

**“PAUL, THANKSGIVING, AND HEMINGWAY”
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As we approach Thanksgiving Day, it's good to listen to one of Paul's key teachings on this subject. He writes, "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (First Thessalonians 5:16-18). Now how is it possible to give thanks in all circumstances? Maybe Paul is exaggerating in order to make a point? This great apostle and missionary certainly knew first-hand about setbacks and suffering. He did not live a sheltered and safe life. As he traveled and shared the Good News of the Risen Christ, Paul was beaten, shipwrecked, and jailed. While he was in prison in Philippi, Paul was overheard praying and singing hymns of God (see Acts 16:24-25).

Paul understood that God would never abandon him—even in the most difficult of situations. As he reflected on his life, Paul could see God's hand in times of joy and also in days of testing. He was thankful that God was forming and strengthening his faith each day.

Paul's insight is echoed in one of Ernest Hemingway's most famous passages. This well-known American author had been wounded in World War I and used the experience as the basis for his book, A Farewell to Arms. One night Lt. Frederic Henry, the main character, makes this observation, "The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places." This young officer had seen many of his comrades killed or wounded. He himself was recovering from a severe wound in the leg. In spite of the pain of weeks of rehabilitation, Lt. Henry was thankful for the gift of life. Hemingway knew first-hand that wounds could either strengthen or kill.

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