

Weekly Health Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of June 23 & 24, 2018

Dear Friends and Family:

This week I am off chemo – Yeah! So, it is easy to follow Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 5:16, “*Always be joyful.*” Why? Because he knew joyfulness is imperative in order to love the life that God has given us. Do you love the life that God gave you? There are times when I do not love this life that God gave me.

How do we remain joyful when life stinks? When people hurt us? When circumstances seem hopeless? When our hearts are broken? Or when the side-effects of chemo are almost unbearable? Starting Saturday, June 23rd, my cancer doctor wants me to double up on the chemo. Oh boy! Always be joyful????

Paul answers those questions in the two verses that follow. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul writes, “*Never stop praying*” (NLT). To be joyful, we need to stay connected to God in prayer, asking Him daily to fill us with joy based on our walk with Him — not our satisfaction with everything going on in life.

Then, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul says, “*Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus*” (NLT). During our continued prayers, we are to be grateful for all He has done for us and the life He’s given us. It is His will for us to live with joy, not because life is perfect but because He is and He promises to send only the very best in our lives. I know, I can’t always see how this or that will work out for my best, but that is God’s promise.

Being “*joyful always*” doesn’t mean we have to walk around with a fake smile on our face all the time, ignore reality or suppress every negative emotion. This verse simply implores us to intentionally focus on the good, instead of the bad. To count our blessings rather than our burdens. To let our faith, not our feelings, dictate our joy.

The secret to real happiness isn’t really a secret at all. It’s simply realizing the importance of counting your blessings over burdens and understanding that gratitude has incredible power over grumbling. Are you ready to always be joyful? I am and I hope you are too.

Pastor Jim