

Introduction

In five more days, we have a day that retailers look forward to all year. It is black Friday. Historically, companies go from being in the red to being in the black in the Thanksgiving to Christmas season, and it kicks off with black Friday. I don't care anything about black Friday, but I absolutely love the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. I love the family get-togethers. I love the Thanksgiving Turkey and sage dressing. I like the cranberry sauce and all the other Thanksgiving foods. In fact, I think Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday of the year.

There are four holidays that are significant to me. Resurrection Sunday is significant because we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The early church celebrated it, and even began to meet on Sundays in commemoration of the resurrection. Mother's Day and Father's Day are special to me because we are commanded to honor our mothers and fathers. I think it is Biblical and I welcome the opportunity to honor my mother. I believe that we should do it every day of the year, but I like the fact that we set a day aside to honor our parents. The fourth holiday that is special is Thanksgiving. There are 140 references to thanks in the Bible. There are a number of reasons that we are given for giving thanks, and we will cover some of those today. We are doing a series on Discovering God's Will and we find in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 that we are to "rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Giving thanks is God's will for my life, your life, and for all of us. God wants His people to have a heart of gratitude. That is His will for our lives. Setting aside a day every year to remind us of what we are to be doing every day is similar to Mother's Day or Father's Day. This morning I want to share several of those reasons why we should give thanks in everything. Then, I want to get into the practical side and share what it will take for us to give thanks in everything.

(1 Thess 5:16-18) "Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

In Everything Give Thanks

1. Why Should We Give Thanks In Everything
2. Practical Applications

1. Why Should We Give Thanks In Everything

a. It is God's Will for us to give thanks.

Our text today says that it is God's will for you and I to give thanks in everything. A few weeks ago we covered God's General Will. Bob Schindler and I were discussing our series and he calls this God's Universal Will, as it applies to everyone. (He calls God's Specific Will God, God's Unique Will.) God's will is for everyone to give thanks in everything. It is not just God's will, He commands us to give thanks. Paul's message to us is a command to pray without ceasing, rejoice always, and give thanks in everything. It is not a suggestion. God does more than command us to give thanks in everything, He tells us why. It is His will for us to give thanks. Sometimes we may not feel like giving thanks in everything, but we have to remember the words of Christ as He prayed in the garden, "Not my will, but Thy will be done." (Luke 22:42) When we pray the Lord's prayer, we pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matt 6:10)

What is being done in heaven? In Revelations 4:9-11 we find the living creatures and the twenty-four elders worshipping the Lord. The living creatures are giving glory and honor and THANKS to Him who sits on the throne. If we are doing on earth what is being done in heaven, we will be giving glory, honor and thanks to Him forever and ever. That is God's will in heaven and on earth.

(Rev 4:9-11) "And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, {10} the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, {11} "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

b. Because it honors God.

In Psalm 50:14 We are commanded to offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Then, in verse twenty-three, the Lord says, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me." Our giving of thanks honors God.

(Ps 50:14, 23) "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High... {23} He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders *his* way *aright* I shall show the salvation of God."

It is interesting what we find in the verses leading up to that. God was reproofing Israel for not honoring Him. They had been offering other sacrifices, like bulls and goats, but they were not honoring Him. He said that all the beasts of the forest are His, the cattle on a thousand hills. All the birds were His, and everything that moves was His. God said if He was hungry, He would not tell us. He did not need the animal sacrifices they were giving. What God did not have were the voluntary sacrifices of thanksgiving, and it was those sacrifices of thanksgiving that honor God.

(Ps 50:8-14) "I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, And your burnt offerings are continually before Me. {9} I shall take no young bull out of your house Nor male goats out of your folds. {10} For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. {11} I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. {12} If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains. {13} Shall I eat the flesh of bulls Or drink the blood of male goats? {14} Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High;"

In the New Testament God tells us to offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. We are to offer up these sacrifices of thanksgivings because they honor the Lord. My desire is that our church be a church that loves and honors the Lord. There are lots of ways to honor the Lord. We saw in Psalm 50:23 that when we order our ways before the Lord and live righteous lives, it honors Him. We also honor Him with tithes and offerings. Solomon wrote that we are to honor God with our wealth and from the first of all our produce. There are lots of ways to honor God, but giving of thanks is one of the key ways.

