

# Thanksgiving

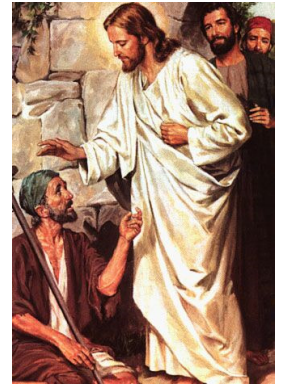
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Luke 17:11-19 describes how Jesus healed ten men who had leprosy. Only one of the men, a Samaritan, came back to Jesus and thanked Him.

Not much has changed. It seems that today most people spend a lot of time moaning and complaining, and little time expressing their heartfelt thanks. We focus a lot on our "rights" and make big expectations on others to provide what we want. When we get what we want, though, we are rarely thankful.

Contrast this with someone who is consistently and genuinely thankful. Don't they stand out as being quite different? Thankfulness is truly a beautiful and attractive attribute of character.



The Bible speaks much about being thankful. Let's explore what it says.

- There are 137 verses which include the word "thanks".
- The Bible says that giving thanks is a good thing. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High, Psalm 92:1. KJV.*
- It is God's will for us to thank in all circumstances. *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.*
- Giving thanks pleases God more than our religious sacrifices. *I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs. Psalm 69:30-31.*
- Paul is a great example to us of someone who was very thankful, and who expressed his thanks clearly and specifically.

*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world..... Romans 1:8*

*I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 1 Corinthians 1:4*

*I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. Ephesians 1:16*

*I thank my God every time I remember you. Philippians 1:3*

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, Colossians 1:3*

*We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. 1 Thessalonians 1:2*

*We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. 2 Thessalonians 1:3*

*I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 2 Timothy 1:3*

God's word to us is simple:  
**Be thankful.** Colossians 3:15.



## Who should we thank?

- God. He has saved us; healed us; forgiven us; blessed us; given us eternal life; enabled us to have a future and a hope..... He has done so much for us in Christ. When we appreciate how much God has done (and is doing) for us we cannot help but thank Him. We will be *always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Ephesians 5:20
- Others. When you give thanks to others you are saying that you recognise what they have done; appreciate it and value it. Saying “thank you” is an easy thing to do, and has a big part to play in the building of relationships. We all do more when we realize that what we do is appreciated. We are inspired and encouraged and it helps us realize that we are all dependent on each other.

*Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Someone once said “I spend a lot of time cooking meals for my family but, so often, all I get is moans and complaints.



Every now and then, though, someone says a big 'THANK YOU'. Oh, it spurs me on to higher things!"

## When should we give thanks?

- Thank God every morning and night

*It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.* Psalm 92:1-2

- Thank God before every meal. That's what Jesus did!

*He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When He had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, He broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before the people, and they did so.* Mark 8:6

*After He said this, He took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then He broke it and began to eat.* Acts 27:35

*He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.* Romans 14:6

- Thank God as a regular part of our prayers.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6,7

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.* Colossians 4:2

- Thank God when He does something special for us

God is always doing wonderful things for us – because He loves us. He wants our best and consistently makes all things *work together for good*, as long as we *love Him and are called according to His purposes*. Romans 8:28. This means that every day God will do things to bless us. If we get into a habit of immediately thanking Him for His blessings we won't take these actions for granted. Rather we will be continually grateful for how God's love is expressed to us. We will be *giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.* Colossians 1:12



Here are some examples of people thanking God when they received blessings from Him:

*We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks, for your Name is near; men tell of your wonderful deeds.* Psalm 75:1

*I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, You have made known to me what we asked of You, You have made known to us the dream of the king."* Daniel 2:23

*But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.* 2 Thessalonians 2:13

*We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.* 2 Thessalonians 1:3

*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.* 1 Timothy 1:12

*I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.* 1 Corinthians 14:18

*I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.* 1 Corinthians 1:4

- Thank God In everything we do

We are to be *always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Ephesians 5:20

*Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

Notice the words that come up time and time again in the Bible regarding thanksgiving: *always, at all times, for everything, in all circumstances.* This clearly shows that we are to be continually thankful to God and others for what happens in our daily lives. Thanksgiving should be a habit; a natural part of our way of life: an "attitude of gratitude" so we are *overflowing with thankfulness.* Colossians 2:7



So thankfulness is a beautiful attribute that acknowledges the blessings we receive, names them and demonstrates our gratefulness. Being thankful to God recognizes all that He does for us; and being thankful to others encourages them and builds our relationship with them. Thankfulness also takes away the focus from ourselves (which can easily be self-centred and selfish). It recognizes that we are beneficiaries of someone else's love.

Let's go against the trend and be thankful people. Thankful to each other and thankful to God. Thankful in the core of our being. Thankful in everything.

*Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 15:57

## Discussion questions

Why does the Bible consistently condemn grumbling and complaining, and consistently encourage thanksgiving?

What happens when you are genuinely thankful? What does it do for you? What does it do for others? What does it do for relationships? What happens if you are insincere in giving thanks? What does this do for relationships?

Is it realistic to give thanks in all circumstances? What if the circumstances don't deserve thanks?

Many Psalms are focused on thanksgiving. Identify these Psalms and then analyses to them to find who was being thanked; who was doing the thanking; why they were thankful, and what they were thankful about.

How thankful are you in your daily life? How can you be more thankful?

*Thanks very much for reading this study!*