

Presence of Mind of the Spirit

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. **–Ezekiel 18:31**

The Message of Hope

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. **–John 1:29**

Thanksgiving Reflections: Cultivating the Attitude of Gratitude

What an exciting opportunity you and I have to embrace this Thanksgiving season with the right heart attitude.

Begin by thanking God for everything that you are and have. Thank Him for every breath you breathe in today, and practice the attitude of gratitude. Make a list of 100 of the people and/or things that you are thankful for, and give God your honor and worship. Make it a habit this week to let God know just how aware you are of His grace and mercy.

Muscles strengthen with use. Develop your gratitude muscle by being appreciative the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night before you go to bed for the next 21 days. The passage below is a significant key to living the abundant life that Jesus paid for. Saying "thank you," not only opens doors with God, His presence and abundance, but it works with people too. Life is too amazing and too short to only be grateful one day of the year.

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations." -Ps. 100:4-5

Every day is a choice. You have to choose to be thankful. You choose whether or not you are going to take time out of your busy day and recognize where all of your blessing and salvation comes from. Thankfulness is an art form that must be disciplined and practiced in order for you to become a master of it. Ask Daddy God to open your eyes to all of the blessings in your life, so that you can give Him the praise and glory. I guarantee that if you master this right heart attitude, you will see positive lasting change in every area of your life.

Pray: "Daddy God, baptize me with Your love. Destroy every work of darkness and bitterness in my life. Remove every barrier and hindrance that keeps me from hearing Your voice and being lead by Your Spirit. Eliminate the time wasters and opportunity thieves that have kept me from experiencing the abundant life You designed for me. Grant me the wisdom and the strength to make the necessary changes for my growth and success. Change my attitude to one of gratitude, and help me to express it in word and deed. In Jesus name, Amen."

You were created to live a life with the attitude of gratitude. Be the revival and transform your world. Jesus believes in you.

Paul Bryan is the senior pastor of Lighthouse Church in Deland, Fla. Check out his “21 Day Thankfulness Challenge” by clicking [here](#).

Thanksgiving Reflections: Giving Thanks in Times Like These

Some of you may have seen your life savings evaporate in the financial chaos that has brought down some of the pillars of our economy. Some may have lost your homes in a hurricane or foreclosure. Many of us have a personal stake in the battles against terrorism, and thousands of families are grieving for brave soldiers who have sacrificed their lives overseas. Most of us are anxious about the upcoming elections and what the future holds.

And that's just the national headlines—not to mention individual tragedies like cancer and divorce that overshadow many of our lives.

In times like these, when nations are desperate for someone they can trust, Christians know we can always find strength and hope in the Word of the Lord. He tells us through the apostle Paul, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Paul knew what it meant to praise God in the midst of suffering. He gave up a relatively comfortable and prestigious lifestyle to become an itinerant preacher who was repeatedly persecuted, beaten, shipwrecked and imprisoned. When he prayed

to God for relief from a thorn in the flesh—what he called “a messenger of Satan to buffet me”—God answered, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

As the world struggles to cope with disease, famine, war, disaster and poverty, it is our responsibility as Christians to assure the world that God is still in control and that He has a plan to rescue all who repent of their sins and trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Not only has He suffered on our behalf, but He has promised to bear our burdens. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

For that, we can be eternally thankful.

This old world may be falling apart, but ultimately this is not our home. “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe” (Hebrews 12:28, NIV).

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Thanksgiving Reflections: Three Reasons to Be Thankful

As I reflect back on the past year, there is so much for which I am very thankful. I’ve been blessed with opportunities around the world to share the love and hope of Jesus Christ over the past several months, from Canada to Kenya, the Jersey Shore to the Philippines. I’ve seen miracles take place this year as I’ve watched people place their eternal faith in the

hands of Christ.

Yet, as I ponder the amazing love of the Lord, it strikes me that so often we view our salvation as commonplace. We have received this unbelievable gift, and rather than bursting with thankfulness and jumping with joy we tuck it into the back of the dresser like a pair of socks.

Let's take a moment to focus on the topic of thankfulness. Luke—the physician—recorded this event in the life of Jesus, showing why we ought to be thankful.

Found in Luke 17:11–19, this is the story of Jesus healing 10 lepers. Once they were healed, the 10 men ran off excited. But only one came back to praise God for what had happened. Just as these men were physically healed of their leprosy, we receive salvation (or spiritual healing) from Jesus that warrants our gratitude.

First, we can be thankful that Jesus came to us (vv. 11–13). The text says that Jesus went through Samaria and Galilee, both of which were made up of people stigmatized by society. Samaritans were considered unclean people. Galileans were misfits and rogues, and yet Jesus made the effort to go to them. They did not have to go to Jesus. Similarly, God came down from heaven some 2,000 years ago in order to redeem mankind.

Second, we need to also be thankful because Jesus hears our cries (v. 14). The text says the men yelled out to Jesus because they were lepers, and the law required them to stay at a distance in order to prevent infecting others. But Jesus stopped and answered their cry for help. This is significant. These men realized their own situation—that they were very sick and they could not help themselves. If they could have, they would have already done so. They realized that only Jesus could help them and so they cried out to Him. Likewise, when we cry out to Christ for our salvation, it is because we

understand that we are unable to save ourselves. We are spiritual lepers in need of healing.

