

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a zebra crossing on a city street. The crossing consists of alternating black and white horizontal stripes. Several pedestrians are captured in motion, walking across the stripes. Their shadows are cast long and dark on the pavement, indicating bright, direct sunlight. The people are dressed in casual attire, including t-shirts, shorts, and trousers. Some are carrying bags or umbrellas. The overall scene is a busy, everyday urban moment.

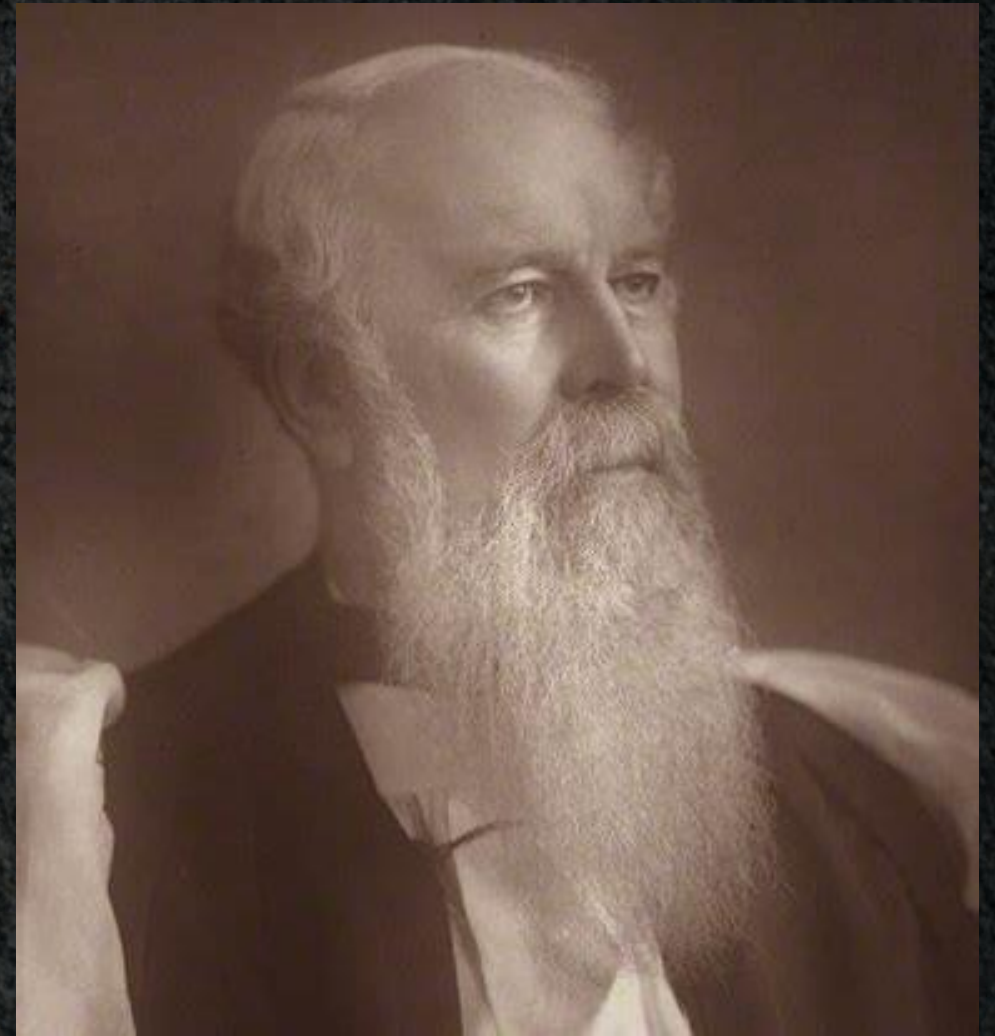
