

Being Grateful

Gary C. Hampton

Ingratitude is a sin. Paul wrote about the downward spiral of the Gentiles into sin, including some thoughts on their failure to be grateful (Romans 1:21). He told a young preacher, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (2 Timothy 3:1-2). Only one leper returned to thank Jesus after the ten were cleansed. The Lord’s questions are telling. “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” (Luke 17:11-19).

Bible examples demonstrate why we should be grateful. Jesus gave thanks before the feeding of the 4,000 (Mark 8:6). He thanked the Father for always hearing Him before commanding Lazarus to come forth from the grave (John 11:40-44). He also gave thanks for the bread and the cup during the time He was instituting the Lord’s supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Matthew 26:26-27). Paul often told of his prayers of thanksgiving for the churches to which he wrote letters (Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2).

Christians are commanded to be grateful. The apostle to the Gentiles wrote, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). Walking in Christ should result in abounding with thanksgiving. Christ’s followers should remain watchful in prayer with thanksgiving (Colossians 2:7; 3:15; 4:2). Our singing is a means of “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20).

So, be thankful on Thanksgiving. Then, each day, let us all remember to give thanks as a clear indication that we are grateful to God.

In Everything Give Thanks

Raymond Elliott

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 the apostle Paul wrote, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” A preacher by the name of Martin Rinkhard wrote the lyrics of the song, “Now Thank We All Our God” to be used as an expression of gratitude by his family at meal time. The unusual background of this song of praise was that it was written during the “Thirty Year’s War” when the preacher was conducting as many as forty funerals a day, including that of his own wife. Yet in spite of war and plagues, he was able to give thanks to God for his blessings. This true story amazes me but it does not surprise me. It seems that in times of extreme and difficult circumstances, people who believe in God can find in their heart expressions of gratitude.

In contrast when a nation is greatly blessed with a bounty of material and physical substances there is a tendency of man to forget the source of such blessings. It was said that the Lord sent two angels to earth to gather the petitions and thanksgivings made by His followers. Both angels returned to heaven in distress. The angel bearing the petitions was truly weighed down with his burden. The other angel bringing the prayers of thanksgivings was nearly empty handed. The lesson is obvious and clear. Most of God’s children are more apt to make requests, petitions and supplications rather than the giving of thanks.

The nation that is greatly blessed with a bounty of material and physical substance is most likely to forget the source of such blessings. The writer James declared that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). The psalmist encourages us by his response from being a recipient of God’s blessings in this manner, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people.” “I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And I will call upon the name of the Lord” (Psalm 116:12-14, 17).

The children of the Heavenly Father should remember daily the blessings that flow from His bountiful hand of grace. Especially, there should be an awareness of “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Every day is Thanksgiving for the redeemed. However, it is good that families and friends can be together on the national day of Thanksgiving. Let us never forget the sacrifices made by our forefathers and loved ones to ensure us of the liberties and freedoms we now enjoy and experience. “O, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:8). “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms” (Psalm 95:2).

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”