

Grateful in the Battle

Dr. John Carmichael

[1Th 5:16-18 NASB95] 16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

- Gratitude is not the seasoning of the Christian life. It is a strategy in the Christian life.
- In Scripture, thanksgiving is not something believers offer after the breakthrough. It is something they give before it. Right in the battle.
- Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians to a persecuted, pressured church. God's will wasn't that they "enjoyed" the trial, but that they chose "joy in" the trial. Gratitude is what transforms pain into praise, fear into faith, and chaos into confidence.
- Today, we step into the end of the year with a fresh declaration: Gratitude is our weapon, and God is our victory.

What does being grateful in the battle look like in our lives today?

Here are four things from this passage that shows us what being grateful in the battle looks like in our lives today.

I. GRATITUDE REFUSES TO LET THE BATTLE STEAL YOUR JOY

- a. [1Th 5:16 NASB95] 16 Rejoice always;
- b. "Rejoice always" isn't emotional denial. It's spiritual determination. Joy is not an emotion; it is a supernatural strength given by the Spirit.
- c. Smith Wigglesworth – "The reason the world is not seeing Jesus is that Christian people are not filled with Jesus. When you are filled with joy, you will be a magnet for souls."
- d. [Neh 8:10 NASB95] 10 Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."
- e. Joy is not based on circumstance but on covenant. Joy strengthens you to keep fighting when the battle is long. Gratitude is how you protect your joy in adversity.
- f. Each morning this week: write down one thing God has done for you. Start your day fighting for your joy with gratitude.

II. GRATITUDE KEEPS YOU CONNECTED TO GOD WITH PRAYER IN THE BATTLE

- a. [1Th 5:17 NASB95] 17 pray without ceasing;
- b. [Phi 4:6-7 NASB95] 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- c. Thanksgiving and prayer are inseparable. Gratitude keeps your heart open, your spirit tender, and your faith active in the conflict.
- d. E. M. Bounds – "Gratitude is the soul's joy in remembering the goodness of God. Prayer fed by gratitude never grows cold."
- e. Prayer without gratitude becomes worry. Gratitude without prayer becomes sentiment. Together they unlock supernatural peace.
- f. When worry rises, stop and pray: "Lord, thank You that You are working in this." Let gratitude interrupt anxiety.

III. GRATITUDE DECLARES VICTORY BEFORE YOU SEE IT

- a. [1Th 5:18 NASB95] 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- b. HERE: Paul does not say give thanks for everything, but in everything. Gratitude shifts your focus from the problem to the Promise-Keeper.

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- i. HOWEVER, [Eph 5:20 NASB95] 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
- ii. How to reconcile:
 1. The first is faith in the moment. The second is faith for the outcome.
 2. “en” = Give thanks in the midst of all circumstances. Trusting God’s presence and character during the trial.
 3. “huper” = Give thanks for all that God is doing through all things. Trusting God’s sovereign ability to redeem, restore, and bring good
 4. “Lord, I thank You in this because You’re with me.”
 5. “Lord, I thank You for what You’re doing through this because You’re sovereign.”
- c. [Psa 34:1 NASB95] 1 [A Psalm] of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed. I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- d. Jack Hayford – “Praise is the highway to the throne of God, and thanksgiving is the paving stones beneath your feet.”
- e. Gratitude doesn’t deny the battle; it declares victory in advance. A thankful believer is a dangerous believer — the enemy fears people who keep praising. Gratitude invites God’s presence into your situation and disarms the enemy.
- f. Turn your hardest situation into your loudest thanksgiving. Speak it aloud: “God, thank You that this battle ends in victory.”

IV. GRATITUDE REBUILDS YOUR TRUST GOD’S WILL IS WORKING FOR YOU IN THE BATTLE

- a. [1Th 5:18 NASB95] 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
 - b. [Rom 8:28 NASB95] 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to [His] purpose.
 - c. David Wilkerson – “To be thankful in trial is to declare to hell itself: ‘My God is still working, and I will see His salvation.’”
 - d. Gratitude keeps your heart aligned with God’s purposes. When believers thank God together, faith rises and the atmosphere shifts. Gratitude brings unity; unity brings power; power brings breakthroughs.
 - e. Give God praise, knowing that His Will is to bring good in your life despite the battle.
- Gratitude isn’t a polite response. It’s a spiritual weapon God uses to bring peace, clarity, and victory in the middle of the battle.
 - Gratitude is not a mood; it is a weapon.
 - It calms your mind.
 - It strengthens your spirit.
 - It opens the door for peace.
 - It releases boldness.
 - It shifts atmospheres.
 - It produces victory.
 - This year may have had battles, but God is not finished.
 - When you stay grateful in the battle, you position yourself for God’s breakthrough.