

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## “Be Ye Thankful”

By Larry Ray Hafley

For children of God, every day is a day of thanksgiving. Even our pleas and petitions are to be accompanied by expressions of thanks – **“With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”** (Phil. 4:6). Jesus commended the giving of thanks for kindnesses shown and blessings bestowed (Lk. 17). One of the first signs of depravity is the lack of thankfulness (Rom. 1:21). Truly, brethren, **“be ye thankful”** (Col. 3:15). **“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”** (1 Thess. 5:18).

While our nation’s “Thanksgiving Day” is not a special day of worship for the people of God, it is encouraging to note the gracious words of reverence and respect that instituted our national holiday. President George Washington said:

*“Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor ... now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November...to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks for his kind care and protection of the people of this country..”*

President Abraham Lincoln said:

*“The year that is drawing to its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies....No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gifts of the...Most High God....I do, therefore, invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States...to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November...as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.”*

Can anyone imagine our current president (Bill Clinton at the time of this writing, **tgmc**) being able to express similar sentiments without being hooted off the stage and ridiculed in the liberal press? Is it any wonder, therefore, that our nation’s moral and spiritual fiber is coming apart at the seams, whether in the darkness of deprived ghettos or in brightness of depraved corporate board rooms?

Until presidents can once again echo the wonderful words of Washington and Lincoln without fear of mocking derision, our great country will continue its inevitable decline. But, while we fervently pray and fondly hope for a new birth of respect for holiness and godliness, let us not fail to give thanks and praise “to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in” heaven. – **Truth Magazine**, December 4, 1997. ■

## Are We Thankful?

By Lewis Willis

Let me share a thought with you which someone here shared with me. (I wish I could remember who, so I could give him the credit.) Stop and think of all the things you have in this life: salvation, the church, family, health, house, food, clothing, etc. Now, imagine that tomorrow you lost every single one of those things. What an unspeakable loss that would be! But, to your surprise, the next day you suddenly got back all that you had lost. Would you be exceedingly thankful that you had all of those things again? Surely you would. But, is it necessary to lose and regain them, before we are thankful for them? Should we not be thankful already just because we are so richly blessed?

Next, Thursday is the day set aside in our great country as a national day of Thanksgiving. For Christians, it should be very easy to find reasons for being thankful. We have so much of this world’s goods to enjoy, and we have such a fortune of spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). How could we be anything but thankful? We certainly cannot limit our thanksgiving to one day a year! It is impossible to adequately express to God our thanks for the immeasurable blessings he has given to us. We often say to our families and friends who give us gifts, “Saying ‘thank You’ is just not enough!” Such is

certainly true regarding God's gifts to us.

I often wonder if our prayers to God do not consist too much in asking him to give us the things we want. Now, being able to ask things of God is one of the blessings he grants to his children (Matt. 7:7; 1 Jn. 3:22). It is absolutely right and proper that Christians request his blessings for their lives. But, a "Give me this; give me that" prayer practice can become very selfish. We must balance our prayers with praise, supplications, intercessions and giving of thanks (Matt. 6:9; 1 Tim. 2:1).

Also, it is not unusual to hear people, even Christians, who blame God for all of their troubles. Their attitude seems to be, "I prayed and look what he did to me, or, look what he let happen to me." We must be careful that we not charge God foolishly. The Patriarch Job, who suffered through so many problems, ***"sinned not, nor charged God foolishly"*** (Job 1:22). What does God do for us—what kind of gifts does he give? James said, ***"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"*** (1:17). ***"Good"*** and ***"perfect"*** gifts come from God. Let us never charge that he has given to us that which brings us pain and heartache. Blame the Devil for that! Until he was allowed into the lives of Adam and Eve, none of these bad things happened. Since then, the world is filled with his wickedness, and its attendant grief.

Fortunately, today our nation is at peace, though we do have troops stationed in dangerous places around the world. Economic hard times have beset us for several years and many wonder what the future holds. American industry continues to decline and many are losing their jobs and security. An entire nation feels their hurt, and is helping. At the same time, more Americans are working than at any time in history. Our standard of living is better than most of the people in the world. In fact, it is almost equal to that found any-where. It is certainly appropriate that we be thankful for our prosperity.

During the past year, many families have been touched with serious health problems. Some still struggle with these illnesses. Some families have had to deal with death, while others have known the joy of babies arriving. Given the disasters which have afflicted parts of our nation, and other countries, we can be thankful that things have gone as well for us as they have.

Remember, our prayers should not be used only "In the event of an emergency." Do you find yourself negligent in praying, except when you have some problem, which you are unable to solve? Are you too busy, or too preoccupied with other things, to find a quiet time for prayer? The Lord taught us that we should always pray (Lk. 18:1). Paul taught us to ***"pray without ceasing"*** (1 Thess. 5:17). Let us never hesitate to pray in times of trouble, but let us not forget to also pray in times of peace and plenty!

The Bible teaches us the importance of prayers of thanksgiving to God for the bounty he has bestowed upon us:

- Psalms 50:14: ***"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High."***
- Psalms 105:1: ***"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people."***
- Psalms 106:1: ***"Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever."***
- Colossians 3:15: ***"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."***
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18: ***"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."***
- Hebrews 13:15: ***"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."***
- 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."***
- 1 Corinthians 15:57: ***"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."***
- 2 Corinthians 9:15: ***"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."***

When we look at the Word of God, our duty is rather evident, isn't it? In this case, we know we have received many blessings for which we should be thankful. It is hoped that God's people will be thankful, not only on Thanksgiving Day, but every day! —***Truth Magazine***, November 17, 1994. ■

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

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