(Heb 13:15) "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."

(Pr 3:9) “Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce;”

c. For His many benefits

Third, we should give thanks to God for the many benefits we have from Him. In Psalm 103:1-5, we are told to bless the Lord and to forget none of His benefits. God pardons our sins, heals our diseases, redeems our life from the pit and crowns us with His lovingkindness and compassion. We have numerous benefits that we receive from the Lord and it is only right to return thanks to someone who has blessed us with so many benefits.

(Ps 103:1-5) “Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, *ble*ss His holy name. {2} Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; {3} Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; {4} Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; {5} Who satisfies your years with good things, *So that* your youth is renewed like the eagle.”

In Psalms 106 and 107, we are told to give thanks to the Lord because He is good and His lovingkindness is everlasting. We should stop and thank God for His lovingkindnesses. My mother shared her testimony last Friday night. She said that when she was a little girl, her father told her that he loved her and as her father he would always love her. Then, he said that God is our heavenly Father and he always loves us. We should give thanks to God for his lovingkindness is everlasting.

(Ps 106:1) “Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

(Ps 107:1) “Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

These benefits include His provisions in our lives. He provides for us to have food, clothing, and shelter. All of our gifts and abilities come from Him. In fact, James wrote that every perfect gift is from the Father of lights. Paul tells us in Romans 11 that from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. Everything we have is from the Lord.

(James 1:17) “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”

(Rom 11:33-36) “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! {34} For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? {35} Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? {36} For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.”

d. For His work in our lives.

We should thank Him for what He is doing in our lives. In Philippians 1:6 we see that He who began a good work in us will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. God is still working in our lives. Not everything that we go through is pleasant or easy, but that does not mean that God is

not using those circumstances to bring about something good in our lives. We need to give thanks in everything, even if it is difficult.

(Phil 1:6) *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Notice in James 1:2-5 that we are to consider it all joy when we go through various trials, knowing that the testing of our faith produces endurance, and then that endurance helps us to mature and be complete. God uses those trials to build character into our lives. We should thank God for those trials and for the endurance and maturity that He is building in us through them.

(James 1:2-5) *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. {4} And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. {5} But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”*

Paul also affirmed this principle in Romans 5, when he said that we exult in our tribulation, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, hope. Why should we give thanks in everything? We should give thanks in everything because God is using all those circumstances in our lives to bring maturity and proven character in our lives.

(Rom 5:3-5) *“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; {4} and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; {5} and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

2. Practical Applications (What will it take to become thankful people who give thanks in everything?)

We have looked at some reasons why we are to give thanks in everything, so I want to take a few minutes to make this practical and easier to apply in our lives.

a. Be Humble

In Deuteronomy 8, God told Israel that He had humbled them by letting them go hungry. Then He went on to say that their clothing did not wear out nor did their feet swell for the forty years they were in the wilderness. He provided for them all that time. He was leading them in a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, where they would not lack anything. He told them when they had eaten and were satisfied, they were to bless the Lord what had given all of that to them. He humbled them so that they had nothing so that they understood that everything they had was from God. In verses 12-14, He warns them about eating and being satisfied with these good things and becoming proud so that we forget that it all came from God. In verse 17, He said, *“Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’”* One of the keys to giving thanks in everything is to have humility. Arrogant people are usually demanding, not grateful. Humble people are grateful, and they understand that everything they have is from God.

(Deut 8:3-18) “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. {4} “Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years... {7} For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; {8} a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; {9} a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. {10} When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. {11} Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; {12} otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived *in them*, {13} and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, {14} then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. {15} He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. {16} In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. {17} Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ {18} But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.”

It is not just our provisions that we need to be humble about. Paul wrote about our salvation. Similar to Deuteronomy, it is not by our works that we are saved. In Romans 6:23, Paul wrote that the wages of sin is death. What you and I have earned, our wages, is death. He continued by saying that the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Our salvation is a gift from God; it is not something that we deserved or earned. It is by God’s grace that we are saved. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9, “for by grace we have been saved by faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” We need to be humble and recognize that our salvation is not because of things that we have done. It takes humility to realize this.