LAST DAYS LIVING

A STUDY IN I & II THESSALONIANS

**“Pleasing God with How We Relate to One Another”
Part IV**

I THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

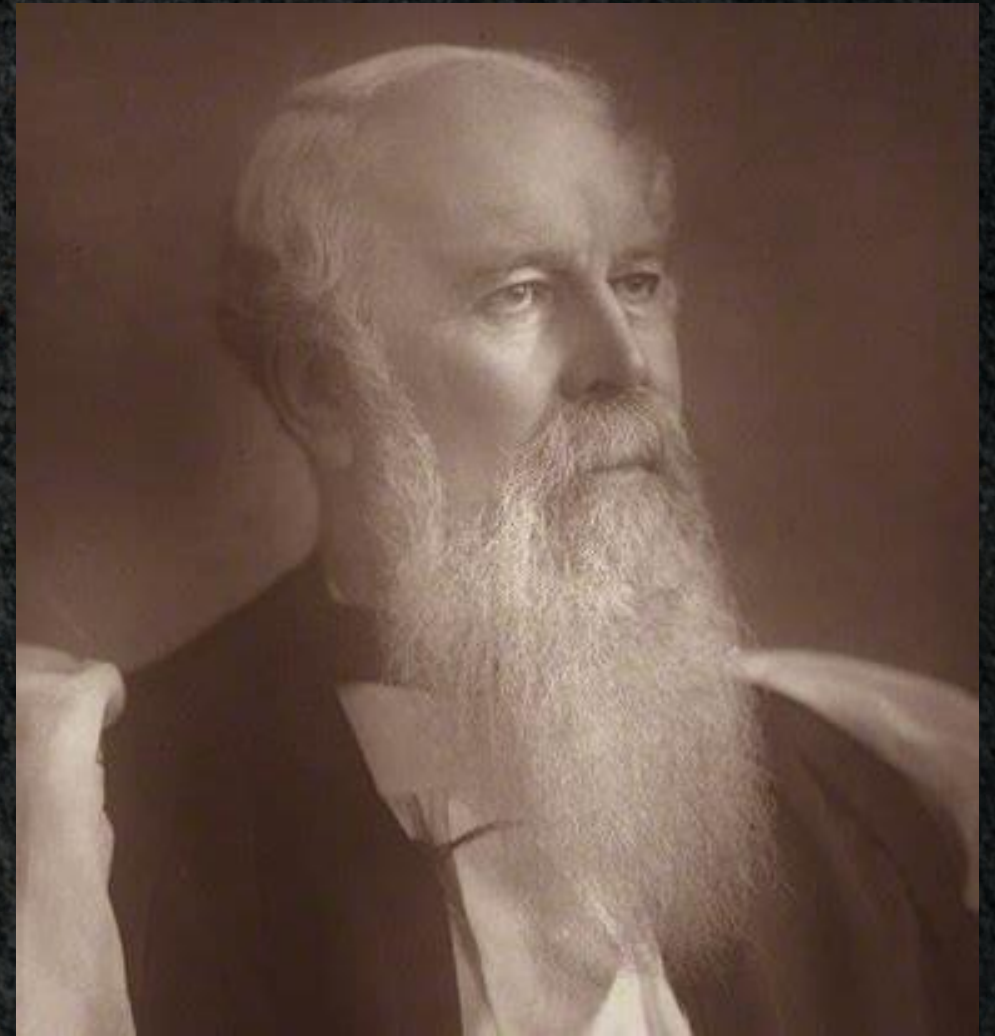
“Habits have long roots.
... Custom becomes
second nature,
and its chains are
threefold cords not
easily broken.
Well does the prophet
declare, ‘Can the
Ethiopian change his
skin, or the leopard his
spots? Then may you
also do good, ...



J.C. Ryle

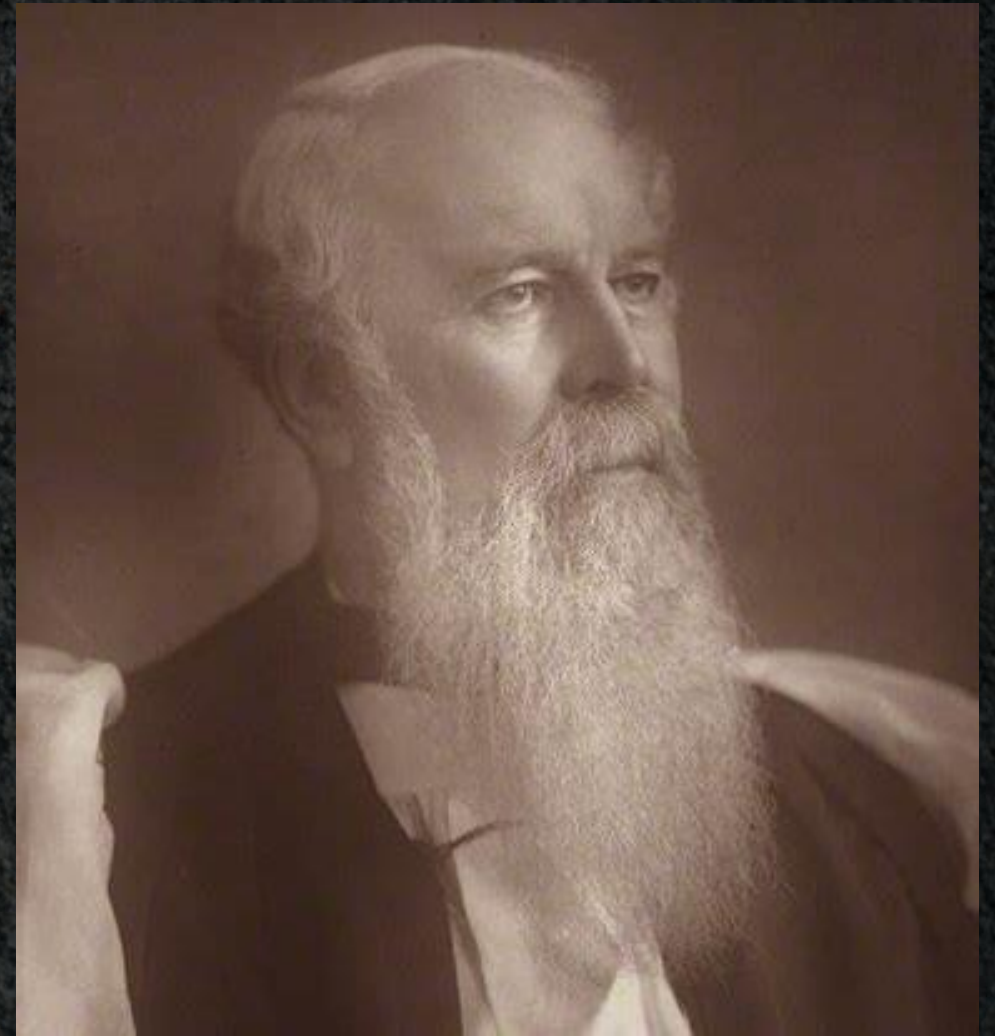
“... who are accustomed to do evil?’ (Jer. 13:23).

