

## How to Give in Times Like These

By Caleb McAfee

When we think of giving thanks we often think of a prayer before eating. For example Jesus gave thanks over the loaves and fish before feeding the multitude. But its usage is not limited to saying grace before eating. Paul instructs that we should give thanks for everything.

Let's look at three commands in the concluding remarks of 1 Thessalonians and relate Paul's exhortations to offering time.

### COMMAND NUMBER ONE

*1 Thessalonians 5:16 (NIV)*

 16 Be joyful always.

If we are to *always* exude joyfulness, then out of necessity it must include offering time, right? We know that God prizes a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7 TLB) Furthermore, we are instructed to rejoice always.

*Philippians 4:4 (NIV)*

 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

### COMMAND NUMBER TWO

*1 Thessalonians 5:17*

 17 Pray continually.

The best answer to the question of how many times a day do we pray is always.

*Luke 18:1 (NKJV)*


 1 ...men always ought to pray and not lose heart.

As we prepare our gifts, we should be praying, "Dear God, use this to win souls. Use this to restore righteousness to a nation that has lost its moral compass. Use this to bring glory to Your name."

We are promised that even if our prayers at offering time are expressed with tears, it will ultimately result in melodious joy.

*Psalms 126:5-6 (NIV)*

 5 Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.

 6 He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.


### COMMAND NUMBER THREE

*1 Thessalonians 5:18*

 18 Give thanks in all circumstances.

Is it God's will for us to give thanks even in a depression? Yes. As we give today let's express our thanksgiving that God will never abandon us and that we don't have to fear evil. (Hebrews 13:5 and Psalm 23:4)

### Congregational Response:

 Today I give joyfully. I give prayerfully. I give with thanksgiving.

### Notes