

"Give Thanks"

This coming Thursday, many will consider what they're thankful for. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to see how counting your blessings will make a difference in your life. Stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Psalm 19 and verse 9 says that "The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether." Because God is good and righteous, we can turn to His word and be assured that it will teach us the truths that we most need to hear and to be His people and then also to prosper. I'm thankful that God loves us so much and blesses us every single day. Thank you for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Psalm 92 verses 1 and 2 says, "It is good to give thanks to the LORD, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; To declare Your loving kindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night." During the Thanksgiving holiday, we remember our blessings and express our thanks to God for them. But thanks should be on our lips every day. We can never say thank you enough to family, friends, and especially to God. Thanksgiving is not just something that we do to be kind; it also blesses us. When thanksgiving becomes an integral part of your life, you'll find that your attitude and your life change. You'll become more positive, more gracious, more loving, and more humble.

We all utterly dependent upon God who created us for life. He provides all our needs. And the fine-tuning of our universe which allows us to breathe, to have fresh water, to have food, and to have night and day is not an accident. God made this world for our blessing. And we need to honor God for all He has done and to be thankful. The act of giving thanks leads us to healthy hearts, minds and lives. Giving thanks will also lead us to take God and His way seriously. And nothing is more important!

Now if you want to study more about giving thanks, we offer today's study free. And if you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

Larry Owsley will lead the Edmond church to worship in song, and we'll read from Psalm 100, and explore the privilege of giving thanks!

Our reading today comes from Psalm 100, all five verses.

Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.

Serve the LORD with gladness;

Come before Him with joyful singing.

Know that the LORD Himself is God;

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving

And His courts with praise.

Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

For the LORD is good;

His loving kindness is everlasting

And His faithfulness to all generations.

What a wonderful thought to give thanks to the Lord. Let's pray. Oh Father we are grateful, we're grateful for our lives, for our health, for our families, for our freedoms. We're thankful Father for all Your blessings spiritual and physical, and we pray that we may serve You always from a heart filled with love. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

God has always urged His people to be thankful. Paul urged the church in Colossians 4 and verse 2, "Devote yourselves to prayer [he says], keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." Now he had already given the reason for this; it's because of what the Lord Jesus has done. He said in Colossians verses 6 to 7, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude." He said walk as you were instructed and overflow with gratitude. My friends, do this and it will make your life brighter and better. You'll be right with God and will fill your life with joy.

The Christian life should overflow with gratitude. Well how do we do this? Colossians 3 verses 15 to 17 says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Let Christ's peace be your focus, sing with thankfulness in your heart, and do everything in His name while giving thanks. Now these changes will lift your spirits and encourage your heart. Your focus determines your attitude and your destiny. Hebrews 13 and verse 15 says, "Through Him then [that is through Jesus then], let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."

Now it takes discipline to keep focusing your mind on God. Life is ever changing, distracting, and often unfair. Our changing world is declining fast in morality and faith. We may even think all is lost. We can't predict what misfortunes may lie ahead, but we can count on the blessings that we now enjoy with confidence. We can remember that we are victorious in Christ. We can be certain that we keep His promises, for He Himself has said in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

So, we must follow God's teaching. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to 18, there he says "pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." In everything? Yes, in everything. In good times and in bad, give thanks. When life is unfair, give thanks for what you have in Christ. And even if you suffer for the name of Christ, give thanks! 1 Peter 4:12 to 14 says, "Beloved, don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you." The "here and now" isn't everything; the Lord will reward those who love and serve Him.

And our struggles in this life prepare us for something better, so be thankful even for struggles. James 1:2 to 4 counsels us, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." God is shaping and molding us for eternity, so don't despair when you face a struggle. Learn to be thankful for everything. Why?

Well first, when you are thankful, you'll stop complaining and grumbling. Throughout their journey in the wilderness, the Israelites grumbled against God. And God counted their grumbling as a lack of trust; 1 Corinthians 10 regards grumbling as a sin as bad as idolatry or even immorality. Philippians 2:14 to 16 says, "Do all things without grumbling [complaining] or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach [he says] in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ [Paul says] I'll have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain." When you complain, you take your focus off of what is good that the Lord has done for you, and put it on the bad.

Second, when you're thankful, you'll stop worrying so much. Philippians 4:4 to 7 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious [that is stop worrying about anything] be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." When we rejoice in the Lord and take our burdens and cares to Him, He blesses us with peace. He'll put a guard around our hearts and minds! Yes, the Lord truly, truly gives us an abundant life.

Start rejoicing over the things that God has done for you, and your life will grow more positive and joyful. Proverbs 15 verse 30 says, "Bright eyes gladden the heart; and Good news puts fat on the bones." Count your blessings, and focus on the good, and rejoice in Christ! Put away the negative and focus on the good. Philippians 4 and verse 8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell [put your mind] on these things."

