

Agape House of Worship
Midweek Bible Study

Topic: Living a Life of Thanksgiving

Texts: 2 Thessalonians 5:18

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Teacher: Pastor Jide Lawore

"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Many people think Worship and thanksgiving are the same, they are not. Thanksgiving is a distinct act of the will. It recognizes the hand of God and is thankful. It chooses to give God credit for what He has done, and what He has promised, while worship praises God simply for His attributes for who He is.

In Everything Give Thanks

Thanksgiving is to be as much a part of the believer's life as breathing. We are exhorted to live in thankfulness to God, and to exalt Him with continual expressions of thanks regardless of our present circumstances. "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (2 Thessalonians 5:18) In prayer we are exhorted to give thanks profusely for the goodness of the Lord, for all his benefits, for His mercies, for His faithfulness, for His steadfast love, for loads of blessings. Psalm 100 is an excellent guide for entering the presence of God. *"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise: Be thankful unto him, and bless His name."* Unthankfulness and silence curses God's name. It brings Him shame.

Ingratitude

It was Israel's ingratitude of heart, the murmuring, the complaining, the grumbling, that brought on the wrath of God. (Numbers 14:27). It was not that God had not blessed. He had over and over again! It is that men soon forget the goodness of the Lord. We are quick to forget His answers to our prayers, His mercies in our troubles, His healings when we are sick, His forgiveness when we fail, and His provisions in our need. The Psalmist groan in Psalm 107 *"O Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good...Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"*

The Psalms are filled with expressions of thanks to God on every side. Oh, may our lives, our lips, be continual Psalms of thanksgiving! The apostle Paul commands the same principle in the New Testament, regardless of the circumstances we are to be thankful and think on the good things the Lord has done.

"Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep you hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

One of the signs of end time is ingratitude. *The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:1-2 "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy.* We must be careful not to be overtaken by the spirit of end times that

Questions: Why is the attitude of murmuring, complaining, and ingratitude so rampant nowadays? What are the things believers can do to ensure we do not fall for this spirit of end times.

Thanksgiving and Good Mental Health

Good mental health begins with a thankful attitude of heart. *"A merry heart does good like medicine...He that has a merry heart has a continual feast."* (Proverbs 15:13 / 17:22) Depression and discouragement are the inability to see the goodness of God around you. David frequently expressed his depression, *"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living."* (Psalm 27:13) The eyes of faith see the goodness of God even in the midst of adversity. God's purposes, plans, and provisions are always good! Remember, He is working it out. Be thankful while He works it out. (Romans 8:28 and Jeremiah 29:11)

Forget Not all His Benefits

Forgetting or neglecting to give Him thanks is the sin of ingratitude - at least it is taking God for granted. D.L. Moody in commenting on Psalm 103 said, *"I can't remember all his benefits and blessings, but I dare not forget all of them either."*

Thanksgiving is remembering God's good gifts and giving Him the credit due His name.

Psalm 103:2-5 "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Psalm 68:19 "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits..."

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Questions: Why are we so quick in our days to forget God's benefits?

Thanksgiving Is a Sacrifice to God

Hebrews 13:15 – "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name"

Hebrews 13:15 points out that thanksgiving is a sacrifice to God. A sacrifice of our lips, that is to be offered up to God continually. Thanksgiving is not always easy. It is tough to be thankful and express thanks from the heart for everything. Wouldn't prayer be wonderfully transformed if we would offer 10 sacrifices of thanksgiving for every request we make of God?

Practical Steps to Living a Life of Thanksgiving

1. Thank God for His Creation, your own body (Psalm 139:14)
2. Thank God for the blessings of salvation. **Colossians 1:12-13** *"giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and [a]conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love"*
3. Thank God for His provisions. For everything you have. List each thing for which you are thankful.
4. Thank God for people He has put into your life. Name them by name and what you are thankful for.
5. Thank God for little things. Start with the smallest things you can think of for which you are thankful. From there work toward the bigger things, He has done. Never start with the big lest you despise the small. Do not despise the day of small things. (Zech. 4:10)
6. Thank God for hard things. "In everything give thanks...for this is the will of God..." Thank God for the trials and adversities that come to make us strong. They are what make us lean on Him. So, thank Him!
7. Thank God for everything. Keep a notebook handy in which you write down your thanksgiving list. It helps!