

“Give Thanks”



1 Thessalonians 5:18

I. What is Thanksgiving?

A Definition:

II. Thanksgiving in the Old Testament

III. Thanksgiving in the New Testament

IV. Thanksgiving in Paul's Letters

V. Thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians 5:18

GIVE THANKS

The Imperative of Thankfulness

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

*“In everything give thanks;
for this is God’s will for you
in Christ Jesus.”*

THANKSGIVING

“Expression of gratitude, most often directed to God; aspect of praise that gives thanks to God for what He does for us; praise is thanking God for who He is; the two are inseparable.”

OT Thanksgiving

The Old Testament has NO concept of thanks being independent of or distinguished from praise, and the object is always Yahweh (God).

The Danger of Praise

“The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, and each is tested by the praise accorded him.”

Vows of Thanksgiving - OT

In individual and corporate laments:

“I will give thanks; we will give thanks.”

Frequently vows fulfilled in a joyful song of thanksgiving for God’s mercy and deliverance. (Neh. 12:27; Psalm 26:7)

Psalm 26:6-7

“I shall wash my hands in innocence and go about Your altar, O LORD, that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders.”

Context of thanksgiving in worship!

Psalm 69:30-31

“I will praise the Name of God with song and magnify Him with thanksgiving. And it will please the LORD better than an ox or a young bull.”

Being thankful better than sacrifice!

New Testament Thanks

“eucharisteo, eucharistia, eucharistos, charis” = “thankful, gratitude, favor, grace”

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord.”

1 Timothy 1:12

New Testament Thanks

Exclusively directed toward God.

Three exceptions:

Luke 17:9 - unworthy servant

Acts 24:3 - Tertullus to Felix

Romans 16:4 - Paul to Aquila-Priscilla

Gospels and Acts

Tone of thanksgiving dominates prayers in New Testament, esp. at meals:

4000 Matthew 15:36; 5000 John 6:11;
Last Supper Mark 14:23; Paul on ship
about to be shipwrecked Acts 27:35

New Testament Thanks

John 11:41-42 - Lazarus' tomb - context of anticipation of God's answering prayer = Philippians 4:6 - "with thanksgiving"

Vain prayer of Pharisee - Luke 18:11

Paul's Letters of Thanks

Largest reference to giving thanks:

Romans 1:8; Ephesians 1:15; Colossians 1:3; Philemon 4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; Philippians 1:5; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:3

Paul overflowing in thankfulness to God!

Paul's Thankfulness

For Paul, thankfulness takes its place along with faith and love as the proper and natural response to God's gifts and grace. *God is glorified through the thanksgivings of His people!*

Paul's Thanksgiving

Adoration = Praising God for who He is

Thanksgiving = Praising God for what He does

“I will praise You more and more!” Ps. 71

2 Corinthians 4:15

Goal of Paul's evangelism ministry was to bring great numbers to Christ in order to increase the prayers of thanksgiving, thus bringing glory to God! *“Grace is spreading to more and more people, causing the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.”*

2 Corinthians 9:1-12

“Your gift to the saints in Jerusalem will enrich you by producing thanks to God; in fact, by supplying their needs, there will be an overflowing of thanksgiving to God. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.”

The Duty of Thankfulness

It is the duty of all humankind to acknowledge God as Creator and give thanks to Him - Romans 1:21.

Ingratitude describes apostate humanity in the last days - 2 Timothy 3:2.

Divine Thanksgiving

When infused with thanksgiving, even mundane activities can become acts of worship - Colossians 3:17 - *“Whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to Him through God the Father.”*

Characteristic Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving in all circumstances:

“You have received Christ, so now ‘walk in Him,’ having been firmly rooted, being built up in Him, and established in your faith, and overflowing with gratitude.” - Colossians 2:7

Corporate Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving must be a mark of corporate worship in the Church, esp. in song:

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell in you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing each other with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” - Colossians 3:16

Particular Thanksgiving

We should be grateful to God for all things, but especially for His work of salvation and sanctification - 1 Thess. 2:13 - **“We constantly thank God that you received the Word of God...which performs its work in you who believe.”**

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Triplet of commands for inner life

Startling, assertive adverbs “*always, without ceasing, in everything*”

“Thanks in Everything”

Above the level of natural possibility

Only by God’s grace in the Spirit

A duty not dependent on gratifying circumstances; universal in scope, all-inclusive “*everything*”

Thanks in Everything

Meet every circumstance in life not with stoic resignation, but with joy and praise of thanksgiving! Like Paul and Silas in jail

- Acts 16:25 - A glorious possibility in light of Romans 8:28 - from an “Amen” to God’s will to a “Hallelujah” of thanksgiving!

Justified Thanksgiving

“This is God’s will for you!”

Rejoicing, prayer, thanksgiving linked!

“If the dove of Christian joy is continually to mount upward it must fly on the wings of prayer and thanksgiving.”

God's Will Is Thankfulness

Not Paul's own personal ideal for believers, but God's will; His gracious purpose and design. This eliminates an attitude of pessimism in facing the events of life.

“In Christ Jesus”

Christ is the pattern and source
Union with Him essential
Product of new life in Spirit

God's will "for you"

Specific application for YOUR life

"eis humas" = "into you" =

The truth stated is to reach out and
become operative in YOU!

An attitude of gratitude should be part
of your "fabric of Christianity!"

Be Thankful

Not, “you must do it because God wills it,” but it is, “knowing that it is God’s will, you CAN do it.”