

It is Good to Give Thanks

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Text: *Psalm 92:1-2; Psalm 147:1*

The atheists' dilemma

Richard Dawkins a militant atheist, wrote a book entitled, "*God Delusion*" in which he labels God and belief in God as delusions. But during a debate, he said...

*"When I lie on my back and look up at the **Milky Way** on a clear night and see the vast distances of space and reflect that these are also vast differences of time as well, when I look at the **Grand Canyon** and see the strata going down, down, down, through periods of time which the human mind cannot comprehend . . . it's **a feeling of sort of an abstract gratitude** that I am alive to appreciate these wonders, when I look down a microscope it's the same feeling, **I am grateful** to be alive to appreciate these wonders."*

So Dawkins, in his own admission, said that, as he looks at a massive object (Stars , Galaxy) or a microscopic object (e.i. atom, molecule, DNA), as he looks at the grandeur and wonder of the universe, he is overcome by a feeling of gratitude and appreciation. He is grateful that he is alive to see these wonders.

But if you are an atheist like Dawkins, to whom do you express such gratitude and appreciation? If there is no God, no Creator and that the universe is the result of blind chance, whom do you thank? Who is he going to thank? Himself? Pat himself on your back and congratulate himself for being alive to appreciate the beauty and grandeur of nature?

Dawkins and his atheist friends are in a **dilemma** or conundrum. Because "*being grateful*" calls for a **second person** or **another person**. They want to express gratitude but there is no one to turn to and give thanks. **Gratitude is not complete if there is not another person to thank.** Gratitude without a benefactor is like a sun without light and heat. It is like rain without water. So that "*sort of an abstract gratitude*" is **meaningless**. What empty feeling the atheists must have especially on Thanksgiving Day!

Obviously an atheist cannot celebrate Thanksgiving Day. A person who believes in coincidence or luck or random chance, if he is going to be **intellectually consistent** and **honest** cannot join the million Americans in celebrating Thanksgiving Day. Only those who believe in God and believe that **God is the source of all blessings** are able to celebrate Thanksgiving. The most joyous people on Thanksgiving Day are those who believe in a **personal God who is ever and always at work for our good.**

Where does this feeling of gratitude come from?

The other question is, where does this feeling of what he calls "*a feeling of sort of an abstract gratitude*" come from?

Romans 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest (plain, evident) in them; for God hath shewed it unto them (made it so). 20: For the invisible things (attributes) of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood (observed) 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; (they refuse to honor Him as God nor give thanks to Him) but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Innate in every human heart is the awareness and **knowledge of the existence of God** and that we are **obligated** to thank a Supreme Being. We are all aware of the existence of a Supreme Being and ought to express gratitude to this Supreme Being. But sadly, **many suppress this knowledge** and awareness of God and they **suppress this feeling of thankfulness** and gratitude. Resulting to futile imagination and darkness.

But thank God, many of us have been delivered from vain imaginations and darkened hearts. God has revealed Himself to us and He has given us eternal life which is essentially - a saving knowledge of the true God and His Son Jesus Christ whom He has sent (*John 17:3*).

Mark of Growth

Having been brought to this vital relationship with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, we **must grow** in grace and knowledge. And **one of the marks of true growth in grace or spirituality** is a **continual giving of thanks** to the Lord, a continual offering of thanks to God. **Grumbling, whining, complaining** are the characteristics of an unbeliever and an **immature Christian**. But the mark of a true Christian and one who is growing in grace is gratitude and a grateful heart.

The Bible consistently and constantly reminds us to be thankful and with good reasons.

Though I believe thankfulness is a command and a duty **there is much more to thanksgiving than just a command and a duty**. The Bible gives us reason why we are to be thankful. Here in our text it says plainly that...

Psalm 92:1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: 2: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

It is a good thing to be thankful and to give praise to God. We are to be thankful, not just one day a year, **not just on Thanksgiving Day**, but everyday of the year! It would do us good to think about something for which we are thankful.

Why is it good to praise and give thanks to the Lord?

