

## **Rejoice, Pray, Give Thanks**

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

Being connected to the vine, you truly can rejoice always. The circumstances of life are temporary and fleeting. You are but a stranger here, and heaven is your home. With that understanding, the cares of this world lose their sting. While you still will be sad about many things that afflict you, your heart rejoices in God your Savior.

Staying connected to the vine also means communicating to God about those things which rob you of joy, and those things that make you rejoice. He talks to you through the Word, you talk to him in prayer. To pray continually means your thoughts quickly and frequently turn to the Father. The Apostle Paul says it this way-

† **Romans 12:12** *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

If you are happy or sad, talk to God about it. If you are lonely or surrounded by family and friends, talk to God about it. If you are famished or full, talk to God about it. Be faithful in prayer, as God is faithful in listening to those prayers. Then give thanks to God that he is in your life, not just as a casual observer, but as a loving Father.

Rejoice, pray, and give thanks, not as a fanatic, but as member of God's family. God is your Father, and he loves you beyond understanding. Jesus is your brother, who donated his life that you might live with him. The Spirit is your resident in-dweller, who guides and supports you with Scripture and sacraments. You are family. Live in him, with him, for him.

***Your life is not your own. Your life is your personal ministry to God.***