

# 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Rejoice evermore.

## Analysis

**Rejoice evermore**—*pantote chairete* (πάντοτε χαίρετε, 'always rejoice'). This is the Bible's shortest verse in Greek (two words), yet contains profound command. *Pantote* (πάντοτε, 'always') removes circumstantial limitations—rejoice in prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, freedom and persecution. *Chairō* (χαίρω, 'to rejoice') isn't mere happiness (circumstance-dependent) but supernatural joy (Spirit-produced). Paul writes from persecution (3:7) to persecuted believers (2:14; 3:3); yet commands constant joy.

How can suffering believers 'rejoice evermore'? Not by denying pain (Paul acknowledges affliction) but by transcending circumstances through gospel hope. Joy's sources include:

1. salvation secured (v. 9)
2. Christ's imminent return (4:16-17)
3. eternal life guaranteed (4:17)
4. present trials temporary (Rom 8:18)
5. God's sovereignty assured (Rom 8:28).

This isn't forced cheerfulness or emotional denial but deep-seated gladness rooted in gospel realities. Joy coexists with sorrow (2 Cor 6:10)—Christians grieve but not hopelessly (4:13), suffer but not joylessly. Rejoicing 'evermore' is command, not suggestion—obedience produces joy beyond circumstances.

## Historical Context

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Paul's command to 'rejoice evermore' resonates with his letter to Philippians (written from prison): 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice' (Phil 4:4). Early Christians demonstrated this paradoxical joy—singing in prison (Acts 16:25), counting persecution privilege (Acts 5:41), facing martyrdom gladly (Stephen, Acts 7:55-60). Roman authorities couldn't comprehend Christians' joy amid suffering, which attracted observers to the faith. Contemporary prosperity gospel teaching promising circumstantial happiness betrays Paul's theology of joy-in-suffering. True Christian joy transcends circumstances because it's rooted in unchanging gospel truth, not changing conditions.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What evidence demonstrates that your joy is 'evermore' (constant) rather than circumstance-dependent?
2. How do you distinguish between superficial happiness and deep gospel joy that coexists with genuine sorrow?
3. What specific gospel truths produce joy 'evermore' when circumstances would naturally produce despair?

## Interlinear Text

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Πάντοτε	χαίρετε
evermore	Rejoice
G3842	G5463

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 12:12** (Parallel theme): Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

**Philippians 4:4** (Parallel theme): Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

**Matthew 5:12** (Parallel theme): Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

**2 Corinthians 6:10** (Parallel theme): As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

**Luke 10:20** (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.