

## In Everything Give Thanks

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Text:

1 Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15: See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. 16: Rejoice evermore. 17: Pray without ceasing. 18: **In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.** 19: Quench not the Spirit. 20: Despise not prophesyings. 21: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22: Abstain from all appearance of evil. 23: And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24: Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 25: Brethren, pray for us. 26: Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. 27: I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. 28: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

### Introduction

This Thursday is Thanksgiving Day and I am thankful that our country still recognizes the importance of pausing once a year to give thanks. But we must be careful not to be guilty of waiting until Thanksgiving Day to express our thanks. It is clear in our text that it is God's will for each and every one of His children is to be thankful in every occasion not just one day a year.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 **In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**

It is God's will for us is to give thanks in every thing. In every thing means in all circumstances, not just once a year, but all the time. But the sad truth is that we are by nature ungrateful creatures. Thanksgiving does come naturally to us. We are like children that must be diligently taught and must constantly be reminded to give thanks when someone has done us a favor. Children are ungrateful to parents, people are ungrateful to one another, and worse of all, people are ungrateful to God.

### Ungratefulness is a mark of an unregenerate person

Ungratefulness is the fundamental manifestation of the lost unregenerate person.

Romans 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20: For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as

God, **neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22: Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

### **Ungratefulness is an ugly sin**

Billy Graham wrote, "*Ingratitude is a sin, just as surely as is lying or stealing or immorality or any other sin condemned by the Bible. Nothing turns us into bitter, selfish, dissatisfied people more quickly than an ungrateful heart. And nothing will do more to restore contentment and the joy of our salvation than a true spirit of thankfulness.*"

### **This subject of gratitude is a humbling subject**

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Thank God no matter what the circumstances may be. How can we possibly obey this text when we feel every thing is against us.

### **Thanksgiving is a mark of a growing Christian**

One of the marks of true growth in grace or spirituality is a continual giving of thanks to the Lord. When we realize how blessed we are by others and by God and express that - we are growing.

**The ability to give thanks** even in trying times is one of **the greatest marks of spiritual maturity**.

Learn how Matthew Henry, an English minister and Bible commentator in the 1700's reacted when he was robbed. He wrote in his diary, "*Lord, first, I thank You because this is the first time I ever been robbed; second, I thank You although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, I thank You because although they took all I had, it was not much; and fourth, I thank You because I was robbed not being the one doing the robbing.*"

Today, I want to talk about what it takes to be thankful, not only on Thanksgiving Day, but in every circumstance in our lives. What does it take for us to be thankful?

### **I - It Takes Humility to be Thankful**

One reason that we seldom pause to give thanks is pride. Here in the States, **we are used to having so much** and we think that we are entitled to have all the good things of life. We have so much and yet **we still think that we deserve something better than what we have**.

Also many people do not want to admit that God is the Provider of all good things. They have this is the attitude that says, "*Nobody ever gave me anything, I worked hard for everything I have.*" With this kind of attitude, they feel that they have **no one to thank but themselves**.

This reminds me of the experience the preacher Henry A. Ironside had in a crowded restaurant. Just as Ironside was about to begin his meal, a man approached and asked if he could join him. Ironside invited him to have a seat. Then, as was his custom, Ironside bowed his head in prayer. When he opened his eyes, the other man asked, "Do you have a headache?" Ironside replied, "No, I don't." The other man asked, "Well, is there something wrong with your food?" Ironside replied, "No, I was simply thanking God as I always do before I eat."

The man said, "Oh, you are one of those, are you? Well, I want you to know I never give thanks. I earn my money by the sweat of my brow and I don't have to give thanks to anybody when I eat. I just start right in!"

Ironside said, "Yes, you are just like my dog. That's what he does too!"

The only person who can genuinely give thanks for all things is the humble person, the person who knows he deserves nothing and who therefore gives thanks even for the smallest things.

**Gratitude** is from the same root word as "**grace**," which signifies the free and boundless mercy of God.

We are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing apart from the grace of God. We owe every thing to God. How can we not be thankful when we owe everything to God?

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

*"We have no reason to be proud; all we have, or are, or do, that is good, is owing to the free and rich grace of God. A sinner snatched from destruction by sovereign grace alone, must be very absurd and inconsistent, if proud of the free gifts of God."* - Matthew Henry

John 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

We should remember that every good gift comes from God and that He is the Source, Sustainer, and End of all things. The very breath in our mouths is the free gift of God.

## **II - It Takes Faith to be Thankful**

We are called to give thanks is not "*in most things give thanks*" or "*in some things give thanks*" or "*give thanks when you feel like it*" but "*in every thing give thanks*". But how could

someone give thanks when it seems like every thing is working against us? The answer is found in ...

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The fact that God works everything together for good to those who love Him is the basis for this command.

2 Corinthians 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

It is God's will for us to give thanks in every circumstance in life, because God is turning every circumstance in life to our good and using them to fulfill His will for us.

**Paul is not calling us to be thankful for all things.** We are not commanded to be thankful for the wayward son or daughter, or for the cancer, or for the lost of job, or for the failed marriage, etc. "*In every thing, give thanks*" means in the midst of all things, we can give thanks because God is at work. When we do so, we are expressing our trust in His **sovereignty**, His **wisdom** and His **goodness**.

We cannot control the circumstances of life, but **we can control how we respond to them**. That is what faith is all about, **daring to believe that God** is working everything for our good even when we do not feel like it or see it happening.

"*In everything give thanks*" is not always easy to obey, but if we are to truly give thanks in every thing, there must a willingness to submit to God and to trust God that He is with us through all the circumstances of life. His **mercies** are new every morning, His **compassions** never fail, and He causes all things to work for the good of those who love Him.

### **III - It Takes Thinking to be Thankful**

As we have seen earlier the word **gratitude** comes from the same root word as grace (charis). If we have experienced the grace of God, then we ought to be grateful for what God brings to us.

Thanksgiving is from the same root word as "**think**," so that to think is to thank. If we would think more, we would thank more. But if you don't think you won't thank.

An old English preacher once said, "*A grateful mind is a great mind*".

If you and I pause to think, we will have cause to thank.

## ***Count your Blessings***

*When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,  
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,  
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

*Are you ever burdened with a load of care?  
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?  
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,  
And you will keep singing as the days go by.*

*When you look at others with their lands and gold,  
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;  
Count your many blessings money cannot buy  
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.*

*So, amid the conflict whether great or small,  
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;  
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,  
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.*

### *Refrain:*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God has done!  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.*

Focus on what you have, and not on what you don't have.

Psalm 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2: Bless the LORD, O my soul, and **forget not all his benefits:**

*“Be on the lookout for mercies. The more we look for them, the more of them we will see. Blessings brighten when we count them. Out of the determination of the heart, the eyes see. If you want to be gloomy, there's gloom enough to keep you glum; if you want to be happy, there's*

*gleam enough to keep you glad. Better to lose count while naming your blessings than to lose your blessings by counting your troubles” - M. B. Babcock*

### **Closing Thoughts**

Paul is calling us to a habitual attitude of gratitude. Gratitude is an attitude that like all spiritual disciplines, needs to be consciously developed and deliberately cultivated in the dependence on the Holy Spirit and the grace of Jesus Christ in which we stand.

Remember it takes humility, faith and thinking to be thankful. When we have these we can be thankful.

AMEN!