



# Light from the Word

## Expressing Gratitude to God (Part 1)

**Editor's note:** this month begins a two-part series on Expressing Gratitude

*"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the Bible, God desires to show us what He wants us to do and what pleases Him. In a world where there is often murmuring, complaining, and discontentment, God's people are taught to give thanks in every situation of life. A definition of giving is, to transmit from oneself to another by hand, speech or writing. This is an active step in our lives that reflects our heart's purpose. We are His workmanship and all that we have is a gift from our Heavenly Father. The Word teaches that we are to give cheerfully.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, we see the account of the rich young ruler whose heart's purpose was to do things for his own benefit. When given the chance to give to others in need, he went away very sorrowful: for he was very rich.<sup>3</sup>

Paul reminds us that we should be, "... *giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"<sup>4</sup> Thanks is an expression of gratitude, or an acknowledgment made to express a sense of favor or kindness received. Our Heavenly Father desires to give good gifts to His children,<sup>5</sup> and we have an abundance of reasons to be thankful for all that He has done. Are our hearts full of thanksgiving and gratitude?

*"Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."*<sup>6</sup> Take some time today and write down examples of God's favor in your life for which you are thankful.

Our first thought of thanksgiving goes to His unspeakable gift of Jesus. We who were sinners that

had gone astray, now by grace through faith in the atoning blood of our Savior Jesus Christ,<sup>7</sup> can have a living hope of eternal life. It is hard to comprehend, that we who were unjust, our own righteousness as filthy rags, could be reconciled to a just and holy God. Thanks be to God who, "... *hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*"<sup>8</sup> Like the man who found the hidden treasure, the precious pearl of salvation, we can express the joy of salvation through thanksgiving, forsaking all to obtain eternal life.<sup>9</sup> Like the man on Solomon's porch, we can go on our way, "... *walking and leaping and praising God.*"<sup>10</sup>

And yet, that is not all. Our Father in heaven blesses us exceedingly with all that we have need of, for body and soul. "*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.*"<sup>11</sup> God is faithful. Throughout scripture, we read examples of God giving gifts to those in need. From Daniel, who was given wisdom and might;<sup>12</sup> to Solomon who was given wisdom, riches, and honor;<sup>13</sup> and continuing to the examples in the New Testament of those who received sight, the ability to walk, and cleansing from leprosy; we see God's continual showering of blessings on those who were in need.

*"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."*<sup>14</sup> Daniel's life example was of thanksgiving to God, even though he knew that there would be challenges ahead. And in those challenges, God continued to provide for Daniel.

Do our lives have a pattern of thankfulness? Do we express our thanks to God in prayer? Do we have

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a melody in our heart to the Lord? Do we have a favorite psalm or hymn that we sing throughout the day that expresses the thanks in our hearts? There are so many wonderful psalms that were penned over the years that can be a help to us. What a precious promise we read in the 84th Psalm, "...*the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*"<sup>15</sup>

"*What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*"<sup>16</sup> It is humbling that the creator of Heaven and earth is mindful of man and cares about his daily needs. "*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*"<sup>17</sup> God continues to provide for our physical needs, but we are also reminded that, "*my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*"<sup>18</sup> God also provides daily, to the humble of heart, those things that are necessary for our spiritual being.

We are encouraged by the example of Paul when he was

on the stormy sea, "... *he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.*"<sup>19</sup> He was thankful in every situation of life. Like Paul, no matter how difficult the test, we can gratefully believe that "*our sufficiency is of God*".<sup>20</sup>

(Footnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. 5:18
- <sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 9:7
- <sup>3</sup> Luke 18:23
- <sup>4</sup> Eph. 5:20
- <sup>5</sup> Matt. 7:11
- <sup>6</sup> Ps. 40:5
- <sup>7</sup> Eph. 2:8
- <sup>8</sup> Col. 1:12
- <sup>9</sup> Matt. 13:44-46
- <sup>10</sup> Acts 3:8
- <sup>11</sup> Jas. 1:17
- <sup>12</sup> Dan. 2:23
- <sup>13</sup> 1 Kings 3:12-13
- <sup>14</sup> Dan. 6:10
- <sup>15</sup> Ps. 84:11
- <sup>16</sup> Ps. 8:4
- <sup>17</sup> Ps. 37:25
- <sup>18</sup> 2 Cor. 12:9
- <sup>19</sup> Acts 27:35
- <sup>20</sup> 2 Cor. 3:5