# First Thessalonians 5:16

**5:16** **<u>Paul commands constant and perpetual joy</u>.**

1. **Rejoice.** To be full of joy; to be glad or greatly delighted; to exult. **Joy**. A vivid emotion of pleasure arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction; the feeling or state of being highly pleased or delighted; exultation of spirit; gladness, delight.
2. **Glory.** To exult with triumph, rejoice proudly. **Delight**. To be highly pleased, take great pleasure, rejoice. [We may assist our joy definition by considering "glory" in Jeremiah 9:23-24 and "delight" in Psalm 37:4 and "triumph" and "glad" in Psalm 92:4.]
3. Joy is a command, rather than a nice suggestion or a description of a sanctified believer.
    a. Paul taught emphatically we should rejoice in the Lord (Phil 3:1; 4:4; Ps 32:11).
    b. This is not mere carnal happiness for the satisfaction of sinful and fleshly lusts.
    c. And this is not for seasons of pleasant emotions, but "always" and "evermore."
    d. Think of what we have in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ just a little.
        1. We know God, our Saviour, future, and true wisdom. Why not rejoice!
        2. God is our Father, gave many promises, and never leaves us. Rejoice!
        3. We have incomparable peace, prosperity, and pleasure. Why not rejoice!
        4. There should be great gladness through the gospel (Luke 1:19; 8:1; John 8:56; Acts 13:32,48; Rom 10:15).
    e. Though it is the character of saints (Psalm 21:1-7; 40:16; 64:10; 68:3; 70:4).
4. How can he command perpetual joy, unless it is a choice that every saint can make?
    a. The psalmist described gladness as his choice (Psalm 9:2; 31:7; 104:34; 118:24).
    b. The psalmist would have fainted had he not believed future blessing (Ps 27:13).
    c. Happiness is a choice. You don't wait for favorable circumstances or emotions.
    d. The psalmist further directed his own soul to hope in God for soul joy (Ps 43:5).
5. How can he command perpetual joy, unless it has nothing to do with circumstances?
    a. We have been corrupted to believe circumstances dictate the terms of joy or not.
    b. Our greedy, covetous, and materialistic society measures happiness by things.
    c. But our joy is in the Lord, not in fragile human circumstances (Phil 3:1; 4:4).
    d. We can rejoice more, even in evil circumstances (Habakkuk 3:17-19; Ps 4:7).
    e. A merry heart, based on God's goodness, can have a continual feast (Pr 15:15).
    f. If we seek what Solomon said was vanity and vexation of spirit, we are doomed to joyless failure; and these are all the things done under the sun (Ec 1:14; 2:17).
    g. If we walk by sight, we will be depressed; if by faith, we rejoice in hope (II Cor 4:16 – 5:8). For what pain here can dim the glory of heaven (Romans 8:17-25)?
    h. What of martyrs? They were insensitive to present pain in light of future glory.
6. How can he command perpetual joy, unless emotions have very little to do with it?
    a. We have been corrupted to believe independent emotions cause our happiness.
    b. Have you heard or said, "I'm just not happy today," or "Is he in a bad mood?"
    c. Paul was both sorrowful and joyful at the same time (II Cor 6:10), just as our Lord despised shame for the joy before Him (Heb 12:2). This is our choice to keep the basic joy of wellbeing in Him regardless of circumstances or emotions.
    d. Paul kept on loving the Corinthians in spite of their contrariness (II Cor 12:15).

