

Giving Thanks

Giving thanks, what a blessing. Think about it... if you are giving thanks then you must have a blessing for which to be thankful. If you are giving thanks then someone is giving you something to be thankful for!

Some, sadly, see the giving of thanks as a duty required by God. Yes, it is a command, but that command itself is engineered by Jehovah God to create blessings in your heart. You want to do the right thing, you want to obey God, but sometimes things seem pretty rough... life is low, joy is elusive and the giving of thanks seems almost odd.

However, you decide to do the right thing... on your knees, hands folded, eyes closed... now what! Now your mind begins to search, you examine life a bit more closely... and voila... there are some blessings, more than you recognized at first. Obedience to God's command has delivered to you a realization that brings more joy.

The bills are still piled high, the dog is still sick, the kids still live far away, but you see your blessings more clearly... God's love, your beating heart, that card from the grandkids, that 50 year old teddy bear that you still hug, the smile you put on that special brother's or sister's face last Sunday... suddenly you see more clearly that following God's plan for giving thanks brings more blessings than you ever realized.

Paul knew the drill: midnight in prison? Sing! Standing before a judge? Proclaim Jesus! Shipwrecked, a day and a night in the deep? Pray! In prison in Rome? Tell the Praetorian Guard how great Jesus is! (Philippians 1:12-14)

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you," (1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV.) When the school of life is difficult, God is teaching us important lessons. When class is sweet, God is rewarding us for faithfulness. The day you internalize these two lessons deeply is the day you will blossom in your ability to give thanks in every circumstance.

One last challenge: guess what Paul was most thankful for in writing in his letters to the churches. No, not God's love. No, not salvation. No, not food, not safety and not even God's grace. A quick trip my computer Bible tells me clearly... he wrote most of "giving thanks" for "you" his readers, the everyday Christians in the everyday churches in the everyday cities of daily life... the hearts where God's love takes wing from the printed page and alights gently in the hearts of more and more precious souls.

He gives thanks for us! And is so doing, leaves us an example to imitate Him as he imitates Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Not on "turkey day" but on all the days God has made. "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it," Psalm 118:23! Never neglect the giving of thanks for one another!

-Ray Wallace