

Thanksgiving

The Jews were given specific feast days to celebrate and specific ways to celebrate those feast days. But God did not command that we, in the dispensation of grace, celebrate any holiday (holy day.)

Paul tells us that we can celebrate, or not celebrate holidays, as we see fit. He tells us that whatever we decide, to celebrate a day or not, we should celebrate it to the Lord—giving thanks to God.

Romans 14:5-6

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. **Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.** He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Thanksgiving Day, although not often thought of as a religious holiday, may be the only holiday that we have gotten right!! Paul constantly

wrote about giving thanks. You will see in this Bible study that we should celebrate Thanksgiving all day, every day.

What do we have to be thankful for? We most often think of thanking someone for a gift. God has given us the gift of eternal salvation, and it is totally free. We did nothing to deserve it and we can do nothing to lose it!! God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to take our sins upon Himself and die for them, in our place. He was buried and He rose from the dead. We simply accept this gift of salvation and forgiveness and we are saved for eternity.

See how many times Paul tells us that God's gift to us is free!

Romans 5:14-18

Nevertheless **death reigned from Adam to Moses**, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, **much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by**

one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but **the free gift is of many offences unto justification.** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more **they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)** Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so **by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.**

God has also given us an inheritance. He delivered us from darkness, put us in the kingdom of his Son, redeemed us through His blood, and forgave all of our sins.

Colossians 1:12-14

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:**

2 Thessalonians 2:13

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Christ caused us to triumph and given us victory over sin and death. Our response is to be thankful.

2 Corinthians 2:14

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

1 Corinthians 15:57

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Being thankful has a lot of “perks.” God gives us promises when we pray with thanksgiving. We will receive the peace of God to keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6 -7

Be careful for nothing; but **in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

Keeping your minds through Christ Jesus means thinking about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and good, and that also gives us peace.

Philippians 4:8-9

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and **the God of peace shall be with you.**

Paul tells us to let the peace of God reign in our hearts, and remember we are part of Christ's body. We should teach and celebrate with others in Christ's body.

Again, being thankful and having peace are closely linked.

Colossians 3:15-17

And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to the which also ye are called in one body; **and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom**; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

Paul tells the Ephesians the same thing he told the Colossians, to reading psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, all the while, giving thanks for all things to God, all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:18-20

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; **Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;** Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

We are all members of one body, and we should be concerned about all of the members of Christ's body.

1 Corinthians 12:25-27

That there should be no schism in the body; but that **the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Being thankful and giving thanks is one way to edify other members of the Church, the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 14:14-17

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. **Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.**

Giving thanks can cause others to give glory to God.

2 Corinthians 4:15

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

We can thank God for our fellowship with other Christians, which is possible because of the things that God has done for all of us. We have that in common.

Philippians 1:1-5

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. **I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;**

Having peace and being content go hand-in-hand, and all of it starts with thanksgiving.

Philippians 4:11

Not that I speak in respect of want: for **I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.**

If the world gives thanks at all, it is for acquiring material possessions. We can certainly give thanks for material things. But many think that gain is a sign of godliness. Even some preachers believe people are blessed with possessions because they please God. But Paul tells us to withdraw from such people.

1 Timothy 6:5

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, **supposing that gain is godliness**: from such withdraw thyself.

Notice, none of the reasons Paul gives for thanksgiving are for material things. He tells us that contentment, not wealth, is gain. Remember, thanksgiving is what leads to contentment and peace. Take a look at Philippians again.

Philippians 4:6 -7

Be careful for nothing; but **in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

1 Timothy 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

So, we know why we should give thanks. When should we give thanks? In everything.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Colossians 3:17

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Paul knows that a lot of things happen that we do not feel thankful for. It is easier to give thanks, even at times when things seem not to be going well for us, because we know that all things work together for good to them who love the Lord.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Being thankful to God can keep a person focused on glorifying God and not something or someone else—real or imagined. It is a way of life.

Romans 1:21

Because that, **when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful;** but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Paul often thanked God for specific things about other people. For the Romans, it was their faith.

Romans 1:8

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world

For the Corinthians, it was the grace they had been given.

1 Corinthians 1:4

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, it was their faith that what Paul was teaching was the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, it was the charity (love) that they showed to one another.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

Some people present more of a challenge than others but, we should be looking for specific things about others for which to thank God. When we look for good things in others, it is difficult to hate someone that you are praying for, especially when you can remember that God wants him/her to be saved. It also helps us lead a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and honesty.

1 Timothy 2:1

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and **giving of thanks, be made for all men**; For kings, and for all that are in authority; **that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.** Give thanks for all things because all things are for our sakes and that brings glory to God.

We should always remember to give thanks for the people who help us –especially in spreading the gospel.

Romans 16:3-4

Greet Priscilla and Aquila **my helpers in Christ Jesus**: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto **whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.**

If you don't find enough reasons to be thankful, there is a list of things that God lists as "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof"

and Paul warns us to turn away from these things. One of them is being unthankful!

2 Timothy 3:1-5

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, **unthankful**, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**

Being thankful is a way of living that is pleasing to God. It is another way to witness to the world.