(Rom 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Eph 2:8-9) “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

I think the testimony of Mary found in Luke 7 is a great example of this. Jesus was having supper at the home of a Pharisee named Simon. Luke records that Simon did not give Jesus any water for His feet, and did not greet Him with a kiss. He contrasted this with the woman named Mary, who wet Jesus’ feet with tears and wiped them with her hair. She kissed his feet and anointed Him with perfume. Mary understood that she was a sinner and Simon was a proud Pharisee. In verse 47, Jesus said, “for this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little loves little.” Mary was humble and recognized her sinful condition, and her actions showed her gratitude.

(Luke 7:44-48) "Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. {45} You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. {46} You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. {47} For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." {48} Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."

b. Be Intentional

A second thing that will help us become a people that give thanks in everything is to be intentional. Until we have a habit established, we have to be very intentional. Here are some specific areas to be intentional about.

i. Purpose in your mind to give thanks to God and to other people.

In 1 Chronicles 16:4, David assigned some Levites to give thanks and praise to the Lord. In particular, he assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks. This was an intentional act to give thanks to the Lord. David understood that the giving of thanks honored the Lord, and he took the necessary steps to make sure that thanks were continually being offered unto the Lord. Just as David was intentional, we can be intentional and take steps of action to make sure that we are continually giving thanks to the Lord.

(1 Chron 16:4) "He appointed some of the Levites *as* ministers before the ark of the LORD, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel...{7} Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD."

We can be intentional in our prayers. A number of years ago I gave instructions to our leaders that I wanted the first seven minutes of our corporate prayer to begin with thanksgivings and praises. In our leadership meetings, if this did not happen, I would point it out. I was being intentional about giving thanks. Many of the people would begin their prayers by telling the Lord everything they wanted the Lord to do, and they were not in the habit of entering His gates with thanksgivings and His courts with praise. I had to be intentional until they learned to do this.

Begin your pray time with thanksgiving. In Psalm 100:4, we read that we enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Anytime that you pray, start with thanksgiving. Think about the many benefits that you have and thank God for them. In the morning, thank God for a new day. Thank Him for His mercies, which are new every morning. Thank Him for the privilege of coming before Him. Thank Him for your salvation. Before you eat a meal, give thanks for the food. There are so many things to give thanks about. But, purpose in your mind to give thanks to God.

ii. Memorize and meditate on scriptures about giving thanks

There are so many scriptures about giving thanks. You could start with our passage today in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "In everything give thanks." Psalm 100:4 is a great scripture. Philippians 4:6-7 is a good passage. Psalm 103 is a great Psalm about not forgetting His many benefits.

iii. Sing scriptures about giving thanks

Sing songs of thanksgiving. “Give thanks” is mentioned 152 times in the Bible. Singing songs is a great way of setting your mind on things above. It is a great way to renew your mind. A few weeks ago we looked at proving God’s will in our lives. To prove God’s will, there were three steps: Consecration, Transformation, Determination. First, we need to consecrate our lives by presenting ourselves as living and holy sacrifices. Second, we are transformed by renewing our minds. We have to fill and saturate our minds with God’s word. Third, we have to determine His will and He gave us three criteria to help us determine His will. It must be good; it must be acceptable, and it must be perfect. In renewing our minds, memorization and meditation play a key part. Singing God’s word helps us to memorize and to meditate on His word. It is an excellent tool. Here are some Scriptures and ways to sing them.

Psalm 100:4

Enter His gates with thanksgiving
Enter His courts with praise
Give thanks, and bless His name

Psalm 9:1-2, Psalm 111:1

I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart
I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart
I will tell of all Your wonders, be glad, exult in You
I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart

I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High
I will tell of all Your wonders, be glad, exult in You
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High

I will give thanks to the LORD with all *my* heart
I will give thanks to the LORD with all *my* heart
In the company of the upright, the assembly of the saints
I will give thanks to the LORD with all *my* heart

Psalm 92:1-2

It is good to give thanks unto the LORD
To sing praises to Your name, O Most High
To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning
And Your faithfulness by night
Oh it’s good to give thanks unto the Lord.