Habits are like stones rolling down hills, the further they roll, the fast and more comfortable is their course. Habits like trees are strengthened by age. A boy may bend an oak when it is a ...”



J.C. Ryle

“... sapling, a hundred men cannot root it up when it is a full-grown tree. ... So it is with habits: the older the stronger.”



J.C. Ryle

- a. On Sexual Purity (4:3-8)
- b. On Loving the Brethren (4:9-12)
- c. On the Reality of Future Events (4:13-18)
- d. On the Day of the Lord (5:1-11)

Ways We Please God

e. On How We Relate to One Another (12-22)

1. On How We Recognize Leaders (5:12-13)
2. On Shepherding Others (5:14)
3. On Nonretaliation (5:15)
4. On Rejoicing (5:16)
5. On Regular Prayer (5:17)
6. On Gratitude (5:18)
7. On Testing the Spirits (5:19-22)

Ways We Please God

KEY POINT:

**We please God by regularly rejoicing,
regularly praying, and regularly thanking.**

I. Regular Rejoicing (vs. 16)

- An abiding inner thankfulness and gratitude which does not disappear when affliction arrives

What is Joy?

*“Count it all joy, my brothers,
when you meet trials of various kinds,
for you know that the testing of your
faith produces steadfastness.”*

James 1:2-3

*“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration,
comfort one another, agree with one another,
live in peace;
and the God of love and peace will be with you.”*

II Corinthians 13:11

It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world.
But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy
people who have learned a great secret.
They have found a joy which is a thousand times better
than any pleasure of our sinful life.
They are despised and persecuted, but they care not.
They are masters of their souls.
They have overcome the world.
These people are the Christians-and I am one of them.”

Final Words from a Martyr in the 3rd Century

*And behold,
Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!"
And they came up and took hold of his feet
and worshiped him.*

Matthew 28:9

- a. Our singing must be joyful (Ps 5:11).
- b. Our fear of God must be joyful (Ps 2:11).
- c. Our confession of sin must be joyful (Ps 32:11).
- d. Our gathering with one another must be joyful (Ps 100:2).
- e. Our trials must be joyful (Hab 3:17-18).
- f. Our looking forward to the rewards of eternal life must be joyful (Matt 5:10-12).
- g. Our persecutions must be joyful (Acts 5:41).
- h. Our suffering must be joyful (Col 1:24).

