

## Thanksgiving

It is good to give thanks to God for the things He does for us. We should be grateful. If somebody gives us a gift, it is polite to say thanks. If we gave a gift, and the person who received it, took it without saying thanks, we would feel upset. Most people think of God as Someone Who is there solely to give to us, and we think only of what we can receive from Him, but He likes us to give Him thanks in return. Psalm 100:4 says; 'Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise! Be thankful and bless His name'.

We need to give the Lord thanks when He does something for us. He notices those who thank Him and those who don't. Read Luke 17:12 to 19; 'As Jesus was going into one village, He was met by ten lepers who stood at a distance and they raised their voices and called, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And when Jesus saw them, He said to them, "Go at once and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were healed. Then one of them, upon seeing that he was healed, turned back, thanking and praising God with a loud voice and he fell at Jesus' feet, thanking Him over and over. Then Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was there no one found to return and give thanks and praise God except this stranger?" And Jesus said to the man, "Get up and go on your way. Your faith has made you whole'."

Hebrews 13:15 says; 'Through Jesus therefore, let us at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of the lips that thankfully acknowledge and glorify His name'.

Thanksgiving and praise are closely related. The leper thanked and praised the Lord. Being thankful is a correct response to God's grace and kindness to us. Thankfulness is a condition of the heart and thanksgiving is the vocal expression from the heart (the fruit of our lips). We read in the Gospels where Jesus frequently gave heart-felt vocal thanks to the Father. Thanksgiving is a direct command of scripture (Colossians 3:15 to 17). Thankfulness is the expression of the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts (Philippians 4:7). In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 it says to give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus. When we are not thankful, we are not fulfilling the will of God.

Thanksgiving is an essential expression of the fullness of the Spirit. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:17 & 20 not to be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is; that at all times and for everything, give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. Let's read that another way. We are to thank God the Father in the name of Jesus because that is the will of the Father and if we are not thankful, then we are foolish. Even if everything else in our lives is right, if we are not giving thanks, then we are out of the will of God and we lose our peace. When we begin to give thanks, we will be firmly back into the will of God once again and peace will return.

When Paul says in Ephesians to give thanks at all times for all things, that leaves no time and nothing out. Giving thanks does not depend on our feelings or our circumstances. As we have already read, we are to give thanks in all circumstances and there will be times when we don't feel as though we want to give thanks because some circumstances are very harsh. In Psalm 100:5 we read why we are to give thanks. We have already read verse 4 so now let's look at verse 5. We give thanks because (1) the Lord is always good; (2) His mercy and loving-kindness is everlasting and (3) His faithfulness endures to all generations. Those three things will never change. Our emotions and our circumstances change, but that is no reason for us to change our thankfulness to God. Our thankfulness is not based on our feelings or circumstances; our thankfulness is based on eternal

unchanging facts about Almighty God. He is our Ancient of Days and yet He has never changed nor will He ever change.

We may have to change our focus from the temporary earthly realm to the eternal spiritual realm through the eyes of faith. We are not to worry about anything, but anything we do need, we are to bring to God in prayer with thanksgiving. One key to peace of mind is approaching God with thanksgiving. Read Philippians 4:6 & 7. 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests) with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God, and God's peace which passes all understanding shall guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus'.

We need to have the correct attitude when we pray; that is, a thankful heart. Jesus always had His prayers answered because He had the right attitude. Read His words in John 11:41 & 42; "Father I thank You that You have heard Me. Yes, I know You always hear and listen to Me ...". As we have already seen, Jesus frequently thanked God and if it's good enough for the Son of God to thank our Father, then it's good enough for us, because He is our example to follow.

King David had a special song leader named Asaph, who led the songs of praise and thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:46). The same Asaph wrote some of the Psalms. All through the Bible we are taught to give thanks, or to have a grateful heart, or to give a sacrifice of thanksgiving, or to praise God. From reading the Bible, we can see that we are encouraged to thank the Lord in about 160 different verses. We are encouraged to praise Him in over 250 different verses. We are encouraged to glorify Him in about 30 different verses. We are encouraged to worship Him in over 100 different verses.

When we feel discouraged, the best 'treatment' is praise and thanksgiving, which will bring peace. When we feel elated, the best response is thanksgiving from a grateful heart which brings joy.

Amen and God bless you as you fill your heart with thanksgiving.

<http://www.bibleabookoftruth.com/>