life simply taken out of his hands, he is still called to give thanks to God. For he knows that God is love. He knows that God has a purpose of His own in his life, — a purpose which at the moment he may not discern, but which he is bound to believe wiser and larger than any he could purpose for himself. Everyone who has eyes to see must have seen, in the lives of Christian men and women, fruits of sorrow and of suffering which were conspicuously their best possessions, the things for which the whole Church was under obligation to give



thanks to God on their behalf.

It is not easy at the moment to see what underlies **sorrow**; it is not possible to grasp by anticipation the beautiful fruits which it yields in the long run to those who accept it without murmuring; but every Christian knows that all things work together for good to them that love God (see note Romans 8:28); and in the strength of that knowledge he is able to keep a thankful heart, however mysterious and trying the providence of God may be.

That **sorrow**, even the deepest and most hopeless, has been blessed, no one can deny. It has taught many a deeper thoughtfulness, a truer estimate of the world and its interests, a more simple trust in God. It has opened the eyes of many to the sufferings of others, and changed boisterous rudeness into tender and delicate sympathy. It has given many weak ones the opportunity of demonstrating the nearness and the strength of Christ, as out of weakness they have been made strong. Often the sufferer in a home is the most thankful member of it. Often the bedside is the surmiest spot in the house, though the bedridden one knows that he or she will never be free again. It is not impossible for a Christian in everything to give thanks.

But it is only a Christian who can do it, as the last words of the Apostle intimate: **This is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward.**" These words may refer to all that has preceded: **"Rejoice alway; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks"**; or they may refer to the last clause only. Whichever be the case, the Apostle tells us that the ideal in question has only been revealed in Christ, and hence is only within reach of those who know Christ. Till Christ came, no man ever dreamt of rejoicing alway, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks in everything. There were noble ideals in the world, high, severe, and pure; but nothing so lofty, buoyant, and exhilarating as this. Men did not know God well enough to know what His will for them was; they thought He demanded integrity, probably, and beyond that, silent and passive submission at the most; no one had conceived that God's will for man was that his life should be made up of joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. But he who has seen Jesus Christ, and has discovered the meaning of His life, knows that this is the true ideal. For Jesus came into our world, and lived among us, that we might know God; He manifested the name of God that we might put our trust in it; and that name is Love; it is Father. If we know the Father, it is possible for us, in the spirit of children, to aim at this lofty Christian ideal; if we do not, it will seem to us utterly unreal. The will of God in Christ Jesus means the will of the Father; it is only for children that His will exists. Do not put aside the apostolic exhortation as paradox or extravagance; to Christian hearts, to the children of God, he speaks words of truth and soberness when he says, **Rejoice alway; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks.** Has not Christ Jesus given us peace with God, and made us friends instead of enemies? Is not that a fountain of joy too deep for sorrow to touch? Has He not assured us that He is with us all the days, even to the end of the world? Is not that a ground upon which we can look up in prayer all the day long? Has He not told us that all things work together for good to them that love God? Of course we cannot trace His operation always; but when we remember the seal with which Christ sealed that great truth; when we remember that in order to fulfil the purpose of God in each of us He laid down His life on our behalf, can we hesitate to trust His word? And if we do not hesitate, but welcome it gladly as our hope in the darkest hour, shall we not try even in everything to give thanks?

**Matthew Henry** - If we pray without ceasing, we shall not want matter for thanksgiving in every thing. As we must in every thing make our requests known to God by supplications, so we must not omit thanksgiving, Philippians 4:6. We should be thankful in every condition, even in adversity as well as prosperity. It is never so bad with us but it might be worse. If we have ever so much occasion to make our humble complaints to God, we never can have any reason to complain of God, and have always much reason to praise and give thanks: the apostle says, This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us, that we give thanks, seeing God is reconciled to us in Christ Jesus; in him, through him, and for his sake, he allows us to rejoice evermore, and appoints us in every thing to give thanks. It is pleasing to God.

**Andrew Murray** - A joyful, thankful life is what God has destined for us, is what He will work in us: what He desires, that He certainly does in those who do not withstand Him, but receive and suffer His will to work in them. (The New Life)

**William Barclay** - There is always something for which to give thanks; even on the darkest day there are blessings to count. We must remember that if we face the sun the shadows will fall behind us but if we turn our backs on the sun all the shadows will be in front.

