

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM GOD YOU CAN OVERCOME!

The apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians these words to encourage them to be faithful and admonish them in their Christian journey while here on earth. It should be our encouragement as well!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (NIV) 16 **Be joyful always**; 17 **pray continually**; 18 **give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus**. 19 **Do not put out the Spirit's fire**; 20 **do not treat prophecies with contempt**. 21 **Test everything. Hold on to the good**. 22 **Avoid every kind of evil**. 23 **May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**. 24 **The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.**

Our ultimate concern in this life is to have full assurance that we are walking in fellowship with God. And because we have fellowship with God, we experience fulfillment in our life in Christ here on earth and have the assurance of eternal life.

We can see that life on earth (at it's best) has many disappointments and heartaches. The bible tells us that those who have never accepted God's gift of grace in Christ by dying to the life of sin and living a new life in Christ have no hope of eternal life. In fact they have the assurance of eternal condemnation. This is the result of those who choose to live in sin "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (**Romans 6:23 (NIV)**). This choice is left up to each individual. We all get to make our own choice. God has done every conceivable thing to bring man to repentance and forgiveness of sin through Christ, but it is up to each of us whether we choose to disregard His love, mercy and grace, or accept and submit to it.

Most Christians, although children of God, have a feeling of inadequacy in living a responsible Christ like life here on earth. We understand we have a responsibility to live for God and oftentimes we feel inadequate when we think of trying to live up to those responsibilities.

Anxiety and frustration can be one of the chief causes for Christians to fail to live faithfully, joyfully, and victoriously. This is why we are told, "**Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 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. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.**" (**Philippians 4:6-9 (NIV)**).

As Christians, we hold the key to reaching the lost with the gospel. If we are failing to do that, we should feel the weight of responsibility for the souls who will be lost because of our lack of love for lost humanity.

We don't have to fail; God has given us great encouragement that we are not alone in this fight against sin. He will help us live the Christian life and reach the lost with the gospel if we learn to love the lost and believe that He is able to help us.

LET'S LOOK AT THREE SCRIPTURES THAT WILL HELP US TO SEE THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN OUR QUEST TO LIVE GODLY LIVES. WE JUST NEED TO BELIEVE AND TRUST WHAT HE SAYS.

1. ***PHIL 4:13 I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.***
2. ***ROM 8:28-39. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose.*** For those God foreknew he also

predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he **predestined**, he also **called**; those he called, he also **justified**; those he justified, he also **glorified**. What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?** Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? **Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** For I am convinced that **neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

3. **1THS 5:16-24. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances,** for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. **Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies (preaching) with contempt. Test everything** (test it against God's word – the bible). **Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.**

Do you believe this? It is true whether we believe it or not! If we are to have the courage to do and be the person God made us to be, it is necessary that we learn to trust in God and believe what He says. Jesus said, "15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15 (NIV)) (Read through verse 21).

The thing that frightens most of us and causes doubts in our ability to live the Christian life is caused by our dependence on ourselves to have the courage and wisdom to live the life God has given us to live.

Note: These Scriptures we have referred to promise help from God. He will help if we will have faith in Him! He will work along with us as a co-worker. In **2COR 6:1-2** we read, "As **God's fellow workers** we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor **I heard you**, and in the day of salvation **I helped you.**" I tell you, **now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.**"

THERE ARE MANY REASONS UPON WHICH WE CAN DRAW ENCOURAGEMENT. LET'S CONSIDER A FEW.

Because, In Christ, We Are Free From Condemnation

"Therefore, *there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*" (ROM 8:1-2).

IN CHRIST:

1. I receive all spiritual blessings. (**EPH 1:3**).
2. I am made a son. (**EPH 1:5**).
3. I receive God's grace. (**EPH 1:6**).
4. I receive forgiveness of my sins; I am redeemed from sin by His blood! (**EPH 1:7**).

5. I get into Christ (in God's family) by following God's instructions that I hear and obey, "***You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.***" (Galatians 3:26-27).
6. We are held in His hand, and He and we are in the Father's hand, out of which no one is able to snatch us. ***JOHN 10:27-30. "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30. I and the Father are one."***
 - a. We can leave Christ if we desire, but as long as we walk in the light, **He will never leave us!** "If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But ***if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.***" 1 John 1:6-7 (NIV) The Greek word for purifies [NIV], cleanseth [KJV] is KATHARIZŌ (καθαρίζω), which means "keeps on cleansing." The blood cleanses us in baptism (Colossians 2:11-13; Romans 6:3-8), and continues to cleanse us as we walk in the light (1 John 1:6-10).
7. There is real security for those who are **in Christ!** (Ephesians 1:3-7). There is no security for those who are "**outside of Christ.**" (Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:11-13).