This Tuesday, after I had taken Karen to the airport in Santa Fe, I was driving back to our office. I was meditating on our passage this week, and I began to sing the verse. The Holy Spirit gave me some verses. In Ephesians 5:18 we are told not to get drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but to be filled with the Spirit, singing and making melody in our hearts with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. These are songs that the Holy Spirit gives us. As I was driving the Holy Spirit gave me a song about our passage. It was a fun song, and I had a great time of singing and making melody in my heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:17	
In everything give thanks Give thanks in everything It is God's will for me to fill This place with words of thanks In everything give thanks	In everything give thanks Give thanks in everything No matter what, no matter why That's how I will reply In everything give thanks
In everything give thanks Give thanks in everything It is my choice, To lift my voice And fill this place with thanks In everything give thanks	In everything give thanks Give thanks in everything I will not gripe, I'm not that type I'll fill this place with thanks In everything give thanks

Those are all just songs and choruses that God gave me over the years. We do not use many of them in corporate worship, but I sing them unto the Lord. God has used them to give me a heart of gratitude. It is okay to use other songs of thanksgiving. You might sing songs like, Forever, Give Thanks, Thank You For The Cross, Thank You Lord, Or Thank You Jesus. These are songs that we have been singing the past couple of weeks, as our focus in worship has been about thanksgiving. Learn to sing songs of thanksgiving.

iv. Thank others

Get in the habit of thanking others for what they do. I try to thank Karen every day for breakfast and other things that she does for me. I really identify with Paul's word to the Philippians. He thanked God in his every remembrance of them since they were in his heart. I pray that about Karen nearly every day. I thank God for a godly wife, a wife who fears the Lord, a wife who seeks God and honors God. I thank God for a companion and teammate.

Paul was continually giving thanks for others. In Colossians 1:3-4, he said that they gave thanks to God for their faith and their love. In Ephesians 1:15-16, he said that he thanked God for their faith. In Philippians 1:3, he thanked the Philippians for their participation in the gospel with him. In 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, he thanked God for their faith, their labor of love, and their steadfastness. Paul took note of things in people and churches and continually gave thanks to God and to them for these things.

(Col 1:3-4) "We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, {4} since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;"

(Eph 1:15-16) "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, {16} do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;"

(Phil 1:3-5) "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, {4} always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, {5} in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now."

(1 Thess 1:2-3) "We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; {3} constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,"

Write thank you notes to people. I just gave you a number of letters that Paul wrote to various churches where he gave thanks for them. Write letters or notes to people and say thanks. Thank people for their gifts. Thank people for their service. Thank the young people that serve communion. Thank the people that do overheads for us. Learn to show appreciation of others and to give them thanks. The atmosphere of a church full of thankful people will be unbelievably joyful and positive.

Conclusion

In Luke 17, we have the account of ten lepers. Jesus healed all ten of them, but only one of them returned and gave thanks to Jesus. Notice that the one leper turned back and glorified God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at Jesus' feet and gave thanks to Him. Jesus then asked where the other nine were. We want to be a church that is full of the one leper that turned back. We want to be those who stop and glorify God and give Him thanks for everything He does for us. This is God's will for us.

(Luke 17:15-18) "Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, {16} and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. {17} Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? {18} Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"

Introduction (1 Thess 5:16-18)**1. Why Should We Give Thanks In Everything**

- a. **It is God's Will for us to give thanks.** (Luke 22:42, Matt 6:10, Rev 4:9-11)
- b. **Because it honors God.** (Ps 50:8-14, 23, Heb 13:15, Pr 3:9)
- c. **For His many benefits** (Ps 103:1-5, 106:1, 107:1, James 1:17, Rom 11:33-36)
- d. **For His work in our lives.** (Phil 1:6, James 1:2-5, Rom 5:3-5)

2. Practical Applications (What will it take to become thankful people who give thanks in everything?)

- a. **Be Humble** (Deut 8:3-18, Rom 6:23, Eph 2:8-9, Luke 7:44-48)
- b. **Be Intentional**
 - i. **Purpose in your mind to give thanks to God and to other people.** (Ps 100:4, Lam 3:22-23)
 - ii. **Memorize and meditate on scriptures on giving thanks** (1 Thess 5:17, Ps 100:4, Phil 4:6-7, Ps 103)
 - iii. **Sing scriptures on giving thanks** (1 Thess 5:17, Ps 100:4, Ps 9:1-2, 111:1, 92:1-2, 136:1-26)
 - iv. **Thank others** (Col 1:3-4, Eph 1:15-16, Phil 1:3, 1 Thess 1:2-3)

Conclusion (Luke 17:15-18)