

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Gratitude

By R. J. Evans

In this life we have innumerable blessings for which we are to be thankful. And the Bible tells us that these blessings come from the God of heaven. **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”** (Jas. 1:17). As we look about us, seeing what God has done, surely, we ought to be affected by his magnificent works. We should be overwhelmed with awe and reverence as we contemplate life itself – whether it be a tiny insect, a fragrant flower, or a human being who is so fearfully and wonderfully made.

I wonder, though, are we truly grateful for all that God has done? If we are honest and humble in heart, what changes have been made in our lives because of the goodness of God? It should lead us to repentance. **“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance”** (Rom. 2:4)? But the trouble with so many today is that instead of being humbled with repentance, they have become calloused in heart and drunk on materialism. Hence, they fail to “count their blessings.”

The goodness of God should cause us to be generous with our time. But with regard to time and duties, some seem to always be saying, “I don’t have time to study,” “I don’t have time to visit,” “I don’t have time to teach others,” “I don’t have time to attend all the services of the church,” “I don’t have time to encourage weak Christians,” etc. Oh yes, we do have the time! Everyone’s day is made up of twenty-four hours. Our time may be ill-arranged (especially as far as the work of the Lord is concerned), but we all have the same amount of time. The trouble is – we are not grateful enough to give it to Christ. We are being selfish and self-centered when we have time for television, camping, boating, fishing, golf, tennis, secular reading, movies, ball games and a host of other things, and yet, not enough time for the Lord.

Our gratitude should cause us to be generous with our money. However, in the matter of giving, can it be said that we are grateful to the Lord when we have spent so much on our own selfish desires that we are not able to give as we should? The Bible says that **“God loveth a cheerful giver”** (2 Cor. 9:7). But no man can be a cheerful giver unless he has first acknowledged the great gifts of God to man. The trouble with so many of us is that we never take the time to fully reflect on how much we have received from God. When we take our eyes off ourselves and contemplate the goodness of God, our gratefulness for these blessings will be reflected in our giving.

All too often, when others perform deeds of kindness in our behalf, our attitude is that this is what we expected of them all along. In other words, “You owe this to me, therefore, it’s not necessary for me to be grateful.” Is this your attitude? Obviously, this kind of an attitude is reflected if we fail to express our sincere thanks for the kindness others have shown toward us. If this disposition of heart describes you, this is spoken to your shame.

It seems that the lack of gratitude has always been a problem. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, only one man (a Samaritan) was grateful enough to return and thank Jesus for his cleansing. The record says, **“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks. and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole”** (Lk. 17:15-19). Only ten percent of those who received the blessings here showed gratitude. All ten were ready to receive a blessing; all cried, for mercy; but nine were not concerned about giving praise and thanksgiving. Many today are far too

much like these nine lepers.

A failure in thanksgiving for the blessings enjoyed in this life gives evidence of the alienation of man from God. ***“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful”*** (Rom. 1:21). On the other hand, the Christian, realizing what God has done for him and the world, continually lifts his heart in praise and thanksgiving to God. ***“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”*** (1 Thess. 5:18). – *Truth Magazine*, September 15, 1988. ■

God Wants Us to Be Thankful

By Greg Gwin

Throughout God’s Word we are instructed to be thankful for His blessings. Here’s a sampling of such verses:

- **1 Chronicles 16:8** – ***“Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.”***
- **Psalms 97:12** – ***“Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”***
- **1 Thessalonians 5:18** – ***“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”***
- **Ephesians 5:20** – ***“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***
- **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.”***

Have you ever wondered why God commanded us to be thankful? Does He need this? Is He somehow dependent upon us to voice our gratitude to Him? Is there something about His nature that craves this and can’t do without it?

The answer to all these questions is, of course, NO! God is not dependent upon us in any way. He doesn’t need us – we need Him! His instructions to us concerning giving thanks are like all of His commands – they are for OUR good. Observe: ***“And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes...for our good always”*** (Deut. 6:24).

When we take time to thank God it serves to remind us of our total dependence upon Him. It helps us to realize our own weakness and frailty. It keeps us focused on Him and eternity. ***“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts... and be ye thankful”*** (Col. 3:15). – *Collegue church of Christ Bulletin*, August 19, 2018. ■

Be Thankful

Matthew Henry, author of a widely-respected 19th century commentary on the whole Bible, was once robbed. In his diary that evening he wrote the following words:

“Let me be thankful: First, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because even though they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”

Doesn’t that remind you of the beautiful song, ***Count Your Many Blessings***? Think of the words: ***“Count your many blessings, name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.”*** God has been so good to each one of us. We have received blessings we certainly have not deserved. Let us be ever thankful, and express our thanksgiving to God constantly in prayer. – ***Selected*** ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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