

"Giving Thanks"

The mark of a real Christian is love; the love that grows out of thanksgiving. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today, we're exploring our need to give thanks. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible teaches us what God has done for us and how He's blessed us every day of our lives. Paul realized that "In him we live and move and have our being"; and "we are indeed his offspring" (Acts 17:28). God provides everything we need physically and spiritually to live godly lives filled with good works. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

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 is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is more eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God who wills everything that God wills, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it."

One temptation of the maturing Christian is the danger of getting accustomed to his blessings. Like the traveler who has been everywhere and seen everything, the maturing Christian is in danger of taking his blessings for granted and getting so accustomed to them that they fail to excite him as they once did. Emerson said that if the stars came out only once a year, everybody would stay up all night to behold them." I fear we've seen the stars so often we don't bother to look at them. We've grown accustomed to our blessings.

Psalms 92 verses 1 to 2 says, "It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night." Are you thankful?

We offer this study free on giving thanks. 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. 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.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Psalm 103 verses 1 to 5, and explore the need to give thanks.

Our scripture reading today comes from Psalm 103 verses 1 through 5. This is a psalm of David talking about all the good that God has done.

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.

That's God's blessing for us. Let's pray together. Oh, Father we are so grateful for all the good that You have done for us. Help us to be faithful in our commitment and our love for You. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Psalms 100 verse 4 says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name." This is really what those who love God enjoy doing. Giving thanks takes place when people think about all the good that God has done. In the old Anglo-Saxon tongue, thankfulness means "thankfulness." Thinking of all that God's goodness gives to us and how it draws forth from our heart's gratitude. When we count our blessings, we begin to realize all the good God has made possible for us. James 1:17 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." Yes, every good thing is from our God!

The Christian life should be full of thanksgiving. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:15 to 17, "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. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Gratitude for the Lord leads us to forgive others, to sing from our hearts and to serve the Lord Jesus.

When people fail to respect and thank God, they give their lives to things that can do them no good. Nothing substitutes for God. Romans 1:18 to 23 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth (and they suppress it) in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and His divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 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." Those who forget God settle for useless idols and futile speculations. Without God, there is no hope.

Don't forget all the good things that He has done for you. Moses warned the Israelites not to forget God after they entered the promised land. He said in Deuteronomy 8 verses 10 to 14, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. "Beware that you do not 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."

The book of Judges tells the sad story of a generation that lost sight of God and had to be disciplined. Judges 2 and verse 7 tells of the faithfulness of the people during the lifetime of Joshua: "The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work (which the Lord, a, which) the LORD which He had done for Israel." However, verse ten tells what happened later: "All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; (that is the generation of Joshua) and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel."

The later generation “did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals, they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers” according to verses eleven and twelve. Judges 2:14 says that, “The anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.” When we forget the Lord, we put our lives and our souls into jeopardy. God raised up judges to deliver them from the hand of their enemies, but they wouldn’t listen to the judges and they turned quickly away from the Lord back to the idols.

On the other hand, Job held fast to God even when he suffered great anguish. According to Job chapter one, Job suffered the loss of seven sons and three daughters, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants. He was the greatest of all the men of the east. Job 1:20 to 22 says, “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.’ And through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.”

In chapter two, Job suffered a terrible disease that caused sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job didn’t understand why this happened, but he did not give up his faith in God. When his wife told him to curse God and die, Job said, “Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips. We all face adversity, but we should never forget the good that God gives to us.

What does God do for us? Well, let’s count our blessings. First, we should be thankful we are not where we were spiritually. Salvation is no small gift. Paul realized what it means to be saved from sin. He said in Romans 6:17 to 18, “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” On a very personal level, Paul knew how important it was to be saved from sin. He said in Romans 7:24 to 5, “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” I tell ya without Jesus, we could never be free from sin’s control and destiny.

Second, we should be thankful we have a Savior who loves us and is interceding for us. 1 Timothy 2:5 to 6 says, “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.” Jesus not only died for us; He serves as our mediator with God the Father and makes intercession for us (Hebrews 7 verse 25).

Third, we should be thankful we have a Father in heaven to bless and help us. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:31 to 33, “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” God will take care of us!

Fourth, we should be thankful the Lord gives us strength. Isaiah 40 verses 28 to 31 says, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young

men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.”

Fifth, we should be thankful that our names are written in heaven. Luke 10 verses 17 to 20 says, “The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’” And He said to them, “‘I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.’” I tell ya even a miracle is not as great a blessing as knowing that our names are recorded in heaven. This is our hope.

Sixth, we should be thankful we have victory over death. Because Jesus arose from the dead, we have hope in our bodily resurrection. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:50 to 56, “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of (Heaven. Or the kingdom of) God (rather); nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Seventh, we should be thankful that we have an inheritance in heaven. Jesus went to the Father in heaven to prepare a place for us. 1 Peter 1:3 to 5 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (you) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Yes, we have an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance. We serve a great and loving God.

Let’s praise God and thank Him for all His blessings. Thanksgiving is the foundation of our love for God. Psalm 30 verses 4 to 5 says, “Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, And give thanks to His holy name. For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.”

Don’t let a single day, not even a single day, pass without giving thanks to God for His love, His grace, and His blessing! Without God we have no hope; but with God in our lives, we have every hope and promise. We can rejoice in His love. We can face the future with confidence, because God walks with us. He walks with us every step we take. And so, make this day and every day a day of thanksgiving! And never forget. Never, never forget, what God has done for you.

Let’s pray together. Oh, Father we are so grateful for every good thing and for every blessing that comes our way. Father help us to count our blessing, to remember Your kindness and goodness and to devote ourselves to You in service and in love. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Leslie Flynn tells the story about a farmer in Vermont. He was sitting on the porch with his wife. He was thinking about how much she meant to him. It was about time—for they had lived together for forty-two years; and she had been such a help, a willing a hard worker. One day as they sat together, he said, “Wife, you’ve been such a wonderful woman that I can hardly keep from telling you.” I’m sure

it would mean much to her if he had regularly told her how much he loved and valued her as a wife. Should we be like this thankless farmer and forget how good God has been to us?

You know everyone likes to hear, "thank you." Some people are kinder to the store clerk than they are to their families; they hardly say "thank you" to their families. Others are kinder to the store clerk than they are to God, because they rarely if ever pray, study the Bible, or attend worship. Some rarely think about God or respect His words. When people live more like the world than they do the Lord, their hearts are far from God. If you're grateful to God, say so! If you're grateful to God, show it!

Gratitude for the cross of Christ, revealed in the gospel, calls us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross daily, and to follow the Lord Jesus. Love calls us to believe and trust the Lord and His teaching, to turn away from sin and evil, to confess our faith in Jesus Christ, and to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Baptism into Christ washes away our sins, and adds us to the church, and makes us children of God.

We hope that today's study about thanksgiving has stirred you to recognize your responsibility to the Lord Jesus. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD 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. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And I believe you'll enjoy it. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us, don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you give thanks to God by worshiping at church. Getting involved there. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. Why not worship with them today? Find out all you can, become a member of the Lord's church by obeying the gospel. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So, keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. As always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.