**THANKSGIVING SPECIAL**

11-19-17

The words “thanks” “thank” and “thankful” combined is used 417 times in the NASV of the Bible.

***1 Chronicles 16:8 Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples.***

***Psalm 106:1 Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.***

The phrase, “give thanks to the Lord” is used 26 times in the NASV.

***1 Corinthians 1:4 I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,***

***Colossians 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.***

***Colossians 2:6-7 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7) having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude***.

***Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.***

***Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.***

***1 Thessalonians 3:9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account,***

***Romans 1:19-21 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20) For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21) 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.***

There are wonderful examples of people who gave thanks to God even though they went through extreme hardships:

The Founders

On December 20, 1606, three bold boats sailed down the Thames in London, embarking on a voyage to search for a safe port along the shores of Virginia. Susan Constant, flagship of Sir Christopher Newport’s fleet, 110 feet, 7 inches long, was by far the largest vessel. Though she had only nineteen bunks, she carried fifty-four passengers and a crew of seventeen. She was a sturdy ship with the crudest of accommodations. No one had any privacy except the captain. There was no galley. When weather permitted, food was cooked in sand pots on deck.

The second largest ship in this history-making voyage was the Godspeed. It was 69 feet, 2 inches overall, and had cramped sleeping quarters for twelve, yet she listed thirty-nine passengers and a crew of thirteen.

Quite appropriately, one of the boats used by the founders was the Discovery. This small sailing craft displaced about twenty tons of water and measured 50 feet, 2 1/4 inches from stem to stem. The rough “below” was partitioned for four bunks. Yet she brought over twelve passengers and a crew of nine.

It required 128 days for the voyage. The founders arrived at Cape Henry, Virginia, April 26, 1607, at four o’clock in the morning. On this windswept shore, the grateful settlers raised a “large wooden cross” **and thanked God for their safe arrival**. Jamestown was selected as their site on May 14. These were dark and daring days. The disease-infested swamps, together with Indian warfare, claimed many. Food was scarce. Several hundred colonists came to Virginia in the first six years of her founding, and at one point only sixty persons survived.

On June 7, 1610, it was decided to abandon the settlement. The colonists sailed down the James River once again to challenge the Atlantic. Next morning, Sir Thomas Gates, lieutenant governor of the colony, received word that Lord De la Warr had arrived at Point Comfort with settlers and supplies. Governor Gates returned to the empty fort and, **falling on his knees, thanked God the colony had been saved.** G. Curtis Jones, 1000 Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1986), 42–43.

First Proclamation after Plymouth

Governor Bradford of Massachusetts made this first Thanksgiving Proclamation three years after the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth: “Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the *ravages of the savages*, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to **listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings**.” —William Bradford Ye Governor of Ye Colony *ibid*

These people expressed their gratitude even under dire circumstances, but today, people don’t even express gratitude when they receive gifts and gracious acts from others.

A businessman said, “People are ingrates. It took me 61 years to find it out. I have 175 employees, men and women. At Thanksgiving, I sent them 175 choice turkeys. Only four thanked me. Two thanked me by notes and two said, “Thank you” when they chanced to meet me in the hall. Because of their thanklessness, I’ve decided never to go out of my way to be nice again.” Someone has said, “If you want to find gratitude, look for it in the dictionary.” Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 1461.

**grat•i•tude** noun, [Latin gratitudo,: the state of being grateful: thankfulness

**in•grate**, noun [Latin ingratus ungrateful]: an ungrateful person

**in•gra•ti•ate** transitive verb, to gain favor or favorable acceptance for by deliberate effort Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

* The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings. —Reflection

 • Thanksgiving, to be truly Thanksgiving, is first thanks, then giving.

 • When you drink from the stream remember the spring. —Chinese Proverb

 • It is better to say “thank you,” and not mean it, than to mean it and not say it.

A man writing at a post-office desk was approached by an elderly fellow who asked, “Sir, could I get you to address this postcard for me?”

The man did so gladly, and then agreed to another request, which was to write a message on the card, and to sign it. He then asked, “Is there anything else I can do for you?” The old fellow thought a moment, then said, “Yes. Add this at the end: “P.S. Please excuse the handwriting.” ”

A postal employee opened and read the mail which came to the Dead Letter Office in Washington addressed to Santa Claus. In the three months before Christmas, there were thousands of letters asking for something. In the months after Christmas, there was only one card addressed to Santa Claus thanking him. How quick we are to ask and receive. How slow we are to speak the magic word—thanks!

—Chicago Daily News

Humility and gratitude go together:

After a stirring concert at New York’s outdoor Lewissohn Stadium when Marian Anderson had sung encore after encore, a thousand people crowded around the backstage entrance, asking only a glimpse of the woman who had moved them so deeply.

In response to continued calls, the great singer stepped out onto the porch, still wearing her white, concert gown. She stood silent and motionless for a moment, then said quietly to the crowd, “Thank you for letting me sing.”

—Carolyn Roland

We exhibit a degree of thanksgiving in life *in reverse proportion* to the amount of blessings we’ve received. Martin Luther wrote in his book

Table Talk: “The greater God’s gifts and works, the less they are regarded.”

