

## Giving Thanks for What and Why?

As Christians, living a life of thanksgiving should be as natural for us as breathing. We need to be thankful for life itself. Why? God holds our breath in His hand and owns all our ways (Daniel 5:23). We need to be thankful for our health. Why? Any and all measures of health and strength are ours because it is in God that we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). We need to be thankful for provision and protection. Why? God gives us richly all things to enjoy, and because of Him, we dwell in safety (1 Timothy 6:17; Psalm 4:8). This perpetual mindset is conveyed in Psalm 140:13. “Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; the upright shall dwell in Your presence.”

First Thessalonians 5:18 is very direct in expressing why we are to constantly be thankful. “Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (ESV). Giving thanks in all circumstances is an outgrowth of our faith and trust based on a right relationship with God. Even through the worst times, we give thanks because we understand as long as we live in this fallen, sin-filled and sin-cursed world, “bad” is inevitable. Since “bad” is inevitable, it must be rightly endured. We also give thanks as we realize many circumstances will be bad, but they could get worse!

Through the good times and through the bad times, God is good. David declared, “Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 136:1). His strength becomes our strength when we endure in the obedience of faith with thanksgiving. Personal conviction of always being thankful, no matter what, will resonate in our lives when we truly recognize we are **totally dependent** on God for everything.

As children of God led by the Spirit and not by the sinful lusts and deeds of the flesh, we are to be the most thankful people on earth. Every spiritual, physical, mental and material blessing is ours because of who God is as our Father. Giving thanks for God’s providential goodness is stated four times in Psalm 107. “Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (verses 8, 15, 21, 31). Giving of thanks is reiterated so often in the Psalms. Psalm 92:1-2 specifically states when we should be thankful. “It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night.”

The title of my article last month was “Trust in the Lord – Always!” Years ago one of our preachers in the brotherhood said, “It is easier to obey God than it is to trust Him because we do not know the duration, the extent, the frequency or the outcome of trusting in God.” Trust in God keeps us thankful. When our hearts overflow with thanksgiving for all that God has done, is doing and will continue to do for us, we experience the peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:6-7). We can then say as David did in Psalm 86:12, “I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Your name forever.”

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