

In Everything Give Thanks

It's Thanksgiving week!I LOVE the Thanksgiving holiday.....the food, time with family, football, naps, etc. Those are what most people like most about Thanksgiving.

It tends to be a holiday that people "take for themselves". Christmas is about Jesus' birth. Easter is about His resurrection. Thanksgiving is about, well.....food, family, football, and naps!

So what is Thanksgiving really about? Here is the actual dictionary definition of Thanksgiving - the expression of gratitude, especially to God.

Thanksgiving is a day where we should be showing our gratitude or giving thanks to the Lord! If We have something to be thankful FOR, then we have someone to be thankful TO.

When this holiday was initiated it was intended to be a day of thanksgiving and prayer, a day where we all could offer thanks to someone, and that someone was never intended to be anyone other than God!

In 1789, George Washington made this public proclamation. (here's a portion)

"By the President of the United States of America. A proclamation: Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, & humbly to implore His protection & favor, and

"Whereas, Both Houses of Congress have by their joint committee requested me `to recommend to the people of the United States a day of Public Thanksgiving & Prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God. . .'

"Now, Therefore I do recommend & assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great & glorious Being who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be. . ."

This was the very first Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation.

Today my hope is for us to all have a more thankful heart, appreciating our Lord Jesus, and being thankful for the many blessings that He has given us.

When people give thanks, the natural mindset is to be thankful for material things. It's not that we shouldn't give thanks for material things, many of them are blessings from the Lord, but we also need to be thankful for His promises, the things that are unseen, the eternal things from

above!

It is dangerous to determine our thanksgiving on how much we have. This life is about so much more than how much stuff we have. It is also about so much more than the stuff we want.

Thanksgiving is not to be based on circumstances either, whether good or bad. Your circumstances can all change at any time, and so can your material blessings, which is why there should be a greater focus on thanking Him for those blessings that will never perish.

We need to base our thanksgiving on who Jesus is, what He has done, and what His promises are. Those are the things that are unchanging. Those are the things that no one can take from you

We have to remember that Jesus, the unchanging one, is the provider of all of our blessings.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV)

Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

We are exhorted to rejoice always! To Rejoice is to be glad or make joyful.

The goal here today is giving thanks. Before you can get there, you must start with the Joy of the Holy Spirit in your life!

Now when it says “rejoice always”, it doesn’t mean that you have to fake it. It doesn’t mean that you have to pretend to be joyful when a situation isn’t. But it’s not about the situation...

Romans 5:1-2 (NKJV)

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

First of all, if you are saved...what more do you need. If you have peace with God through Jesus...there’s nothing this world can offer that is greater! If you don’t have that peace, ask Him today! You can be saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Because of the grace of God, we have hope. We rejoice in that hope, and that hope is of the GLORY of God!

The glory of God is the manifestation of God. We have hope that God will show up in our situation!

We can hope that God will use the situation for our good. We can hope that God will use it for

His glory, to show us His power! That is something to rejoice about. It is why we can have joy no matter what the circumstances are.

We have the ability to make that decision to be joyful, no matter what the circumstances are. So rejoice always!

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV)

pray without ceasing

Along with rejoicing always, we are exhorted to pray without ceasing. This is an extension of that hope we have in Christ. In this context, to pray without ceasing does not mean to pray continuously without taking a break.

Luke 11:9-10 (NKJV)

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Praying without ceasing is to pray persistently and regularly. This doesn't mean you have to sit in your room and do nothing but pray for the rest of your life.... What Jesus wants from us is for us to keep asking, seeking, and knocking. He wants us to talk to Him!

If you are asking, seeking, and knocking, yet you are not receiving...make sure your heart is right, what are your motives? Are you seeking God's will or your own selfish desires?

James 4:2-3 (NKJV)

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

God is not into handing out things that are not in alignment with His will. LOTS of the prayers that are prayed are selfish prayers. Prayers of people that do not care what God's will is...they just want more stuff....

"If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled." ~ Charles Spurgeon

As we pray continuously and persistently, we need to be praying for the will of God. How do you know the will of God? Well we just read it, the will of God is that we rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.

But how do we know what else in our life is the will of God? (will is what one wishes or has determined to be done)

Seek Him, pray, ask Him to show you, read His Word! And you will find:
It is His will to heal (physically, emotionally, spiritually)
It is His will to transform the sinner into a saint
It is His will to free His people from bondage
It is His will to speak to you, be with you, comfort you, teach you...

Pray, persistently for these things! We have to be persistent because we don't know everything, we don't know His timing. But He is faithful, He will answer when the time is right.....ask and keep asking!

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)

in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

IN EVERYTHING give thanks. No matter what is going on, give thanks to the Lord!

Ephesians 5:3-4 (HCSB)

But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. 4 Coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks.

These things are not right for the believer, they should be replaced with thanksgiving to the Lord!

Colossians 2:6-7 (NKJV)

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Why is it so hard to be thankful?

Our biggest obstacle that keeps us from giving thanks is this sense of entitlement that we have.

"You can't be grateful for something you feel entitled to." - Pastor Steven Furtick

This entitlement mindset leads people to complain when they don't have what they want preventing them from being thankful for what they have....

People would much rather participate in a holiday called Complaintsgiving. I can assure you we would have NO PROBLEM getting everyone to share their complaints around the dinner table!

You could complain about the meal. (I don't like this or that, It's too late or too early)

You could complain about the family (who is coming, who isn't coming, etc.)
You could complain about the football games. (Who wants to watch the Cowboys)
You could complain about the nap (I can't sleep, it's noisy, I'm cold)

Pastor/Evangelist Dr. Dale Robbins said, "I used to think people complained because they had a lot of problems. But I have come to realize that they have problems because they complain. Complaining doesn't change anything or make situations better. It amplifies frustration, spreads discontent and discord, and can invoke an invitation for the devil to cause havoc with our lives."

Complaining makes us miserable. Why would we rather complain than give thanks? That is not what God wants from us

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV)

Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I think most people are missing the ability to rejoice regardless of their situation.
Most people are not praying intentional prayers with persistence.
Most people are not knocking on that door, asking until God answers!

If we could rejoice always and pray without ceasing, our hearts would be in a better place to be able to give thanks in everything!

That is the will of God. That is what He wishes we would do. Have a grateful heart, tell Him what we are thankful for.

"Thou who hast given so much to me, give me one more thing—a grateful heart!" ~ George Herbert