I - It is good because it is proper

Psalm 147:1 Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

Giving thanks is comely. It is proper. It is right. It is appropriate. It is reasonable.

Psalm 33:1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

Thanksgiving is expected. What is the proper thing to do when somebody does you a favor or give you a gift? Isn't that what we teach our children. We say thank you to fellow human beings when they do us a favor, how much more should we give thanks to God for His gifts.

How good it is to sing praises and give tanks to our God. Not just simply say "I am thankful..." but give thanks to God specifically. God deserves our thanksgiving.

He made us. He provides for us. He sustains us. He redeemed us. He guides us. He protects us. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. **Yes! It is right to give thanks.**

Psalm 106:1 Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

II - It is good because it is pleasant

Psalm 147:1 Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

Psalm 135:3 Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.

Giving thanks is not only good, it is also pleasant. **There are things that are good but are not pleasant.** Like ampalaya, bitter melon, okra, spinach, exercise, work, child discipline. These things may be good but they are not pleasant. **There are also things that are pleasant but are not good.** Like junk food, greasy food, etc. Drugs and alcohol and cigarettes may give you pleasure but they are not good for you. They are destructive. Sin maybe pleasurable (*Hebrews 11:25*) but it not good. It is evil. It destroys.

But giving thanks is both good and pleasant.

1. It pleasant to God

Thanksgiving pleases and honors God. When we give thanks to God, we acknowledge that God as the great Giver.

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.

God is pleased. I want to please God.

Psalm 50:23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

It glorifies God. It promotes His glory. The primary purpose of giving thanks to God is to acknowledge His goodness and this honors Him.

2. It is pleasant to fellow men

I like to be with people who have grateful hearts. I don't want to hang around with murmurers, complainers, grippers, grumblers, etc.

One complainer said: *"I feel a little bit better today but when I feel better I always feel worse because I know I will feel bad tomorrow."* This is a good example of a pessimist. I don't want to be around *"the glass is half empty"* kind of person.

III - It is good because it is profitable

Why does God command that we praise Him with thanksgiving? Is He such a megalomaniacal tyrant that He is always seeking praise and worship? Does He require our praise and thanksgiving because He needs our praises? NO! This command is repeated throughout the Bible **because we need it!** It is for our good. The effect is good. **Gratitude has a positive purpose or influence in our lives as Christian.** Gratitude can be beneficial to us in our lives.

It benefits us ...

1. Physically

Giving thanks is good for our health. Dr. Hans Selye discovered that positive attitudes contribute to good health and of all the positive attitudes, the one he finds the most effective was gratitude.

2. Emotionally

Scientific research reveals that people who take the time to reflect on what they are grateful for, **are happier, healthier and more content**, than those who are chronic complainers and murmurers.

Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontentment and dissatisfaction.

We would worry less if we praise God more. - Harry Ironside

It tends much to lessen the real troubles and afflictions of life to dwell on those things for which we should be thankful.

3. Spiritually

Gratitude and thankfulness also will benefit us spiritually. Thanksgiving is one of the ways we can guard ourselves from all kinds of sin and evil.

Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Continue steadfastly in prayer, watch in the same (being watchful in it) with thanksgiving. There is a connection between watchfulness and gratitude. Be watchful in it BY thanksgiving. Guard yourselves with gratitude!

*Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God. 7: And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, **shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus** (will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus).*

Thanksgiving humbles us, strengthens our faith and guards our hearts.

*When I'm worried and I can't sleep
I count my blessings instead of sheep
And I fall asleep counting my blessings
When my bankroll is getting small
I think of when I had none at all
And I fall asleep counting my blessings*

When you are worried and cannot sleep, **don't focus and count the sheep**, instead **focus on the great Shepherd and count His blessings**.

On this Thanksgiving Day, as you gather with your family and loved ones, pause and give thanks to God and pray that God would give you a thankful heart. Pray that you would be able to express that gratitude and thanksgiving by your lives and by your service.

Happy Thanksgiving and God bless you all!