

## In Everything Give Thanks

Stress is not a new phenomenon. It goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve got evicted for not keeping their contract! From paradise to pulling weeds must have induced a horrific stress, physical, mental and spiritual.

Daily life, financial worries, even pop culture recognizes it and expresses it in various ways. In the movie Fiddler on the Roof, in one of the key songs Tevya asks his wife Golda, "Do you love me?" It seems like sweet and innocent question, and it is, but Gorda answers out of stress:

"Do I love you?  
With our daughters getting married,  
And this trouble in the town,  
You're upset, you're worn out,  
Go inside, go lie down!  
Maybe it's indigestion."

While we smile at this small refrain, it does reflect the various sources of stress that come our way on a regular basis, political, practical, religious upheaval, wars, inflation, traffic, appliance breakdowns, and, as I type this, our electricity keeps going off every few minutes (twelve inches of new snow!). The list of genuine problems seems to be endless.

Therein lies a problem, in the midst of all this stress it is incredibly easy to forget to be thankful, genuinely, deeply thankful to God, who is the source of every blessing we have from food to family to finances and even fun! The last I looked James 1:17 still says, "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." (Isn't it amazing how the ink never changes on those pages!)

I read that more divorces in the US are caused by financial disagreements than any other cause. Whether that's true or not, it does reflect that depth of stress some people experience when they don't trust God and his promises. We should trust and obey God concerning our finances and His provision. Deut. 8:18 reminds us, "...you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth." When we fail to trust God in every area of life, we open our hearts to mind-numbing stresses every day.

Obedience to God creates joy and Nehemiah 8:10 says, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for ***the joy of the Lord is your strength.***" The old hymn says, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey." Trust and obedience are God's plan for our joy to drive out our stress. When that is functioning according to God's plan, joy and peace reign in our hearts and that, in itself, promotes the continuous giving of thanks!

No wonder Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "**in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.** It's not just one day designed by a former president, but every day, all year long.

-Ray Wallace

Further study: Col. 3:15, 16; 2 Cor. 4:15; Eph. 5:20

