



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Thank you, God, all the time.

Sorrow, sadness, grief, distress, sickness, and pain. What do all these words have in common? At first glance, we might categorize them as things we don't like. They are part of a whole list of uncomfortable thoughts and emotions. Often, these words only bring negative thoughts. We avoid them because they are bad. Or so we think.

From a Christian perspective, however, we see them in a different light. We remember Christ is King of all things and the things that cause sorrow, sadness, grief, or pain don't enter our lives by mere chance. God never says, "Oops. Didn't see that coming." And God doesn't ever punish us for things that we've done wrong; he already punished Jesus for all our sins.

We know that when suffering comes in any form, our Father will provide a way out and make that pain serve for our good. He uses the suffering in our life to purify our faith and draw us closer to him.

God also uses our hurt as an open door or window in our life. He allows it as an opportunity for us to tell others about the hope that we have in Jesus, our Rock, and our Redeemer.

In our passage today, the apostle Paul remembers God's love to him even as he deals with sorrow, sadness, grief, distress, sickness, and pain. His reaction shouldn't surprise us. Paul understood the purpose of suffering. Instead, his reaction inspires us. His reaction was one of joy, prayer, and thankfulness. No, he wasn't delusional—he had Christ, and Christ was enough for him. More than that, he understood that everything in his life was directed and guided by God for his good.

This Thanksgiving, your heart may be broken, and you may have reasons to be sad. But remember that you have Christ and nothing can take him or his love away from you. Remember what you have in Christ. You have forgiveness, security, joy, peace, and eternal life. Remember God's promises and give thanks to him even as you endure hardship.

Finally, remember a day is coming when all those headaches and aching hearts will disappear. A day is near where sin will be no more and sadness will be a thing of the past. This day is when your King and Savior comes and takes you to be with him.

As God's children, like Paul, in gladness or sadness, we always have a reason to give thanks through and because of Christ!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for making us your children and for giving us eyes of faith to see your great love for us even during the difficult times in this life. Help us always to rejoice, pray, and give thanks in the good times and the sad. Amen.