7. How can he command perpetual joy, unless sobriety (6,8) is very compatible with it?
   a. It is a wicked scorner who distorts sobriety to mean living life without any joy.
   b. At God's right hand, the most solemn place of all, is fullness of joy (Ps 16:11).
   c. Our self-examining souls profit by death, funerals, and mourning (Eccl 7:1-6); yet at the same time we have a foundation of incredible joy at our knowledge of God and our deliverance from death, ignorance, wrath to come, and hell; and nowhere in this mix is there room for the crackling of thorns and songs of fools.
   d. And this is about the same as a frowning person claiming to have joy (Pr 15:13).
8. A man with the Spirit of God unquenched and not grieved will have joy (Gal 5:22-23).
   a. John Baptist leaped for joy in his mother's womb at His presence (Luke 1:44).
   b. The power of the Holy Ghost can give hope, joy, and peace (Rom 14:17; 15:13).
   c. What river brings streams of joy to the city of God but the Holy Spirit (Ps 46:4)?
9. We choose joy by redirecting our perspective away from circumstances and emotions.
   a. God has given you the ability to be full of joy; but you must use it (Col 1:11).
   b. Suffering for His sake should bring joy (Matt 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23; Ac 5:41).
   a. We look ahead like Jesus (Heb 12:2; Luke 10:20; Rom 12:12; I Pet 1:6-9; 4:13).
   b. We should understand the end or purpose of temptations (Jas 1:2-4; Rom 5:1-5).
   c. God Himself should be enough (Ps 43:4; Isaiah 61:10; Je 9:23-24; Hab 3:17-19).
   d. Do you joy in God's Word (Psalm 19:9-10; 119:143,92; Job 23:12; Jer 15:16)?
   e. Joy comes by keeping God's commandments by the Spirit (John 13:17; 15:11).
   f. Do you joyfully sell all you have to buy the kingdom of heaven (Matt 13:44)?
   g. The ability to enjoy your labor in this life is a gift from God (Eccl 5:18-20).
   h. God will test us with breaking hearts to see if our joy is only Him (Ps 73:25-26).
   i. Joy rests on your faith, which is the eye of your soul to the proper vision of life.
   j. God knows we will be cast down, but destruction is the loss of joy (II Cor 4:9).
   k. Can you not rejoice in His wisdom, Scriptures, election, omnipotence, adoption, glory, promises, nature, church, works, glorification, blessings, etc., etc., etc.
   l. Happiness is secured by knowledgeable choices of the will or godly activity based on His commands (Deut 33:26-29; Job 5:17; Psalm 128:1-2; 144:15; 146:5-10; Proverbs 16:20; 28:14; 29:18; John 13:17; Romans 14:22).
10. Joy is a reflection of your relationship with God, which can vary from good to bad.
   a. As we allow the world to distract and consume our thoughts, we lose godly joy.
   b. Sin may have short pleasures, but it will end up painful (Heb 11:25; Ps 36:2).
   c. As we humble ourselves and seek Him again, He restores joy to us (Ps 51:12).
11. Let the lesson be simple: God should be our exceeding joy for Himself and for His fear.
   a. God Himself should be our joy by all His perfection and affection (Psalm 43:4).
      (1) Wisdom, strength, and riches do not compare to Him (Jeremiah 9:23-24).
      (2) The LORD our God has done plenty worthy of our joy (Isaiah 61:10).
   b. God Himself should be our joy by our fear and reverence for Him (Mal 1:14).
      (1) Mere kings demanded and received joyful service (Neh 2:1-2; Esth 4:2).
      (2) He has also threatened us for lack of joy and gladness (Deut 28:47-48).
   c. If anyone or anything competes with Him, He will tear it from our sinful grip.
      (1) Our God is rightly Jealous for the above two reasons (Exodus 34:14).
      (2) We can only serve Him by forsaking all that we have (Luke 14:25-33).
      (3) We will forfeit our life trying to hold on to something (Luk 9:24; 17:33).
   d. Therefore, we must constantly prepare to lose anything and everything for Him.
      (1) Paul counted all things loss and dung in comparison to Him (Phil 3:8).
      (2) We cannot allow idols in our heart when worshipping Him (Eze 14:1-3).
      (3) Life is a constant war not getting attached to anyone or anything here.

12. What can you do right now to restore your joy in the Lord, if you have lost it somehow?
    a. Remember from where you are fallen, repent, and do the first works (Rev 2:4-5).
    b. Pray and ask for it back with His Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:8-10; Luke 11:13).
    c. Count your blessings, taste His goodness, and praise Him from the border of Israel (Ps 139:17-18; 34:8; 33:1; 147:1; 34:1-3; 126:3; Malachi 1:1-5).
    d. Help someone else (I Thess 5:14; II Cor 1:3-4).
    e. In everything give thanks (I Thess 5:18).
    f. Sing by the Spirit and seek the blessing of His joy in your heart (Eph 5:18-20).
    g. Muse and meditate (Job 37:14; Psalm 63:1-8; 143:5; 1:2; 77:11-12; 104:34).
    h. Cut your activities in half and be still (Psalm 4:4; 46:10).
    i. Reject and repudiate any hopeless reading or viewing (I Cor 15:33,19; Is 57:21).
    j. Go to the house of God (Psalm 122:1).