

Why You Should Give Thanks for All Things

Thanks seems to be a word that is used less and less in this culture. People seem to expect to be served, and it doesn't cross their minds to thank the person serving them.

Luke 17:11-37 tells the story of 10 lepers who were cleansed by Jesus. Only one returned to thank Jesus for healing him. Jesus asked where the other nine were, and then He told the leper who thanked Him that his faith had made him whole. Did something else occur when this leper gave thanks to Jesus? Wasn't he already made whole when Jesus healed the ten lepers?

I believe the one who **gave thanks** received a deeper healing than just the skin on his body. He received a healing in his heart. His heart was made whole, and he received the love of God in all of its fullness when he made the effort to return and give thanks to the Lord. We too will always receive a healing for our hearts when we give thanks to the Lord in everything.

We are exhorted in the Word to give thanks in everything and for everything. I used to resist the verse that exhorted us to give thanks for all things, because it was difficult for me to give thanks for some of the trials I experienced in this life. However, when I look back at these trials, I realize that God used them to build character in me and to also cause others to see God's glory through me as I went through fiery trials without being burned or bitter. Now I can **give thanks** for all things, even those things God allows Satan to use against me. I have to remember that no weapon that is formed against me will prosper, and ultimately the very weapons Satan uses against me will be used for my good to bring me into a deeper understanding of **spiritual warfare** or to build more of God's character into my life.

Grace abounds through **thanksgiving**, and when I have a grateful heart no matter what I am experiencing, I place myself in the position to receive more of God's grace. No matter what we are going through, we can always find something to be grateful for. I heard someone say if you can't find something to thank God for, just thank Him for the fluid in your eyeballs. We take so much for granted in this life, but a grateful heart will take nothing for granted. The one who has a grateful heart sees everything as a gift from God and he gives God the glory. I would much rather be around people who are **grateful** than people who murmur and complain all the time. Gripping charges the atmosphere with the negative, but a grateful heart gifts the atmosphere with grace, love and joy.

We used to sing a song, "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative and don't mess with Mr. In Between." Mr. In Between is the devil, and we latch on to him every time we murmur and complain instead of being grateful.

Lord, help me always to have a **grateful** heart.

READ: *Joshua 11:1-12:24; Luke 17:11-37; Psalm 84:1-12; Proverbs 13:5-6*

Linda Sommer is the author of Around the Word in 365 Days, from which this article is excerpted.

Happiness Is Determined by Two Daily Choices

Everyone in this life is searching for **happiness**. The word *happy* in Hebrew is the same word for *blessed*. We all want

blessings in our lives, and yet so many fail to live a happy, **blessed** life.

Proverbs 3:13 gives the secret to a continual life of happiness or blessedness: "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding" (NKJV).

All the treasures of wisdom are hidden in Jesus Christ. Unless a man comes into this knowledge of Jesus Christ, he will always lack the wisdom that brings happiness. Chances are also he will seek **happiness** in the wrong places.

There are two kinds of wisdom—the wisdom of this world, which comes from below, and the **wisdom** of God, which comes from above. James tells us about these two kinds of wisdom: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then **peaceable**, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:13, KJV).

Which wisdom will you choose to walk in today? If you choose the wisdom from above, you will have a happy, blessed day no matter what circumstances you encounter.

*Lord, You are all wisdom, and I will grow in **heavenly wisdom** only as I stay close to You, talk with You and listen to Your Word. You are the way that leads me to all the hidden treasures of wisdom. Your Word is the road map that instructs me as I follow this way. Help me as I go searching for hidden treasures today in Your Word, and help me to operate in heavenly wisdom today in all of my relationships with others. Thank You. Amen.*

READ: *Genesis 30:1-31:16; Matthew 10:1-26; Psalm 12:1-8; Proverbs 3:13-15*

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How Dancing Before the Lord Releases Power in Your Life

Most of us are familiar with the Indian war dances, which always occurred before they entered warfare with their enemies. Dancing and rejoicing before the Lord is also an effective weapon before we go to war against Satan (Ps. 149:1-9).

We have the scriptural example of this when Jehoshaphat sent the singers ahead of his army and ambushes against their enemies were established: "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever" (2 Chr. 20:21, KJV).

We learned the importance of **rejoicing** before the Lord with singing and dancing through attending a fellowship in Jerusalem. The Zion Fellowship is a unique fellowship that spends a lot of time in praising the Lord with the dance. Ruth Heflin, who heads this fellowship, has written a book called *Glory* in which she expresses the importance of the dance in **spiritual warfare**. She relates in her book *Glory* the following: "I believe that dancing brings an anointing for the nations. I never let a day go by without dancing. I have danced in the toilets of 707s, 747s and DC-10s. How do I do

it? Straight up and down.”

Ruth urges her readers not to let a day go by that they don't **dance** before the Lord. I am just now catching on to the **power** and anointing in rejoicing before the Lord in the dance. David made this discovery years ago when he wrote, “Let them praise His name in the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp” (v. 3).

If you have not tried **rejoicing** before the Lord in the dance, you can start today. Put on some praise music and dance before the Lord. The Lord loves to see you dance before Him, because after all, He rejoices over you with **singing**. David was a man after God's own heart because he often danced before the Lord with all of his heart. We are exhorted to praise the Lord with our whole being. Dancing is a good way to do this. Have a good day and a good dance.

