

Introduction (1 Cor 1:4-9)

One of my core values is honor. God commands us to honor our mother and father, and Karen and I have tried to honor our parents. She calls and facetimes with her father, and visits as often as possible. I call my mother daily and try to take care of any needs. In addition to honoring our parents, Karen and I try to honor one another. The apostle Peter wrote that husbands need to show their wives honor as fellow heirs so that their prayers are not hindered. Honoring one another is very important to us, and I believe to God.

(Ex 20:12) “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

(1 Pet 3:7) “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; **and show her honor as a fellow heir** of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

In 1 Samuel 2, Eli did not correct his sons, and God rebuked him for honoring his sons above Him. Then, God said, “those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.” We have always tried to honor God in our lives and in our churches.

(1 Sam 2:29–30) “Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?” {30} Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, ‘I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever’; but now the LORD declares, ‘Far be it from Me—**for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.**”

There are lots of ways to honor God. We honor Him with our time, giving Him our first time every day. We honor Him with our finances, giving Him our tithes and offerings. We honor Him with our lives, by ordering our ways aright. In Psalm 50, God tells us that offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving and ordering our way aright honors Him. So, we have tried to cultivate a habit and culture of giving thanks to God and to other people. In our prayer times, we try to enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. We try to give thanks in everything, for we know that this is God's will for us.

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

(Ps 50:23) “He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.”

(Ps 100:4) “Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.”

(1 Thess 5:18) “in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

One of the things that I greatly appreciate about the apostle Paul is his thankfulness. In his letters he usually offers thanks, and his letter to the Corinthians is no exception. Our text today begins with, “I thank my God always concerning you...” I believe that Paul tried to cultivate a culture of thanksgiving in all the churches. This morning, we will look at Paul's prayer of thanks, and four things that he thanked God for.

Paul's Prayer of Thanks

1. For the grace of God given to them (1 Cor 1:4)
2. That they had been enriched everything (1 Cor 1:5)
3. For their eagerness for the revelation of the Lord (1 Cor 1:7)
4. That God would confirm them to the end (1 Cor 1:8-9)

(1 Cor 1:4-9) "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, {5} that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, {6} even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, {7} so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, {8} who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. {9} God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

1. **For the grace of God given to them** (1 Cor 1:4)

After Paul has introduced himself, addressed the church in Corinth, and given his greeting, Paul tells the church how he always gives thanks to God for them. People like to be appreciated, and Paul shows his love and appreciation for them by giving thanks for them. Paul was not general in his giving of thanks; he mentions several things that he gives thanks for. The first thing that he gave thanks for is for the grace of God given to them. That is something that all of us can give thanks to God. It is by grace that we are saved, not by our own works, that no man should boast. What each of deserve and have earned is death. In Romans 6:23, Paul said the wages of sin is death, and in Romans 3:23, that all of us have sinned. So, we all deserve death, but by the grace of God we have come into the kingdom of God. Personally, I was not seeking God, but He sought me out. I was hard-hearted, and He softened my heart. He brought people into my life to share the gospel with me. So, I am very grateful for the grace given to me, and each of us can be thankful for the grace given to us.

(1 Cor 1:4) "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,"

We should give thanks to God for His grace and other things. We should also give thanks to other people for what they do for us. When Chad helps me do something, I make it a point to thank him. At meal times, we pray and give thanks for our food, and I also give thanks to Karen for preparing the meal. I also tell Karen every day how I give thanks to God in my every remembrance of her. 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. I learned this from Paul, who in Philippians 1, told them that he gave thanks to God in his every remembrance of them. Paul gave thanks in his letters to all the churches. Giving thanks shows appreciation, and that you are not taking their labor and service for granted. God wants us to have grateful hearts that are appreciative of everything that we have.

(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."

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul wrote, "In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." We need to learn to give thanks in everything. It is God's will. We should give thanks to God and we should give thanks to and for one another.

(1 Thess 5:18) "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

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;"

(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,"

We can give thanks verbally, which is the most common way for me. We can also write thank-you notes or letters to people. I just gave you a number of letters that Paul wrote to various churches where he gave thanks for them. We should thank people for their gifts, service, friendship, etc. At church, we should give thanks to the people who work nursery, usher, greet, serve communion, work the media center, and work in other ministries in the church. 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.

2. **That they had been enriched in everything** (1 Cor 1:4-5)

Paul thanked God for the grace that He had given to the Corinthian church. Then, he gave some examples of that grace. First, they were enriched in Him in everything. The Greek word for enriched is *ploutizo* (Strong's G4148), which means to make wealthy. Paul is not speaking about material wealth; he mentions two specific areas that they were enriched, in all speech (*logos*, Strong's G3056) and all knowledge. God had blessed them with good preaching and teaching of the word. Paul, a great preacher and teacher had planted the church. Apollos had come there after Paul, and he was a great preacher and teacher.

