



Appreciation for Our God

Appreciation for our God is a lifestyle endeavor. Tucked in at the conclusion of Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica, this admonition to "pray without ceasing" comes as a part of a series of closing thoughts. These appear to be a collection of assorted instructions, but that is no reason to dismiss this call to prayer as a lesser teaching.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

How is it that we are to "rejoice always" or to "pray without ceasing"? Peter teaches us that our rejoicing is not to be contingent upon of circumstances. Rather, even if we suffer or simply cannot see or feel the presence of God in our current circumstances, we can and should rejoice (1 Peter 1:6-9). So, it's not that we need something new to rejoice about. We have God's daily blessings to rejoice in, even when they are at risk of being overshadowed by the struggles that might come our way.

With this impediment removed, we still need to come to some understanding of what it means to not cease in our prayer. It is not that Paul is asking us to spend all day on our knees, though a bit more time in that posture would never hurt. No, the posture that Paul is suggesting is one in which prayer is even in our heart throughout our day. There may be times when this prayer is in the forefront of our minds, but I don't think that the request is that it always is. If we think of our prayer not as momentary list of requests for God, but an ongoing conversation in which God speaks to us throughout the day through life events and the words and actions of others, then we are able to cultivate a posture in which we are always ready and able to respond with a brief prayerful thought to God as we remain attentive to His blessings throughout the day. Through this we are able to prepare ourselves to cultivate gratitude in such a way that we show ongoing appreciation to God through ceaseless prayer and rejoicing.

Thoughts for Reflection

Give some thought about how you can cultivate your prayer life to be more unceasing. What can you do in the coming week to attune yourself toward offering your appreciation in gratitude to God throughout your daily life?