



St. Mary & St. Joseph Coptic Orthodox Church

11308 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4S 1K9

Reflections - November 2020

THE ROCK

THE LORD IS MY ROCK.

- PSALM 18:2

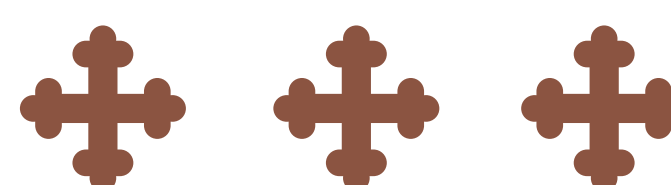
Reflection on (1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18):

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

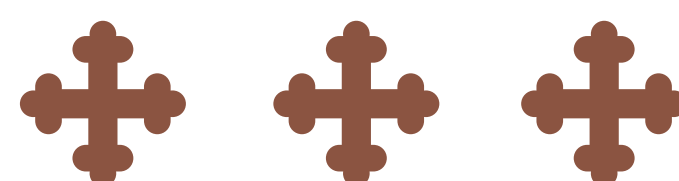
There is a very common perspective we often hear a lot around us which says that life is a series of ups and downs and together they make us who we are today. Despite it being a very prevalent point of view, the above verse from first Thessalonians encourages us to try and take on a different approach, one that perhaps might be more encompassing than the general belief that we tend to hold unto.



Math is perhaps not everyone's favourite subject, but it is one that uses graphs, which give a great depiction of an idea when in need of visualizing it. In this case, the idea we are visualizing is the alternative perspective that this verse directly and indirectly calls for us to seek. Looking through a mathematician's lens, if we visualize life as a simple graph, we can then easily look back at our personal lives and start plotting the "ups" and the "downs" of our lives on the graph. Without a doubt, everyone's graphs will look very different, yet, they will all have one common similarity – some points will be plotted higher than other points. Regardless of the differences each graph carries, in the end, we will find that the higher the point is on the y-axis, the happier the memories associated with it, and the lower a point is on the graph, the more sadness and despair that we may feel.

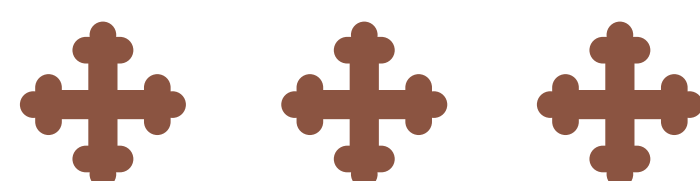
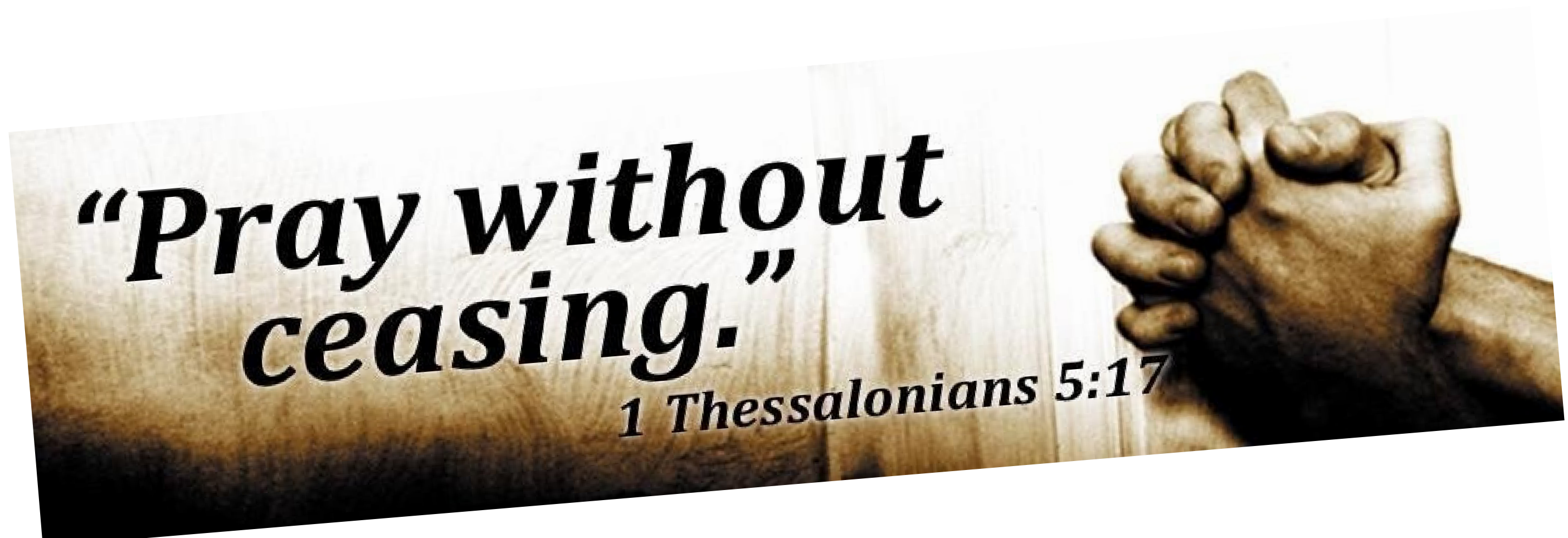


So far, everything goes well with the conventional perspective that life is indeed a series of ups and downs, which to a certain extent may be true. However, if we take a look at the highest points on our graph, we will probably start remembering that dream job that we were able to get or that state of euphoria we felt when we passed that exam. Reminiscing on these moments will certainly make us yearn for those highs, appreciate them, and perhaps even try to replicate them, which is certainly amazing but also dangerous. You see, in C.S. Lewis' infamous the Screwtape letters, it is obvious that one of the devil's most potent yet simple tools, by which he is able to manipulate us, is through pride. Pride is a self-destruct button. It can suddenly transform the highs in our lives into potent weapons in the devil's arsenal without us even realizing. This does not mean that we shouldn't celebrate success and achievements. As a matter of fact, being in a constant state of joy and thanksgiving is exactly what we should aspire to achieve, as long as we realize that all goodness comes from the one source of true and everlasting goodness.



Despite all of us experiencing varying highs and lows in our lives, that doesn't mean there is no room for variation. In other words, if we start looking at the highs in our lives as blessings that we indeed don't deserve and the downs as necessary for our salvation then all of a sudden the gap between the two becomes smaller and only then can we start realizing that an alternate perspective truly exists. Once that happens, a line of best fit can start to be drawn, and only then can we realize that life is not merely a series of ups and downs, but it is rather a constant state of growth which prepares us for our place in heaven which was prepared specially for each one of us.

It is true that in life we can have some exceptional days and other days can be so awful it is almost impossible to see any positive in them. In spite of that, the alternative perspective doesn't eliminate the fact that we are humans with emotions and feelings. There will be days where we can't contain our cries of joy and there will be days when our tears will flow nonstop until we can cry no more. It is through these ups and downs that our Lord is preparing us for the life that He has promised us from the very first day He created us.



Romans 8:28 tells us, **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”**

Frankly, there was no better way to conclude this but to leave you with the verse from first Thessalonians and share with you this picture, which represents each and every one of us.



Connect with us:

 smsj.ca/the-rock/

 @TheRockatSMSJ