(1 Cor 1:4-5) "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, {5} that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge,"

Luke had this to say in Acts 18 about Apollos' word ministry. He was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and spoke and taught accurately. He powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. God had greatly enriched the Corinthian church with good preaching and knowledge.

(Acts 18:24–28) “Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. {25} This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John... {27} And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, {28} for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.”

Paul also gave thanks to God for the grace that had been given them in the area of spiritual gifts. He said that they were not lacking in any gift. That is quite different than Paul's initial comments to the churches in Rome. He told them that he wanted to come to them so that he could impart a spiritual gift to them. The Greek word for gift is charisma (Strong's G5486). The root word is charis (Strong's G5485), which means grace. The spiritual gifts are gifts of grace, and God had enriched them with these gifts of grace.

(1 Cor 1:6-7) “even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, {7} so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

(Rom 1:11) “For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;”

Even though they were not lacking in spiritual gifts, they were lacking in understanding of them. In 1 Corinthians 12, he wrote, I do not want you to be unaware or ignorant of spiritual gifts. They were also lacking understanding about how they were to be used in their meetings. Paul devoted the chapter fourteen to the use of gifts in the services. The improper use of gifts was causing chaos, so Paul wanted everything to be done in an orderly manner.

(1 Cor 12:1) “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”

(1 Cor 14:40) “But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.”

In much of the church, there is a lack of these gifts of grace, a lack of understanding of these gifts, and also a lack of understanding in the use of them in public services. When spiritual gifts are not exercised properly in church meetings, they create distractions and chaos. The answer in many churches has been to shut them down and not allow them to be exercised. Instead, we should ask God to enrich us with these spiritual gifts. Then, we should teach on the gifts, and the proper use of them. If we do this, the church will be edified, and unbelievers will recognize the presence of God, fall on their faces, and worship God. Despite they lacked understanding of the gifts and the use of them, Paul gave thanks that they had been enriched in Christ.

(1 Cor 14:24–25) “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; {25} the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.”

3. For their eagerness for the coming of the Lord (1 Cor 1:7)

Paul acknowledged that they were awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word for revelation is apokalypsis (Strong's G602), which means appearing, coming,

manifestation or revelation. The KJV translates this as the coming of the Lord. The Corinthians were eagerly awaiting the return of Christ.

(1 Cor 1:7) “so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

(1 Cor 1:7 KJV) “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:”

Another place that the word apokalypsis is used is in Luke 17. Jesus was telling His disciples about the lightning flashing when He returns. Then, He told them that it will be like the days of Noah, where people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. Then, in verse thirty, He said, “It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed (apokalypsis). The revealing of Christ is the coming of Christ. The Corinthian church was eagerly awaiting the return of Christ.

(Luke 17:22–30) “And He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. {23} They will say to you, ‘Look there! Look here!’ Do not go away, and do not run after them. {24} For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. {25} But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. {26} And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: {27} they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. {28} It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; {29} but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. {30} **It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.”**

I wait eagerly for things that are dear to my heart. We have awaited eagerly for live services. We are grateful to have been able to use zoom, and it has served us well in the transition, but we have missed the corporate worship, the meals together, and the fellowship with one another. Karen and I built a new home, and we waited eagerly for the home to be finished. The Corinthians obviously had a love and zeal for God and eagerly awaited the coming of Christ.

When Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, he told them that “our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” If we think that our citizenship is here on earth, then we will not be as eager for the return of the Lord, for He will be taking us away from our home. However, if we understand and believe that we are aliens, that our citizenship is in heaven, we will eagerly await the coming of the Lord Jesus. The Corinthians understood that they were citizens of heaven and were eagerly awaiting His coming.

(Phil 3:20–21) “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; {21} who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

Paul mentioned to the Philippians that when the Lord returns, He will “transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has

even to subject all things to Himself.” Whatever shortcomings or imperfections that we have now will be suddenly transformed when the Lord comes. Whatever suffering, hardship, or pain that we are enduring will suddenly be removed at the coming of the Lord. Our bodies will be transformed into conformity with the body of His glory. We have a lot of reasons to eagerly await the coming of the Lord.

4. That God would confirm them to the end (1 Cor 1:8-9)

Paul mentions two things that God, who is faithful, will do for them. First, God would confirm them to the end. The Greek word is *bebaioo* (Strong's G950), which means to confirm, or establish. It means to make stable or stabilize. God wanted to establish them and make them stable. The second thing that God was going to do, was to make them blameless in the day. Paul is writing a letter of correction to them, and confronting them on some areas where they are not blameless, but he is looking past their current situation, and declaring that God is going to make them blameless in the day of the Lord. God is a faithful God and He is wanting to confirm and establish each of us in our faith.

(1 Cor 1:8-9) “who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. {9} God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

In Philippians 1:6, Paul said that “He who began a good work in us will be faithful to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” The word, perfect, means to complete or reach the intended goal or mark. Paul was confident that God would confirm them, and make them stand blameless before the Lord.