TO ASSURE US OF OUR SECURITY WE ARE GIVEN GOD'S SEAL – HIS GUARANTEE, THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (THE SPIRIT HIMSELF – NOT MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT) THE FOLLOWING VERSES TESTIFY TO THIS.

1. ***ACTS 2:38.*** Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**"
2. ***Acts 5:32 (NIV) 32*** We are witnesses of these things, and ***so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.***"
3. ***EPH 1:13-14.*** And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. ***Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.***
4. ***Romans 8:9-11 (NIV) 9*** You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, ***if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness (Christ's righteousness given to us 1 Corinthians 1:30). 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you (God's Spirit), he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit (God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit), who lives in you.***
 - a. There is **One godhead** made up of **God, Christ,** and the **Holy Spirit.** (Acts 17:29 KJV; Romans 1:20 KJV; Colossians 2:9 KJV).
"There is ***one body*** and ***one Spirit***— just as you were called to ***one hope*** when you were called—***one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God*** and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:4-6 (NIV)
 - b. If one has Christ in him (**Romans 8:9-10**), they have the other two of the godhead as well (**Romans 8:9-11** above [#4.]).

5. **2 Corinthians 5:5 (NIV)** 5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and **has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.** (Same as Acts 2:38)
6. Do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?** You are not your own; (1 Corinthians 6:19 (NIV))
7. **READ ROM 8:8-17.**
8. If we are free from condemnation, and we believe it, why shouldn't we be happy and rejoicing?

IF WE HAVE GOD, CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKING FOR US AND IN US, WHY WOULD WE NOT BELIEVE THAT WE CAN BE FAITHFUL, DO ALL THAT GOD HAS TOLD US TO DO FOR HIS GLORY AND BE JOYFUL AS WE LIVE FROM DAY TO DAY?

CONCLUSION:

God's will for us in this life is for us to be always joyful; continue to pray always; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies (preaching) with contempt. Test everything (by the word of God). Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. Having lived this life we will be sanctified through and through and we will be (counted) blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who calls us (through the gospel [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14]), is faithful and He will see to it that those who are faithful to Him will have the help to be saved.

When we depend on God, Christ and the Holy Spirit to perform through us, doing the things He wants done, and not draw back, we will be powerful in our service to Him!

We will look forward to our labor together in unity, love and an expectation of accomplishing what God wants done. And this with joy!

We will begin to look for Christ's coming with excitement, and great joy.

There is much encouragement from God revealed in His inspired word. We can read it, apply it and live, or we can refuse, and die (spiritually)!

The reason we become frustrated, fearful, and discouraged is because we fail to **let go and let God help us as He promised to!** **Philippians 4:13 was written as an encouragement for all Christians, not just the apostle Paul!** **"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."** Does God give us strength? Paul said He did. How does He do it? **I DON'T KNOW.** Nor do I have to know. If He guided Paul to write this, then He will do it and we don't have to know how!

Another passage tells us **"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."** Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV). It is God who is able to do more than we can ask or imagine and it is **according to his power that is at work within us!** **This power is present in every Christian and it is working in those who believe and submit to God's leading according to our faith!**

Many more scriptures could be given that show God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit helps us in our walk but these should be sufficient to encourage us to let go of our restrictions on how the godhead is able to help us in walking in the light. We don't have to be perfect to be successful; in fact there are none who are perfect for all sin and fall short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23-26**). Our success, as a Christian depends on our faith in God having provided Christ as a sacrifice to pay for our sins, not on our perfection. **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened**

by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:1-4 (NIV)

We are fully capable of being and doing all that God expects of us because this does not depend on how perfect we are but on our trust and faith in God to help us. We need to read and study His word to know what He expects and desires of us and then trust Him to help us be that person.

Not all people have the same talents or the same measure of intelligence. God knows that and does not judge us on our intellect but on what we do with what we have. Most of the work in the church is accomplished by the common person rather than the most intellectual. Whatever you have, use it for the glory of God! “And **whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**” Colossians 3:17 (NIV)