

Memory Verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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

Discovery Bible Study Exercise:

In your journal or on a piece of paper make three columns and follow these steps:

- Step #1: Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Step #2: Re-write in your own words 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Step #3: Write down what you discover from this passage
- Step #4: What will you do to obey what this passage says?

Daily Meditation Readings:

Day 1 – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Day 2 – John 15:1-11

Day 3 – Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Day 4 – Matthew 6:25-34

Day 5 – 1 John 4:9-10

Lesson: Relating to God

Read each of the five daily meditation passages for this week. After reading each passage, pause, reflect on the verse and answer the questions below. Then go onto the next passage.

1. How does this passage connect with my relating to God?
2. What does this passage teach me about my relationship with God?
3. How would you rate yourself in your pursuit of a love relationship with God based upon this passage?
4. What does this passage remind me I need to do?
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22, this is what Tim will be preaching on this week and individuals should be meditating on the verse throughout the week. Encourage and challenge people to complete the discover Bible Study exercise this week. This passage teaches me that I am to find joy in the Lord give Him thanks always which means in all circumstances. My joy is not a condition of my status or my circumstances. It is based on my relationship with God. That is God will which tells me that part of my connection to God is to do these things according to His will. The verse also goes on to tell me to allow the Holy Spirit to move and work in me and to take His word and trust and obey it which also involves avoiding sin and temptation. Prayer is one of the key aspects of my relationship with God. If I am unwilling to take time to communicate with God through prayer and His word I will not develop a strong relationship.
 - John 15:1-11, this is one of my favorite passages in the Bible and it tells me that I am to remain connected to God. Again, that connection is key and through a relationship with Jesus I bear fruit that lasts. I learn also the importance of His word remaining in me and my obedience to His teachings.
 - Deuteronomy 6:4-9 teaches the importance of knowing and obeying the word of God. A love relationship is the key to our obedience to God's commands and through our obedience we demonstrate that love relationship with God. This teaches me that my love relationship with God and His word should be the

highest priority in my life and I should share who God is and what He is teaching me in my life. Small Groups become a place we can live out Deuteronomy 6 as well as in our homes. But we also learn it should move into our workplace and neighborhoods.

- Matthew 6:25-34, teaches us that part of a love relationship with God includes trusting Him. If I seek first to know the Lord and fall into a love relationship with Jesus then I can come to know and trust Him with my life.
- 1 John 4:9-10, this straight forward verse teaches me that a love relationship with God is initiated by God. We love God not because of our own ability but because He first loved us and sent Jesus to reconcile us to Himself. Jesus paid the price, not just part of it, He paid all of it out of love for you and I.

Recently a group of dear friends for EVC gave me a license plate frame based upon an important teaching I shared during Experiencing God study. It is this and I believe it is a summary of the passages above and it tells us much about our relationship with God. The plate frame simply says, "KNOW HIM, LOVE HIM, TRUST HIM, BELIEVE HIM OBEY HIM."

The point is this, Jesus taught us over and over again that the greatest command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Therefore my greatest pursuit should be that love for God. I will love God by first getting to know Him (in part through the word and prayer). I will love Him as I get to know Him and realize what He has done and out of love for me. I believe God and that what He says is trustworthy and true and that His promises are irrevocable. If I trust Him with my life I will want to do whatever He says and I obey Him because what He says is always best for me.