Third, when you're thankful, you'll become more humble and less prideful. Remember God is the source of every blessing. James 1:17 says that "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." Well this is why the Lord in Matthew 6:11 asks us to pray to God, "Give us this day our daily bread." You may work a job and think it all depends on you, but remember God is the source of every blessing.

Moses reminded the Israelites as they were about to enter the promised land in Deuteronomy 8 verses 11 to 14, "Beware that you don't forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, 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." You see, pride leads to forgetfulness. And so Moses urged them in verse 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." God is the source of all we possess, all we are, and all we hope to be. 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 7 asks some arrogant people, "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you didn't receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you hadn't received it?"

Some folks focus on themselves, and their own abilities, and their own righteousness. And when a person gives thanks to God merely for what he himself possesses within himself, he's actually bragging about himself more than he is thanking God. The Lord Jesus contrasted the arrogant person with the person who recognizes his great need for God. You remember in Luke 18:11 to 14, it says that "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself [not to God, but too himself]: [he said] 'God, I thank You

that I'm not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." Gratitude to God, our great need for God, removes our pride.

Fourth, when you're thankful, you'll be willing to be more gracious to other people. The Lord Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6 and verse 12, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Giving thanks for God's grace leads us to be willing to forgive other people. Ephesians 4:31 to 32 says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Fifth, when you're thankful, you'll express your love. We're thankful the Lord Jesus willingly and lovingly sacrificed Himself upon the cross. 1 John 4:19 says that "We love, because He first loved us." Giving thanks helps us keep our focus on the Lord and on what really matters. Gratitude for what Jesus did is at really the heart of our conversion. Gratitude leads us to be committed disciples who want to please the Lord in all that we do. We can't look deeply at the cross and then walk away as if nothing matters. Our thankfulness will not let us.

Does the cross matter to you? Surprisingly, some people live as if the cross didn't matter. Perhaps you remember when Jesus healed the ten lepers. Luke 17:12 to 16 says, "As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' And when He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, and glorified God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan."

When people fail to remember God, fail to honor Him, or thank Him, they lose sight of the blessings of living as God's people. An ungrateful person will become apathetic and callous toward God. When people lose sight of God, they also lose sight of morality and truth. They don't realize that when they stop honoring God, they start honoring themselves.

Romans 1:21 to 24 described the pagan Gentiles this way: "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them."

I tell you, giving thanks matters. When you love God, you want to serve Him with all your heart. Psalm 50:23 says, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God." Truly giving thanks comes from our hearts and shows in our lives. Thanksgiving should lead to thanks-living. Are you thankful?

Let us pray. Oh Father help us to give thanks to You every day and in every way, from our hearts because we love You. This we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

I look forward to going to heaven and seeing Jesus, my Savior and Lord. And one thing I want to do is to look into His eyes and say to Him "Thank you, thank you for dying for me. Thank you for shedding your blood to cleanse me from all my terrible sins, thank you for loving me and allowing me to live with

you forever.” But I don’t want to wait until I go to heaven to express my thanks to God. I can do it now by getting right with Him and by worshiping Him. I don’t want to miss a single Lord’s Day, the first day of the week, without prayer and singing and praise to Him. I don’t want miss a single Lord’s Day without gathering around the Lord’s table to partake of the Lord’s Supper, and remembering the Lord’s body and blood which were given for me.

The word “thankful” actually comes from an old English word “think-ful.” Being thankful comes from being think-ful. When we realize how blessed we are, we should respond to the love and goodness of God. And I think how often people today want and want and want from God, but never think to give their praise, and their thanks, or their hearts to Him. Have you?

Are you following Jesus and are you serving the One who loves you? God’s goodness leads us to repent and obey the gospel. If I love God and am thankful to Him for His grace, I’ll gladly follow and obey Him. God’s love makes us want to trust in Him, to repent of all our sins, to confess His name, and to be baptized into Christ. According to Romans 6:3 to 7, we die with Christ in baptism, we’re buried with Him in baptism, and we’re raised with Him to walk in newness of life in baptism. Romans is so true in this manner. And God wants you, He wants your heart, He wants your life, and He wants your soul. So won’t you serve Him and follow Him always. Thankfulness begins when people keep the Lord Jesus in their hearts everyday and serve Him. And we hope you’ll not wait another day to put your Lord on in baptism.

We hope that today’s study has stirred you to give thanks to God. And to consider what God has done for you. Now if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office, it’s toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There’s also a schedule of our programs. We also offer a free Bible Correspondence course to those who write and ask for it. Now don’t worry, we won’t hassle you for money or put you on a list.

But we do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. They love guests. And if you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. Well we’ll be back next week, And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.