

Be Thankful Colossians 3:12-17

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

How long has it been since you _____ your blessings? How long has it been since you gave _____ a second thought? Today we're going to explore the _____ of giving thanks to God. We turn to the Bible to _____ about the power and the wisdom of God. We know "Every good thing and every perfect _____ is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (James 1:17). God is the _____ of life, of love, and of every blessing we enjoy. For that _____, we should come to know and to love Him. The best way to do that is through a diligent _____ of the Word of God.

Each year America sets aside a day to _____ God for our blessings and to consider our relationship with Him. God has truly given us _____ to be thankful. Let's never let it be said that we were ungrateful or forgetful for what God has _____. William Law in his book, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, said, "Would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It's not he who prays most or fasts most; it's not he who gives most the alms, or is more eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it's he who is always _____ to God who wills everything that God wills, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a _____ always ready to praise God for it." In the old Anglo-Saxon, thankfulness means "thankfulness." Thinking of all God's blessings and goodness makes us grateful.

Let's set aside this week for _____ than turkey and ball games. Let's genuinely thank God for _____ that He's done for us today and every day! Let's consider our relationship to the One who gave us life and _____ blessing.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Colossians 3:12-17.

David said in Psalm 100:4, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with _____. Give _____ to Him, bless His name." A thankful heart is a _____ heart and one ready to give praise to God. It counts its blessings and knows how _____ God has been to every one of us. David again urges us, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; 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" (Psalm 103:1-5).

The Bible says, "Through Him (that is Jesus) then, let us continually offer up a _____ of praise to God, that is, the _____ of lips that give thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15). Thanksgiving is not just a holiday for once a year; it should be a _____ of life. The Bible says that "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from _____, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (James 1:17). Your food, your water, your

clothing, and your house—all of them come from His _____ hand. He does indeed crown us with lovingkindness and compassion. Some people grumble and complain about every little thing, not realizing _____ that God has done for us, and He does it every day.

God gives us many _____ blessings. He gives us peace, He gives us His Word, the Bible, to teach and admonish us; He gives us a song to build us up; and He gives us a purpose in life. The goodness of God makes us _____ people. His love makes us _____ to love all the more.

It's not always _____ to be thankful. Life is not always _____; and things don't always go smoothly. But, God said, "Rejoice _____; pray without ceasing; and in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). The test of a Christian is not will he give thanks when things are easy, but will he give thanks and praise God when life is _____? Christians rejoice always for Christ and His cross, even when the world _____ them. They don't _____ praying because life is rough. They pray even more. They give thanks "in" everything and in every circumstance. They know everything is not good or pleasant; but they also know Romans 8:28 that says: "And we know that God _____ all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." Not everything is good, but God can cause it to _____ for good. So we give thanks in everything.

The Pilgrims who came to America thought it _____ to thank God for their food and their lives. The Congress, in the earliest days of the United States, also thought it good to thank God for all His provisions of freedom and prosperity. On November 1, 1777, the United States Congress issued this proclamation to the whole _____:

"It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise; that with one _____ and one _____ the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the _____ of their divine benefactor; and that together with their sincere acknowledgments and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their manifold sins, whereby they had forfeited every favor, and their humble and earnest supplication that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of remembrance; that it may _____ him graciously to afford his blessings on these governments of these states respectively, and prosper the public council of the whole; to inspire our commanders both by land and sea, and all that are under them, with that wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit instruments, under the providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States the greatest of all blessings, independence and peace."

This early Congressional proclamation asked America to _____ their manifold sins and ask God to _____ them so that the government and the military may be fit instruments under the providence of Almighty God. The early Americans knew God was the _____ of their liberties. They also knew that if they abandoned the will of God that's found in the Bible they would _____ the favor of God and their liberties. **Read what they knew what God said in Jeremiah 18:7-10.**

Nations do not stand or fall on the basis of their _____ or their _____. No! Many nations have been very wealthy and powerful, yet they _____. We must understand that a nation stands or

falls on the basis of its willingness to _____ by the principles found in God's Holy Word. The God of Heaven, the God of the Bible, is the true King of our country and of every country. He is a greater _____ than all our weapons.

The people who began this country understood God's _____ in its establishment. Did you know the very first act on the very first day of the very first Continental Congress on September 7, 1774, that their first act was to _____ Psalm 35 and _____? Did you know the representatives of that congress when they _____ were kneeling, bowed with reverence, and praying in the name of Jesus Christ? Who was kneeling? Patriots like George Washington, Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay. Did you know that they began every day with prayer at 9 o'clock?

The Continental Congress on May 16, 1776 appointed a day of fasting and prayer for the colonies. They said, "The Congress.... Desirous... to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely... on his aid and direction... Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17th day of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and do this through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness."

Benjamin Franklin said in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, "God governs in the _____ of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His _____? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in _____ that build it (that's a quotation of Psalm 127:1). (Franklin said) I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, that we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

After the first battle of Bull Run, Abraham Lincoln declared September 26, 1861 as a National Day of Prayer and Fasting. He said, "It is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to _____ in humble submission to His chastisement; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offenses, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action."

When Solomon became _____ over Israel, he asked God's blessing on the nation. God answered Solomon's prayer with the words found in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14. God said "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name _____ themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." Solomon knew being right with God makes a difference. By inspiration he said, "Righteousness _____ a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). One must wonder how long God will _____ the sins of this or any nation.

We cannot take God's grace and blessing for _____, that He will always favor us regardless of how we live. Israel made that _____, and Babylon destroyed them. When we

allow taking the lives of the unborn and selling their organs, when two of every five children are born out of wedlock, when we're mixed up about morals and marriage, and when some have ousted God from public life, do you think God will remain _____? Isn't it time that we all took stock of our spiritual lives? Isn't it time that we _____ of our sins and made changes in our lives? How can we _____ God one day and act like He doesn't _____ the next day? We should thank God and _____ what He's done for us every day.

Let's say "thank you" to God for His mercy and blessing. Let's never become like the nine lepers that Jesus healed. In Luke 17, they raised their voices, saying, "'Jesus, Master, have _____ 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, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving _____ to Him. And he was a Samaritan. And then Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine— _____ are they? Was no one found who returned to give _____ to God, except this foreigner?'"

Merely saying thank You to God is a good beginning, but God wants _____ than mere appreciation. He wants our _____, our _____, and our _____. The people of Haggai's day had grown so _____ with their lives they forgot the task that God had given them to do in rebuilding the temple. God said, "Consider your ways! You've sown much but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied;...you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns ways to put into a purse with holes" (Haggai 1:5-6). Could it be that we today are facing so many _____ because we too have forgotten our God? Could it be that we need to consider our _____ and be thankful for what God has done?

We cannot expect to _____ in sin or apathy and still _____ God. Galatians 6:7-8 teaches, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." Isn't it time that we humbled ourselves and began _____ the Lord? There's always a point at which God's patience comes to an _____, when God sees that people have embraced evil and do not wish to _____. **Read 2 Peter 2:4-10.** We can't continue in _____ and expect God to continue to _____ us. Do you have sins in your life? Do you need to repent?

To become a Christian, put your _____ wholeheartedly in Jesus Christ and in His Words in the Bible, turn your heart from sin to the Lord, and cease from sin and live for Jesus, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be _____ into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Acts 2:38 still says, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." That promise is for all _____ for all _____. When we're baptized, the Lord washes away our sins (Acts 22:16) and He makes us His children (Galatians 3:26-27). Oh, won't you become a Christian today?