

REJOICE ALWAYS

*A Sign of Life in the Ruins — Bible Study Guide
Pr. Abe Acosta-Newball*

1 Thessalonians 5:16 • Philippians 4:4

When rescuers search through earthquake rubble, they stop everything and call into the silence: "If there is someone alive, say something." A voice answering back becomes a shout of victory. Paul's shortest command — "Rejoice always" — is that same kind of shout: proof that life still remains, even under the weight of hardship. Use this guide individually or in a small group.

1. The Context of the Command

1 Thessalonians 5:16 • Acts 17:1–10 • Philippians 1:12–14

Discuss: Paul wrote "rejoice" from persecution and from a prison cell, not from comfort. What does it change about this command, knowing where it was written from?

Apply: Name one "ruin" you're standing in right now. This week, speak one sentence of thanks out loud in the middle of it — even before it's resolved.

2. A Confession, Not a Feeling

Nehemiah 8:10 • 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Discuss: Is it honest to "rejoice" when you don't feel joyful? Where's the line between denial and faith-filled choice?

Apply: Pick one moment each day this week — a meal, a commute, a bedtime — and choose one true thing to thank God for, regardless of your mood that day.

3. Anchored "in the Lord"

John 15:11 • Psalm 16:11

Discuss: What have you been tempted to locate your joy in besides God — health, approval, outcomes, comfort? What happens when that thing shakes?

Apply: Write down one circumstance you've been pinning your peace to. Beside it, write one unchanging truth about God's character you can anchor to instead.

4. Joy as Evidence in the Great Controversy

Revelation 12:10–11 • 1 Thessalonians 2:18

Discuss: How does choosing joy in hardship function as a kind of testimony — evidence to others that God is trustworthy?

Apply: Tell one person this week how you're choosing to trust God through something hard. Let your joy be visible, not just private.

5. Corporate Joy — The Church as Rescue Team

Romans 12:15 • 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Discuss: Who in your church or family might be "buried" right now and simply needs someone to call into the silence for them?

Apply: Reach out to one person this week — not with advice, just with presence. Ask how they're really doing, and actually listen.

6. The Blessed Hope

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 • Revelation 21:4

Discuss: How does the promise of the resurrection change the way you carry grief or loss today?

Apply: Read Revelation 21:4 slowly before bed this week. Let it be the last thing on your mind as you fall asleep.

7. Living It Out

Habakkuk 3:17–18 • Philippians 4:6–7

Discuss: Habakkuk rejoices even though nothing has changed yet — the fig tree still hasn't blossomed. What would that kind of joy look like in your life right now?

Apply: Instead of only praying about your problem, spend equal time this week thanking God in advance for how He'll meet you in it.

Memory Verse

"Rejoice always." — 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Cody Road Adventist Church