(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.”

Conclusion and Applications

Paul gave thanks to God for the Corinthians. He thanked God for His grace given to them through Jesus Christ. He thanked God that they had been enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, and that they were lacking in any gift. He thanked God that they were awaiting eagerly the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He thanked God because He was going to confirm them to the end.

(1 Cor 1:4-9) “I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, {5} that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, {6} even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, {7} so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, {8} who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. {9} God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

We should give thanks to God for His grace in our lives. We should give thanks to God because He has enriched us in all speech and knowledge. We should give thanks to God for the spiritual gifts He has given to us. We should eagerly await His coming. We should give thanks that He is going to confirm us to the end. We have a lot to give thanks for.

What will it take for us to be like Paul, and always be giving thanks? Here are some things to help us develop the habit and culture of thankfulness.

1. **Understand that it is God's will to give thanks.** God wants us to give thanks in everything. We may not feel like it, but we need to be committed to doing His will, which is to give thanks in everything.

(1 Thess 5:18) "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

2. **Consider the benefits that we have in Christ.** In Psalm 103, David wrote, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefit; who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; who satisfies your years with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle." I find that the word of God is a great prayer book. As I read this passage, and other passages, it is easy to thank God for the things that we read about. Paul's prayer of thanksgiving is a great prayer for us to use. Take time to consider the many benefits that we have in Christ.

(Ps 103:2-5) "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.

3. **Prioritize the giving of thanks in our prayers.** In Psalm 100:4, we are taught to enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. In our prayer times, we should begin with thanksgiving and praise. Karen and I pray together every morning, and we begin our prayer time with thanksgiving and praise. Two of the things that I regular thank God for is His faithfulness and His provision in our lives. We raised a large family and people ask how we did it, and it was by God grace and provision that we did it.

(Ps 100:4) "Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name."

David appointed Asaph and other Levites to give thanks to the Lord before the ark of the covenant. They were not there to petition the Lord for things; they were there to minister to the Lord and to give Him thanks. That was their assignment. It was an important priority so David assigned Levites to give thanks. We need to make the giving of thanks a priority.

(1 Chron 16:4-7) "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: {5} Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel, with musical instruments, harps, lyres; also Asaph played loud-sounding cymbals, {6} and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests blew trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God. {7} Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD."

4. **Get in the habit of saying thanks.** A culture of thankfulness comes out of the habit of giving thanks. When people help, serve, give, or bless us, we should thank them. As we intentionally thank people and God, we will develop the habit of being thankful. When we have the habit of giving thanks, the people around us will pick up on it and will begin to give

thanks. That is how the culture of thanksgiving is developed. God is looking for a community of believers to honor him by offering Him thanks. The Connection Church of Rome is going to be a community of believers that are not only connected to God, but are loving and honoring Him.

Prayer

Father God, thank You for this letter that you inspired Paul to write to the church in Corinth. Thank You for Paul's example to us of giving thanks. Help each one of us learn to be thankful. Help us to appreciate the many benefits that we have in You. Help us to be a church that honors you with thanksgiving. Help us to be a church that honors and appreciates one another by giving thanks to one another. Help us develop a culture of thankfulness. Father, I also pray that we would be full of zeal for You and Your kingdom. I ask You to help us be excited and to eagerly await Jesus' return. It will certainly be a glorious day. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Q & A

- What is something that you can thank God for?
- What are some things that we can do to create a culture of thanksgiving?
- When someone thanks you for doing something, how does that make you feel?
- In Luke 17:11-19, ten leprosy men were healed, and only one came back and gave thanks. Why is it that only one returned to give glory to God?

Introduction (1 Cor 1:4-9, Ex 20:12, 1 Pet 3:7, 1 Sam 2:29-30, Pr 3:9, 50:23; 100:4, 1 Thess 5:18)

1. **For the grace of God given to them** (1 Cor 1:4, Phil 1:3-5, 1 Thess 5:18, Col 1:3-4, Eph 1:15-16, 1 Thess 1:2-3)
2. **That they had been enriched in everything** (1 Cor 1:4-5, Acts 18:24–28, 1 Cor 1:6-7, Rom 1:11, 1 Cor 12:1, 14:24-25, 14:40)
3. **For their eagerness for the coming of the Lord** (1 Cor 1:7, Luke 17:22–30, Phil 3:20–21)
4. **That God would confirm them to the end** (1 Cor 1:8-9, Phil 1:6)

Conclusion and Applications (1 Cor 1:4-9)

1. Understand that it is God's will to give thanks. God (1 Thess 5:18)
2. Consider the benefits that we have in Christ. (Ps 103:2-5)
3. Prioritize the giving of thanks in our prayers. (Ps 100:4, 1 Chron 16:4-7)
4. Get in the habit of saying thanks.