

## Give Thanks With A Grateful Heart

Psalm 100:4 & 5: 'Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise! Give thanks and bless His name for the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; His faithfulness and truth endure to all generations'.

John 11:41 & 42: "Father I thank You that You have heard Me. Yes, I know You always hear Me."

Hebrews 13:15: 'Through Jesus therefore, let us at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of the lips that thankfully glorifies His name'.

Luke 17:12 to 19: 'As Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers who stood at a distance and they raised their voices and called, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And when Jesus saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were healed. One of them saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice and he fell at Jesus' feet, thanking Him. Then Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was there no one found to return and give thanks and praise God except this stranger?" And Jesus said to the man, "Get up and go on your way. Your faith has healed you'."

It is good to give thanks to God for the things He does for us. We should be grateful and it is polite to say thanks. Most people think of God as Someone Who is there solely to give to us, and we think only of what we can receive from Him, but He likes us to give Him thanks and show our gratitude. He notices those who thank Him and those who don't. Being thankful is a correct response to God's grace and kindness to us. Thankfulness is a condition of the heart and an essential expression of the fullness of the Spirit, while thanksgiving is the vocal expression from the heart (the fruit of our lips). We read in the Gospels where Jesus frequently gave heart-felt vocal thanks to the Father.

Thanksgiving is a direct command of scripture. 'Let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which you were called in one Body and be thankful' (Colossians 3:15). 'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God for you who are in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18). 'Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is ... At all times and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus to God the Father' (Ephesians 5:17 & 20). Thankfulness is the expression of the peace of Jesus ruling in our hearts. We are to give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God. We are to thank God the Father in the name of Jesus because that is God's will. If we are not thankful, then we are foolish and we are not fulfilling the will of God and we lose our peace. When we begin to give thanks, we will be back into the will of God once again and peace will return. When the Lord said to give thanks at all times for all things, that leaves no time and nothing out. Giving thanks does not depend on our feelings or our circumstances. We are to give thanks in all circumstances and there will be times when we don't feel as though we want to give thanks because some circumstances are very harsh. That is when our thanks is a sacrifice. We give thanks because (1) the Lord is always good; (2) His mercy and loving-kindness is everlasting and (3) His faithfulness endures to all generations. Those three things will never change. Our emotions and our circumstances change, but that is no reason for us to change our thankfulness to God. Our thankfulness is not based on our feelings or circumstances; our thankfulness is based on eternal unchanging facts about Almighty God. He is our Ancient of Days and yet He has never changed nor will He ever change. We should change our focus from the temporary earthly realm to the eternal spiritual realm through the eyes of faith. We are not to worry about anything, but anything we do need, we are to bring to God in prayer with thanksgiving. One key to peace of mind is approaching God with thanksgiving. 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests) with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God, and God's peace which passes all understanding shall guard over your hearts and thoughts in Jesus' (Philippians 4:6 & 7).

We need to have the correct attitude when we pray; that is a thankful heart. Jesus always had His prayers answered because He had the right attitude. Jesus frequently thanked God and if it's good enough for the Son of God to thank our Father, then it's good enough for us, because He is our example to follow. All through the Bible we are taught to give thanks, or to have a grateful heart, or to give a sacrifice of thanksgiving, or to praise God. We are encouraged to thank the Lord in over 160 verses in the Bible. We are encouraged to praise Him in over 250 verses. We are encouraged to glorify Him in over 70 verses. We are encouraged to worship Him in over 170 verses. When we feel discouraged, the best 'treatment' is praise and thanksgiving, which will bring peace. When we feel elated, the best response is thanksgiving from a grateful heart which brings joy.

Amen and God bless you.

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