A hungry man is more thankful for his morsel than a rich man for his heavily-laden table. A lonely woman in a nursing home will appreciate a visit more than a popular woman with a party thrown in her honor.

A Russian who finally gets his own copy of the Holy Scriptures after seventy-five years of state-imposed atheism is more thankful for his little book than we are for all the Christian books and magazines and translations that overflow our shelves.

Ralph Waldo Emerson observed that if the constellations appeared only once in a thousand years, imagine what an exciting event it would be. But because they’re there every night, we barely give them a look.

One of the evidences of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives is a gradual reversal of that twisted pattern. God wants to make us people who exhibit a thankfulness in proper proportion to the gifts and blessings we’ve received. Robert J. Morgan, Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 736.

The words “Thank” and “Think” hail from the same root, reminding us that thanksgiving comes from thinking about our blessings.

Helen Keller once said, “I have often thought it would be a blessing if each human being were stricken blind and deaf for a few days at some time during his early adult life. It would make him more appreciative of sight and the joys of sound.”

Senator Richard Neuberger once said the experience of contracting cancer changed him. “A change came over me which I believe is irreversible. Questions of prestige, of political success, of financial status, became all at once unimportant. In their stead has come a new appreciation of things I once took for granted—eating lunch with a friend, scratching Muffet’s ears and listening for his purr, the company of my wife, reading a book or magazine in the quiet cone of my bed lamp at night, raiding the refrigerator for a glass of orange juice or a slice of coffee cake. For the first time I think I am actually savoring life. I shudder when I remember all the occasions that I spoiled for myself—even when I was in the best of health—by false pride, synthetic values, and fancied slights. Robert J. Morgan, Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 736.

Barbara Ann Kipfer began keeping a list of her favorite things as a shy teenager. Soon the list became second nature; she found herself making additions while riding the bus, eating breakfast, and even in the middle of the night. Twenty years and dozens of spiral notebooks later, her list was published as a book titled *14,000 Things To Be Happy About.* Why not write your own book?*ibid*

Between Prison and Monastery

Dr. David Soper, in *God Is Inescapable*, suggests that basically the difference between a prison and a monastery is just the difference between griping and gratitude. Undoubtedly this is true. Imprisoned criminals spend every waking moment griping; self-imprisoned saints spend every waking moment offering thanks. Dr. Soper says that when a criminal becomes a saint, a prison may become a monastery; when a saint gives up gratitude, a monastery may become a prison.

—Ray O. Jones Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Garland, TX: p.1456.

***1 Thessalonians 1:2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;***

**Paul further declares that thanksgiving is not just an elective exercise but something every believer should do.**

***2 Thessalonians 1:3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting,***

***2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord,***

All blessings in life start with the grace of God.

Gratitude is the basis for true happiness in life. No one can have true happiness without gratitude. The less the gratitude, the less happiness you have. So how can we become more grateful? The answer, through prayer and the consistent intake of Bible doctrine.

The greater the gratitude the greater the blessing. When you take blessings for granted your soul dries up. True happiness is based on capacity in the soul for love and gratitude. Without that capacity, you will never be satisfied so happiness becomes nothing but an illusion.

Without gratitude to God and grace orientation there is no happiness for the believer, even if all of your lusts are fulfilled, because there is no capacity for happiness, only self-centered constant concentration on self.

Most people today aren’t even thankful for the good things in their lives so they certainly aren’t thankful for the bad things even though the Scriptures expects us to be thankful for the bad as well as the good.

***Ephesians 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;***

***1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.***

**Christian Victory**

**O Thou whose bounty fills my cup,**

**With every blessing meet!**

**I give Thee thanks for every drop—**

**The bitter and the sweet.**

**I praise Thee for the desert road,**

**And for the riverside;**

**For all Thy goodness hath bestowed,**

**And all Thy grace denied.**

**I thank Thee for both smile and frown,**

**And for the gain and loss;**

**I praise Thee for the future crown**

**And for the present cross.**

**I thank Thee for both wings of love**

**Which stirred my worldly nest;**

**And for the stormy clouds which drove**

**Me, trembling, to Thy breast.**

**I bless Thee for the glad increase,**

**And for the waning joy;**

**And for this strange, this settled peace**

**Which nothing can destroy.**

***Habakkuk 3:17-18 Though the fig tree should not blossom, And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail, And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold, And there be no cattle in the stalls, 18 Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.***

***Job 13:15 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.***

The word for thanksgiving in Greek is eucharistía, from eu, “well,” and cháris, “grace, thanks.” When we consider God’s cháris, “grace,” we are compelled to have eucharistía, “thanksgiving.” Spiros Zodhiates, vol. 1–4 (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992).

Paul expresses thanksgiving as simply something he does (1 Thess. 1:2). But in 2 Thessalonians 1:3 the Greek text has the expression, opheílomen eucharisteín, translated “we are bound to thank,” or “it is our duty to thank God always for you.”

***Psalm 95:1-3 O Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 3 For the LORD is a great God, And a great King above all gods,***

***Ex. 15***

***Psalm 100***