

Giving Thanks to God | 12/1/19

- We are undeserving of God's grace and mercy.
 - Before we talk about being thankful to God, it is important that we understand how underserving we truly are for any blessing or gift we might receive from God in the first place.
 - **When we understand how underserving we really are, it makes the need for us to be thankful (and the impact when we are) that much greater.**
 - **A clear example of how undeserved we are can be seen with salvation as we are all born unto sin and do not deserve to be made righteous.**
 - We need to remember that salvation is a gift given to us even though we are underserving, as we can see from our sinful nature that we have at birth.
 - Psalms 51:5
 - "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."
 - Psalms 58:3
 - "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies."
 - Christ died for the unrighteous, for the sinner, for the ungodly for the undeserving.
 - Romans 5:6-8
 - "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but while God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
 - We have not done anything to deserve what Christ did for us.
 - **A common perception is to think that we deserve to be saved, that somehow God is required to do this.**
 - **But the truth is that God would be just to not save a single one of us.**
 - This is the same thinking that leads to well "it's not fair" if God doesn't save everyone automatically, why would God allow some people to go to hell?
 - The truth is that God would be fair and just to let us all go, because we were born with a sinful nature that is in itself adherent to God.
 - **Being fair doesn't have anything to do with it, it's God being just.**
 - **Christ didn't have to go do the cross, instead He chose to go because of His love for us.**
 - **God does not "owe us" anything**
 - **As Christians we can at times think that God "owes us".**
 - Well God owes me, I've been a good person and I deserve blessings from God.
 - God owes me because of all the good works I have done.
 - **That is also untrue, just as God would be just to not save anyone, He doesn't "owe us" because of any works we may perform.**
 - We know that works are fruit of the spirit, a Christian having the Holy Spirit will desire to do the good works He has prepared for them.
 - **A Christian will desire to do good works because they love God, not because they expect a reward or payment.**
 - If a Christian only does "good works" because they expect something in return, then they are doing it for all the wrong reasons.
 - The Bible does tell us that **he will reward us** for our good works, now these rewards may be nothing we see while we are here but rewards in Heaven.

- **But regardless any gift from God is because of his grace and love, not because he “owes” us.**
 - **God is not our employer in whom we work for and we are owed our paycheck.**
 - **However, because of his grace and mercy, he has given us a gift that we do not deserve.**
 - Because of his amazing Grace God has chosen to give us a path to be considered righteous in the eyes of God, even though we are underserving.
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9**
 - **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”**
 - This gift of Salvation and the hope that comes with it is by far the greatest gift that God can give us, and he gives it to us freely because of his grace.
 - **But sometimes we take this for granted and don’t realize what he did for us to give us this most wonderful gift that we did not deserve.**
 - **How can a perception of “being owed” effect our ability to properly thank God for what He does for us?**
 - **What is wrong with thinking that you deserve something from God when you have “worked” for it?**
- Giving thanks to God.
 - Now that we understand how undeserving we are, we will look at Scripture to see what they say about being thankful to God.
 - **We must continuously offer up prayers of thanksgiving to God.**
 - It is important to God that we are continually thankful for everything that He is doing in our lives. There are many passages of Scripture that speak to this.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
 - “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
 - Hebrews 13:15
 - “Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”
 - Psalm 34:1
 - “I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”
 - Absolutely everything that we have is because of God, He is deserving of the thanks and praise for it all.
 - The life that you have, the air that you breathe is all because of God.
 - The clothes on your back, the place you have to lay your head down at night, the food you eat is all because of God.
 - The income you have, the things you own are also because of God.
 - We are never in a position that we should not give thanks to God, no matter our circumstances we should always give him thanks.
 - **What does it look like to always be in a state of giving thanks to God?**
 - **We must NOT have the worldview that it is only because of our abilities and hard work that we accomplished or achieve our goals.**
 - **The world perspective on this is quite different, it says that you have (fill in the blank) because of YOUR hard work, YOUR effort it’s because YOU made it happen.**