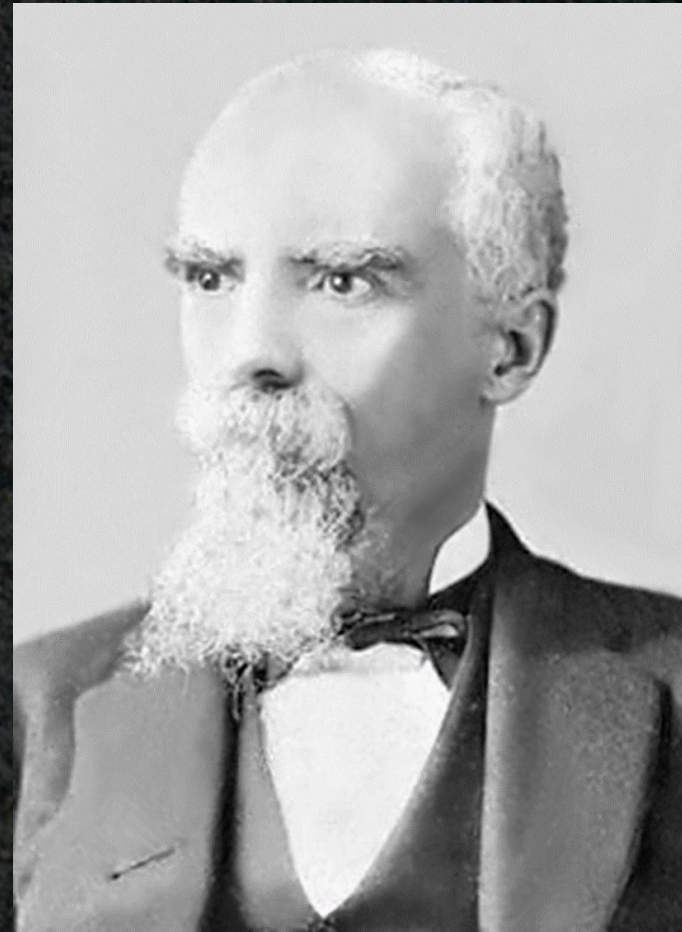
The Bible and Joy

- I. Regular Rejoicing (vs. 16)**
- II. Regular Praying (vs. 17)**

- a. Paul says we must be steadfast and persevering in prayer (Col 4:2).
- b. The early church illustrated unceasing praying (Acts 1:13-14; 2:41-42; 4:23-31; 6:4; 12:5-19; 13:1-4; 14:23).
- c. God tells us wherever we can, we can and should pray (I Tim 2:8).
- d. We can and should pray about anything (Phil 4:6).

The Bible and Prayer

“Nonpraying is lawlessness, discord, anarchy. Prayer, in the moral government of God, is as strong and far-reaching as the law of gravitation in the material world, and it is as necessary as gravitation to hold things in their proper sphere and in life.”

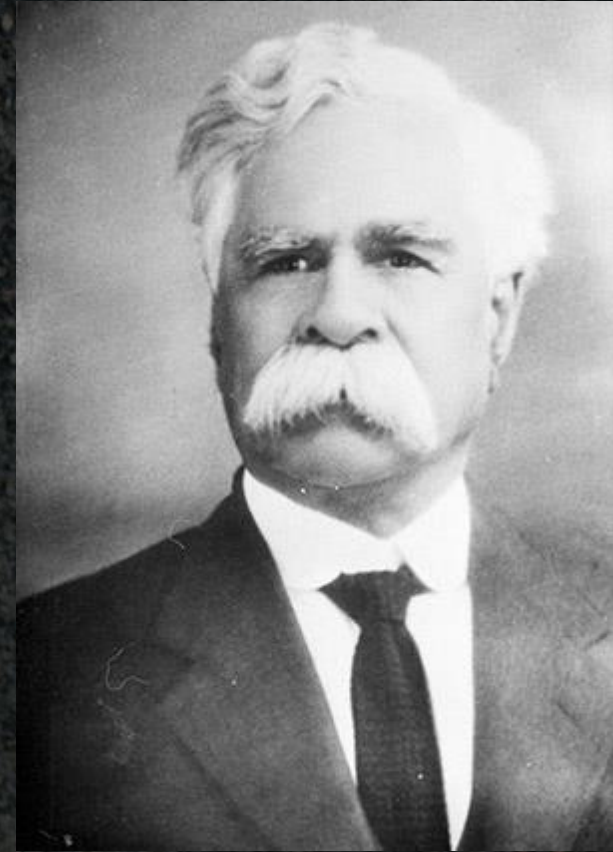


E.M. Bounds
The Reality of Prayer

- I. Regular Rejoicing (vs. 16)**
- II. Regular Praying (vs. 17)**
- III. Regular Thanking (vs. 18)**

“Our continual praying shows that we are always beggars, and our continual thanksgiving shows us always debtors.

Our thanks, then, indeed, is the rebound of mercy heavenward, whence it came, and a holy reflection of the warm sun-beams of God’s benefits shining on us.”



William Cooper
The Reality of Prayer

- a. Being unthankful is a characteristic of non-Christians (Rom 1:21).
- b. In the last days, society is described as an unthankful society (II Tim 3:2).
- c. Paul regularly opens his letters to churches with thanksgiving (Rom 1:8; I Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; I Thess 1:2; 2:13; II Thess 1:3).
- d. We have a model of what to give thanks for in Matthew 6:9-13.
- e. We must be growing our thanksgiving (Col 2:7).

The Bible and Gratitude

f. We have a large list of things to be thankful for: the Bible (Ps 119), deliver from our enemies (Ps 7:17), food (Matt 15:36), for forgiveness (Ps 30:11), for opportunities to serve (I Tim 1:12), for salvation (Rom 1:8), for trials (I Pet 2:19), for victory over sin (I Cor 15:57), for wisdom (Matt 11:25) and everything else!

The Bible and Gratitude

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