

Sermon Notes – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – Pray Continually

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

Prayer is not a narration. It is **awareness** of His presence and of His voice. It is **awareness** that He has opinions on the day.

It is not an **awareness** so strong that I never sin or so strong it stops me from saying stupid things. It is not even an **awareness** so strong that I never have any doubts.

Prayer is less about sin or my own stupidity than it is a constant awareness that God is unfolding His plan right before my eyes.

To pray continually is to be aware of God's presence throughout the day, especially as you interact with other people.

There will be formal times for prayer.

1. When you roll out of bed...
2. Before we eat as a family...
3. Before we eat with others...
4. Before we do something as a group...
5. When someone is sick...
6. Before you close your eyes at night...

Pour Out Your Heart Prayers -- Don't confess your sins unless you have some time to hear from God. Don't dump and run.

Informal Prayers -- The rest of the time, prayer is more informal. Maybe more like texting as opposed to a phone call, but that puts God too far away. He's very close.

God is Positive – Read Philippians 4:4-9

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. – Philippians 4:8

Tony Campolo suggests, that when you pray at night before you go to sleep, run through the good things you did with God today.

- Think about what you said that was true today.
- What you did that was noble.
- What you did that was right.
- Think about a moment in your day that was pure.
- What did you do today that was lovely.
- What you did that was admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.

God Isn't Concerned about the Past

God is there to help you to love and to be loved, to forgive and to be forgiven, to heal and be healed, to tell the truth and to hear the truth about yourself. God is constantly there for you.

And God lives in the present and has taken care of the past.

Pray Continuously

Questions -- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 – Pray Continually

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1. When do you pray during the day?
2. How would you describe prayer?
3. Do you find God is more positive or negative?
4. Name one good thing you did today.
 - Think about what you said that was true today.
 - What you did that was noble.
 - What you did that was right.
 - Think about a moment in your day that was pure.
 - What did you do today that was lovely.
 - What you did that was admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.
5. Is there anything in your past that you feel like holds you back from doing good? How does God feel about that?
6. What would it take for you to begin praying continuously?

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