Lord, I want to be free in my worship and praise to You. Help me to get rid of all self-consciousness and just have my eyes on You as I praise and worship You. Set my feet to dancing, Lord.

READ: 2 Kings 18:13-19:37; Acts 21:1-17; Psalm 149:1-9; Proverbs 18:8

How Your Praise and Worship Cast Out Demons

When I read this passage—Psalm 135:1-21—about the vapors ascending from the ends of the earth, I recall one of the funniest yet most penetrating sermons I ever heard.

The psalmist writes, "He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures" (v. 7).

The sermon I heard included this verse about the vapors ascending from the ends of the earth. The sermon was entitled "The Devil Can't Swim." It was preached by a young evangelist who was on fire for the Lord.

His major point was that the devil hates water (especially the water of the **Word of God** and the River of Life of the Holy Spirit). He used as his text the account of Jesus casting the demons out of the man called Legion. The demons cried out to Jesus and asked Him not to send them to a far country. Jesus sent them into a herd (more than 2,000) of swine, and the swine ran down a steep hill into the sea and drowned (Mark 5). He said that demons don't like water because they always go to the dry places when they are cast out.

He based this on Luke 11:24, which says, "When the **unclean spirit** goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'"

This evangelist then proceeded to tell us how we can drown demons just as Jesus did. He said that when we **praise and worship** the Lord with all of our hearts, vapors are sent from earth into the heavens, and glory clouds form.

God dwells in the midst of our praise.

When these glory clouds are filled with the vapors from our praise, they begin to release the showers of blessings from the Lord—the former and **latter rain**, the refreshing rain of the Holy Spirit. Remember the old hymn "Showers of Blessings"? One verse says that "mercy drops flow from His throne," and this literally is what happens in the spirit realm when we praise the Lord. As the rain of the **Holy Spirit** falls, the demons have to flee because they hate that kind of water. If

you want to drown the devil, keep praising God all the day long.

*Lord, help me to drown all the **demonic forces** that may try to come against me today. I will praise You all the day long.*

READ: 1 Kings 18:1-46; Acts 11:1-30; Psalm 135:1-21; Proverbs 17:12-13

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Pray About Everything; Worry About Nothing

☒ *Philippians 4:1-23* Most of us are familiar with the phrase that is “batted about” so casually today: “Don’t worry, be happy.” There is a way you can not worry and be happy no matter what you are facing in this life—pray. The phrase should be revised to say, “Don’t worry, Pray!” If we followed this admonition, our lives would be filled with joy (not just a happy “ha-ha” joy, but an inner joy that will strengthen us in all circumstances).

Worry is a sin. Worry is negative meditation. When we meditate, we roll over and over again in our minds the same thing. When we worry, we keep thinking over and over again the same negative thought. Both my mother and mother-in-law were worriers. I think since they both went through the Great Depression a little worry bug was implanted deep within them, and it was hard to shake it off. Most of the things they worried about never came to pass.

The Value of a Prayer Partner

☒ If the prayer of one righteous man avails much, just think about what the prayers of two or more righteous people will accomplish.

Matthew 18:1-22

It has been my privilege over my fifty-plus years as a Christian to always have a prayer partner. There are so many advantages in having a prayer partner. This passage in Matthew gives two very important reasons for us to pray with others. Jesus tells us, “Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:19-20, KJV).

Peace In a Private Pavilion

☒ David knew the secret of the quiet place, and he had to constantly focus to remain in this quiet place. He writes, “Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies” (Ps. 23:5, KJV). David had many enemies. However, he knew he was not fighting against flesh and blood. He knew his true enemy was Satan. David knew the secret to overcoming Satan.

When Saul chased after him to kill him, David wrote, “Where can I flee from Your presence?” (Ps. 139:7). The presence of the Lord was always much stronger than the presence of the

enemy to David. No matter what difficult situation David encountered, he knew the Lord was ever before him. He wrote, "Your face is ever before me."

Pray for Zion

✘ As we think of our Jewish brethren, we wonder how they missed seeing the Messiah clearly presented in the prophets, the psalms and even the Pentateuch. The only explanation is what Paul speaks clearly about in Romans. The Jewish people have a veil over their eyes that has been placed there by God. Should we pray for this veil to be dropped if this is God's will? The answer to this is a resounding yes.

When Nothing Is Impossible

We like to quote so often the phrase, "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (see Luke 1). If God did not have to work through men, His power on earth would be unlimited. However, even though nothing is impossible with God and He does all things well, the stark reality is that we as Christians do not allow Him to do the impossible in our lives because of our lack of faith.

Cooking Is a Curse

☒ I am the mother of three sons, and I have spent 40 years in the kitchen cooking. If there is such a thing as a cross to bear, I guess this might be one of mine. With four hungry men to satisfy, I often felt that I was one giant feed bag.

Saturday was not my favorite day, because I would just get through serving a big breakfast when one of the boys would always ask, "What's for lunch?" I could feel the tingles of resentment crawling up my spine when this was asked, and I always had to pray, "Lord, give me strength."