

The Healing Power of Thanks

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of Christ Jesus for you (1Thessalonians 5:18).

The Gift of Thanksgiving

Loving spouses give of themselves unreservedly to the relationship, not for the purpose of being noticed or expecting thanks. Love puts the other person first - simply because one wants what is best for the other person. When acts of kindness are noticed, however, there is a special atmosphere in the home - very different from a home where every contribution is expected and unacknowledged.

Likewise, parents and grandparents don't do things for their children or grandchildren just to be appreciated, but a hug, a smile and crayon drawings can warm their hearts. Gratitude from a child is like dessert after a good meal. You don't have to have it, but the sweetness is a delight.

No one enjoys being taken for granted. Thanksgiving is a gift others give to us, but the reciprocal is also true. The golden rule applies. We love to be appreciated and others do too.

A Thankful Attitude

Thanksgiving has been described as an attitude of gratitude. It is s choice - a way of thinking - an acknowledgment of someone else's contribution to your life.

Thanksgiving sets the stage for a good day. The lack of it can trigger a gloomy one. Even during times of adverse circumstances, it is difficult to be depressed if you count your blessings. Generally, you don't have to look very far.

A thankful attitude can make the difference between being happy or depressed, being healthy or getting sick, or even staying sane or going insane. We have a choice.

Thanks to God

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever (1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 106:1, 107:1, 118:1, 118:29, 136:1 NKJV).

Every good thing comes from God. He is the ultimate example of unselfishness. Evidence of His love and care are all around us. His supreme demonstration of that love was expressed in the gift of His Son as our Savior.

We often forget He has feelings, too. When we accept His blessings as if we deserve them and neglect to give Him thanks, He notices.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30 NKJV). Paul wrote these words to Christians - believers who are part of the family of God. With unbelievers, God can be justifiably angry. With His children, He can be grieved. In a sermon on this passage, the great preacher Charles Spurgeon made this observation:

Here is something very touching in this admonition, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." It does not say, "Do not make him angry." A more delicate and tender term is used - "Grieve him not." There are some men of so hard a character, that to make another angry does not give them much pain; and indeed, there are many of us who are scarcely to be moved by the information that another is angry with us; but where is the heart so hard, that it is not moved when we know that we have caused others grief? - for grief is a sweet combination of anger and love. It is anger, but all the gall is taken from it. Love sweetens the anger, and turns the edge of it, not against the person, but against the offense. When I commit any offense, some friend who hath but little patience, suddenly snaps asunder his forbearance and is angry with me. The same offense is observed by a loving father, and he is grieved. There is anger in his bosom, but he is angry and he sins not, for he is angry against my sin; and yet there is love to neutralize and modify the anger towards me. Instead of wishing me ill as the punishment of my sin, he looks upon my sin itself as being the ill. He grieves to think that I am already injured, from the fact that I have sinned. I say this is a heavenly compound, more precious than all the ointment of the merchants. There may be the bitterness of myrrh, but there is all the sweetness of frankincense in this sweet term "to grieve."

God is our heavenly Father. We can grieve Him with our sin and our thoughtlessness in our attitude towards Him and His blessings.

The apostle Paul was in prison when he wrote, "*speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Ephesians 5:19-20). For the Lord's sake, he was beaten, imprisoned, stoned, shipwrecked, hungry and thirsty, and in perils in many circumstances. *In everything give thanks; for this is the will of Christ Jesus for you* were not empty words to him. They were his life. He knew that regardless of your circumstance, you control your response to it. In the midst of trials, thanksgiving directs your thoughts upward, not inward.

"Thanksgiving—the giving of thanks—to God for all His blessings should be one of the most distinctive marks of the believer in Jesus Christ. We must not allow a spirit of ingratitude to harden our heart and chill our relationship with God and with others. Nothing turns us into bitter, selfish, dissatisfied people more quickly than an ungrateful heart. And nothing will do more to restore contentment and the joy of our salvation than a true spirit of thankfulness." - Billy Graham

Give thanks to God. He is delighted with our thanks and knows its healing power in our lives.

Oh give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples (1 Chronicles 16:8, Psalm 105:1). *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Corinthians 15:57). Scripture references are from the NKJV.