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What You Need to Know About Thanksgiving

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THANKSGIVING

Imagine the following situation: You are in a church service listening to a sermon on the sin of pride. Soon the Holy Spirit convicts you regarding this very failure in your own life. Sitting there you inwardly confess this sin and determine to remedy it. But just how does one go about this? Are there certain steps to take in becoming humble?

Will you be like the man who wrote a book entitled, *Humility and How I Attained It*, which included a dozen pictures of the author with the final chapter boasting on how proud he now was of his humility?!

Actually, the antithesis of pride is not humility, but rather that of thanksgiving. This is simply to say a thankful person is automatically a humble person. Suppose a total stranger sees you in a shopping area carrying a large bundle of packages, attempting to open a door. He quickly runs over, picks up the packages you have dropped, and opens the door for you. Of course you thank him for this. Why? Well, because he was performing an act of kindness that you did not deserve or expect. In essence, you are saying, "I appreciate this so much. We've never met and you were under no obligation whatsoever to do what you did!"

In fact, thanklessness was the single one sin that caused the ancient world to degenerate into both idolatry and immorality. Note Paul's sad commentary on this:

" . . . since they knew God but did not honor Him as God, nor did they thank Him. Instead, their thoughts became total nonsense, and their ignorant hearts were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools; they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortals, and of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of crawling creatures. And so, as they followed the lusts of their hearts, God handed them over to live immorally by dishonoring their bodies with one another. He did this because they traded the truth of God for this lie, namely, they worshiped and served what was created instead of the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen!

That is why God gave them up to shameful lusts. Their women have even exchanged natural relations for the unnatural. And men likewise have given up the natural relations with a woman and burned with lust for one another, men doing shameful acts with men and suffering in themselves the punishment they deserve for their perversion" (Rom. 1:21-27, New Evangelical Translation).

THINGS TO THANK GOD FOR

I have counted no less than seventeen!

- **For creating us in His image**

"Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name"(Psa. 100:3, 4).

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"(Rev. 4:11).

How wonderful and comforting to know we have not evolved from some ancient muddy glob, but rather have been created by the hand of the Mighty God!

- **For redeeming us by His blood**

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"(Rev. 5:9).

I believe every Christian should sing or pray the words of this little chorus at least once a week:

Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul,
Thank you, Lord, for making me whole.
Thank you, Lord, for giving to me,
Thy great salvation, so rich and free.

- **For sending His Son**

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift"(2 Cor. 9:15).

John 3:16 is universally regarded as both the most important and greatest verse in all the Bible!

- A. It is the most important verse because it contains the gospel in a nutshell.
- B. It is the greatest verse because it contains nine of the most profound truths ever recorded.

1. *For God*—The greatest Person
2. *So loved the world*—The greatest truth
3. *That he gave*—The greatest act
4. *His only begotten Son*—The greatest gift
5. *That whosoever*—The greatest number
6. *Believeth in him*—The greatest invitation
7. *Should not perish*—The greatest promise
8. *But have*—The greatest certainty
9. *Everlasting life*—The greatest destiny

- **For the very fact that He exists.** He lives, unlike the false god Baal!

"And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded" (1 Kings 18:26-29).

- **For answered prayer**

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me" (John 11:41).

- **For unanswered prayer (as illustrated by Moses and Elijah)**

"I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness" (Num. 11:14, 15).

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:4).

- **For forgiveness of sin**

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psa. 103:1-3).

- **For wisdom**

"I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter" (Dan. 2:23).

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25).

- **For His holiness**

"Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness"(Psa. 30:4).

"Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness"(Psa. 97:12).

Unlike the cruel, immoral, bloody gods of the pagans, our God is holy!

- **For His mercy**

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name ... The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy"
(Psa. 103:1, 8).

This virtue is so important that the psalmist refers to it no less than 26 times in Psalm 136.

- **For His shepherding ministry**

"So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations"(Psa. 79:13).

- **For other Christians**

That's right. We are instructed not only just to pray for other believers, but to actually thank God for them. Time and again the apostle Paul did this. (See Eph. 1:15, 16; Phil. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2.)

- **For victory**

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"
(1 Cor. 15:57).

This would mean victory over the world, the flesh, the devil, temptation, lust, fear, and death itself.

- **For that specific work God has called us to do**

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"(Eph. 2:10).

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry"(1 Tim. 1:12).

- **For allowing us to give to Him of our tithes and offerings—many biblical verses refer to this:**

"Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings" (2 Chron. 29:31).

"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pray thy vows unto the most High" (Psa. 50:14).

In fact, this is one of the first things that wicked King Manasseh did following his conversion.

"And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel" (2 Chron. 33:16).

- **For Christ's coming millennial reign**

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned" (Rev. 11:15-17).

In other words, we are to thank God in advance for the story that will have a happy ending.

- **For anything and everything**

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18).

This is, undoubtedly on many occasions, the most difficult of all to do. How can we possibly thank God when financial losses come our way, or when the medical tests show cancer, or when our loved ones are involved in horrible auto accidents? During these critical moments we must ever remind ourselves that God often permits these tragedies—

1. That through them **He** might receive the most amount of **glory** and,
2. That through them **we** might receive the most amount of **good**!

I think Johnson Oatman's great hymn says it best:

Count Your Blessings

*When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you're discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings—name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

*Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings—every doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by.*

*When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings—money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven nor your home on high.*

*So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged—God is over all;
Count your many blessings—angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.*

Chorus

*Count your blessings—name them one by one;
Count your blessings—see what God hath done;
Count your blessings—name them one by one;
Count your many blessings—see what God hath done.*

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**THERE WILL BE NO BASIC BIBLE BRIEF ON MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 19 DUE TO THE THANKSGIVING BREAK.**