

Thanksgiving Is Not a One-Day Celebration

We are called to be grateful at all times, regardless of the circumstances. While that may seem like an utter cliché said by people of faith, there's a deeper truth and a greater joy that is found when we truly trust God and believe that He not only can and will do something for us, but that He already is merciful and gracious simply because of who He is.

I'm the first to admit that I am not always filled with gratitude. When things don't go exactly as I planned or in the timeline I set up for myself, I can easily fall into an attitude of bitterness and resentment because God didn't do what I wanted. What's even worse, is when God gives exactly what we planned or prayed for, yet the complaint exists because He didn't do something in the way that was desired. Yet, isn't that exactly human nature to become upset and impatient simply because the world doesn't revolve around every single thing we'd like it to?

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We can easily look back at the Israelites and see the same thing in this group of people. They experienced hundreds of years of struggle, yet God always vindicated them and brought them out of the darkness and into the light. What did God do after the Israelites spent 400 years in slavery? Their Egyptian captors experienced torment through plagues of disaster, unnatural impossibilities and death to their firstborns. What happened when the Israelites were pursued by these same people? God miraculously parted the Red Sea so they could escape while their enemies drowned. And yet, even after

experiencing such refuge, this same group of people God had saved time and time again had enough nerve to complain about the food they were miraculously fed by God day after day.

We might think that the Israelites were just extra picky and ungrateful. But how often do we experience God do the supernatural and yet we still complain about what He's bestowed upon us?

Often we find ourselves complaining about the job we asked for, the friends that we prayed for, or the vast food selection we have to pick from. Just as the Israelites were blessed by God in supernatural ways, God has done the same for us. The Israelites were fed manna, drank from streams out of the rocks and were led by the Spirit of God by cloud by day and by fire at night. He provided for their every need, and He's done the same in our nation, whether or not we see it. While many still have vast needs, we have been placed in a spot where resources are abundant if only we used them to help our neighbors out the way God has commanded us to love one another.

It's not unusual though that we wouldn't necessarily pay attention to the gravity of thankfulness. After all, the very definition of being thankful is "conscious of benefit received." Gratitude is not an innate part of our fleshly, sinful nature. Gratitude requires a mindful decision to take in all that we have been given, how God is moving in our lives and what we believe He will still do.