A French proverb says "Gratitude is the heart's memory."

Although he was not a Christian as far as I can discern, Cicero has some sage advice remarking that "A thankful heart is the parent of all virtues."

## Chrysostom's example of "Praise For All Things"...

Three hundred years after Paul lived John Chrysostom, a good and brave man who preached very plainly against iniquity of all kinds. The empress was not a good woman, so she schemed to have him falsely accused and banished. He died an exile from his home.

Thirty years later, his body was bought back to Constantinople for burial in the imperial tomb. Chrysostom's motto was inscribed on the tomb: "Praise God for everything!"

As his friends testified, "When he was driven from home, when he was a stranger in the strange land, his letters would often end with that doxology, 'Praise God for all things!'"

Where did Chrysostom get his motto? From Paul—"In everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians. 5:18). (Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations)

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In Everything Give Thanks = Taking [a] "servant" attitude of thankfulness in all of life's circumstances will help you react as old Matthew Henry did when he was mugged. He wrote in his diary, "Let me be thankful first because I was never robbed before; second, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed." I wonder if I could be that thankful. Could you (or I)? One of the greatest marks of spiritual maturity is the ability to give thanks when it's tough.

G. K. Chesterton, when asked what was the greatest lesson he had ever learned in life, said, "The greatest lesson I have learned is to take things with gratitude and not take them for granted." He also wrote, "You say grace before meals. All right But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, walking, playing, and grace before I dip the pen in the ink." Throughout the Scripture, we hear the call to give thanks. Thanksgiving is faith in action

A woman had a parrot who always complained about everything. It was Thanksgiving Eve, and she was preparing the Thanksgiving meal. The parrot complained about everything as she worked. Finally, she had heard enough. She took him out of his cage and opened the refrigerator to put him in to punish him, "You'll stay in the refrigerator until you cool off and get control on your tongue," she said as she put him and closed the door. The parrot was stunned. Shivering, he caught a glimpse of the Thanksgiving turkey, skinned, legs pointing upward from the pan. The parrot said to the turkey, "Good heavens, man! What did you say?"

Focus on your "haves," not your "have-nots." The hymn says, "Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done." As the psalmist said, "Forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

Observe that in 1Thes 5:16 and 1Thes 5:18 we have rejoicing coupled with thanksgiving. This same combination appears in Colossians 1:11-12 "Joyously giving thanks to the Father." Paul's association of thanksgiving (**eucharisteo**) and joy (**chara**) is not surprising for they both derive from the the same Greek root (**charis**) which is our word "**grace**." And so grace is the foundation for fallen men and women to be enabled by the Spirit to keep on rejoicing and keep on giving thanks when the circumstances are not very joy filled! And remember the lost world is watching. Will I respond naturally or supernaturally. The first draws attention to me, but the latter points toward the Father (Mt 5:16)!

Thanksgiving is **eucharisteo**, and joy is **chara**. If you don't give thanks, what will you give? Anger, resentment, doubt, complaint? The secret to abounding joy is the gratitude attitude. "When you can't change the wind, adjust your sails."

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**Be Filled With Thankfulness** - Throughout history, many cultures have set aside a time for expressing their thankfulness. In the US, Thanksgiving Day originated with the pilgrims. In the midst of extreme hardship, loss of loved ones, and meager supplies, they still believed they were blessed. They chose to celebrate God's blessings by sharing a meal with Native Americans who had helped them survive.

We know we've lost the spirit of that original celebration when we catch ourselves complaining that our Thanksgiving Day has been "spoiled" by bad weather, disappointing food, or a bad cold. It's we who are spoiled—spoiled by the very blessings that should make every day a day of thanksgiving, whatever our circumstances.

Billy Graham wrote, "Ingratitude is a sin, just as surely as is lying or stealing or immorality or any other sin condemned by the Bible." He then quoted Romans 1:21, one of the Bible's indictments against rebellious humanity. Then Dr. Graham added, "Nothing

turns us into bitter, selfish, dissatisfied people more quickly than an ungrateful heart. And nothing will do more to restore contentment and the joy of our salvation than a true spirit of thankfulness."

Which condition describes you?—Joanie Yoder

A grumbling mood of discontent

Gives way to thankfulness

When we consider all God's gifts

And all that we possess. —Sper

**Gratitude is a God-honoring attitude**