- While it's true we do put in effort and work in obedience it is still only because of God.
- This perception can be summed up in a very old "Thanksgiving" episode of the Simpson where Bart says this prayer:
 - *"Dear God we paid for all this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing" – Bart Simpson*
- **This unfortunately is the view of the world, that it is only the work of our hands that we get anywhere.**
- **Christians certainly don't carry this perception for everything, but if they are not careful, they might see some things in their life as the work of their hands alone.**
 - **God gave this warning to the Israelites before they entered into the Promised Land.**
 - Deuteronomy 8:17-18
 - "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' **You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth,** that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day."
 - **This is a clear example that shows that God is the one that gives us the ability to do great things.**
 - We MUST remember that no matter how hard we work for something, that it is only possible because of God.
 - He gave us the abilities, the talent, the skill, the mind to do those things.
- **We must also be careful that we do not "forget" to be grateful.**
 - **If we are not careful, we as Christians can do more taking and accepting of God's grace and mercy, than we give him glory and thanksgiving.**
 - We go through life asking God to help us with our circumstance, we pray for healing for our sick and safe passage when we travel.
 - But how often do we simply turn to God and give him thanks?
 - **How easily we can act and behave like a spoiled child who ask and receives continuously from his parents, but yet rarely gives thanks for what he has received.**
 - Christians unfortunately can behave in a similar way. We make request after request to God, he answers those requests but how often do we return the thanks.
- **Is it common for Christians to at times lose track of who truly made it possible for our life achievements, to instead give ourselves the glory and praise?**
- **What might cause us to "forget" to be grateful to God for what He has done for us?**
- **The conditions or situations in which we give thanks to God.**
 - We have established that we are to always give thanks to God, let us look at a few specific situations that this applies to.
 - **This list can be quite extensive, we will just highlight a few for study.**
 - **We must give thanks to God for the past, present and future.**
 - We thank God for the things He has previously done for us.
 - We must not forget what God has previously done for us.
 - God deserves our thanks not just once, but continuously for the things He has already done in our lives.
 - This shows Him our gratitude and is also a reminder for us of what God has done previously which will encourage us.

- No better way to give ourselves hope for current event than to remember and thank God for what He had done previously in our lives.
 - We thank God for what He is doing presently in our lives.
 - We must thank God for what He is doing in our lives right now.
 - Not wait until we see the outcome of those events if they are to our liking, but we thank Him continuously regardless of what is taking place.
 - We thank God for the future things He will do for us, for His promises yet to be fulfilled or realized.
 - We must also thank God for the things He has yet to do in our lives.
 - God has made many promises in Scripture for things we have yet to see fulfilled, but we thank Him anyways for them.
 - **This shows our trust and confidence in the will of God even though we do not yet know what that maybe.**
 - **Why else do you think it is important to thank God for what He had done previously and also for things that have not yet taken place?**
- **We must be unashamed to give thanks to God in front of others.**
 - David was not ashamed to give God praise.
 - Psalm 138:1-2
 - “I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”
 - Before the world David was not ashamed to give God thanks and praise.
 - We must not think that we cannot give God the glory in a situation because we are ashamed of what others might think.
 - We must give Him the praise regardless of what others might think.
 - Psalm 34:1-3
 - “I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!”.
- **We must thank God even when things do not go our way, or we have seemingly unanswered prayers.**
 - This is perhaps the most difficult, to thank God even when the outcome is not what we expected or wanted.
 - When we pray and ask for something that God seems not to answer or does in a way that isn't what we wanted.
 - **It is to thank God even when there is no joy for what we are thanking him for.**
 - It can seem easy to be thankful to God when things are going well, but to thank God in the darkest of times is much harder.
 - 1 Peter 4:12-13
 - “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”
 - **When we praise God during our trials, it shows our faith and trust in Him.**

- That regardless of our circumstances we will give Him the praise and thanks that He deserves.
- **Do you find it difficult to give God thanks during a fiery trial? Has this changed as you have spiritually matured?**