Finally, we need to be thankful that Jesus can cleanse us and make us whole (v. 14). Jesus told the men to go show themselves to the priests, and on the way, the men were healed. They exercised faith in Jesus—they believed He could heal them—and showed obedience as they did exactly what Jesus commanded them to do. Only Jesus has the ability to forgive sin and cleanse us spiritually, as He cleansed the lepers physically.

We should be thankful that we serve a God who can heal, cleanse and save—physically and spiritually—and who comes to us and invites us into communion with Him. When we give thanks to God, He is honored and glorified (vv. 15-19). The Bible says that only one man came back to thank Jesus, and when he did, he was honoring God.

We're entering the holiday season and things will begin to get hectic, but I encourage you to be sure that you aren't like the other nine. Please take the time to come back to God and thank Him for what He has done for you. He came down, He heard your cry, and He answered it by healing your soul. My friends, we have every reason to be thankful!

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Trying to Prove Ourselves

You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight. **—Luke 16:15**

12 Keys to Thanksgiving

As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving on Thursday, I want to briefly examine how the Bible exhorts us to respond to God's faithfulness. The answer is very simple: to be thankful.

King David thought the virtue of thankfulness so important that he appointed a large group of Levites (priests) who did nothing else in the House of God but to thank and praise Him. As Christians, we must continue to show our thankfulness to God.

Here are 12 things for which we should give God persistent thanks.

1. For creating us in His image

Psalm 100:3, 4: "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

How wonderful and comforting to know we have not evolved from some ancient muddy glob, but rather have been created by the hand of the Mighty God. Like God, He made us a trinity: body, soul and spirit.

2. For redeeming us by His blood

Revelation 5:9: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

3. For sending His Son

Second Corinthians 9:15: "Thanks be unto God for his

unspeakable gift.”

4. For His holiness

Psalm 97:12: “Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” Unlike the cruel, immoral pagans Gods, our God is holy!

5. For His mercy

Psalm 103:1, 8: “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”

This virtue is so important that the psalmist refers to it no less than 26 times in Psalm 136.

6. For His shepherding ministry

Psalm 79:13: “So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.”

7. For other Christians

That’s right. We are instructed not only to pray for other believers, but to actually thank God for them. Time and again, the apostle Paul did this. Philippians 1:3 is a great example: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you ...”

8. For victory

First Corinthians 15:57: “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This means we have victory over the world, the devil, temptation, lust, fear and ultimately death itself.

9. For that specific work God has called us to do

Ephesians 2:10: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

10. For allowing us to give to Him of our tithes and offerings

Psalm 50:14: “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows

unto the most High.”

11. For Christ’s coming millennial reign

We should be vigilantly thankful to God in advance for the story that will ultimately have a happy ending.

12. For anything and everything

First Thessalonians 5:18: “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

This is certainly the most difficult of all to do. How can we possibly thank God when financial loss comes our way, or when medical crisis comes to us? During these critical moments we must ever remind ourselves that God often permits these tragedies so that through them we might ultimately be blessed.

He is a perfect God, my friends, and worthy of our constant praise. May we all spend time thanking Him for these essential gifts to us this Thanksgiving.

This article originally ran in Jerry Falwell’s November 2006 e-newsletter.

What are you thankful for? Let us know your thoughts by commenting below.

Walgreens Reverses Decision to Nix ‘Christmas’ Gifts

Just one day after coming under a firestorm from Christians for selling “holiday” gifts and providing “holiday” shipping for gifts to arrive by Dec. 25, Walgreens has changed its tune.

“During the month of December, there will be greater use of ‘Christmas’ in our store and online. We completely agree that while others celebrate different holidays, we should use the word ‘Christmas’ to describe items we are selling for Christmas decorations and gifts,” says Tiffany Washington, a spokesperson for Walgreens. “As Christmas draws closer, there will be plenty of messages in our store and online that say ‘Merry Christmas.’”

Liberty Counsel has received a report of Christmas music being played in Indiana Walgreens stores in response to a directive from its headquarters. Liberty Counsel has moved Walgreens back to the “Nice” list. Liberty Counsel’s ‘Naughty or Nice’ list catalogs more than 50 national retailers that either censor (“naughty”) or recognize (“nice”) Christmas.

It joins CVS Pharmacy, which has embraced Christmas with a large “Christmas Central” portion on its website that is dedicated to Christmas gifts, shipping and savings.

“I am pleased with Walgreens for joining the growing number of stores that recognize Christmas,” says Mathew D. Staver, founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel. “We will be monitoring stores and updating our ‘Naughty and Nice List’ to help consumers support stores that support Christmas.”

Liberty Counsel will continue to monitor these and other stores. To see what other stores have made the list, visit www.LC.org.

Polygamy, Polyamory Fail in

BC Supreme Court

It's still illegal to marry more than one spouse in Canada.

The Supreme Court of British Columbia ruled that Canadian government has the right to prohibit polygamy and polyamory. The decision rejects an approach that could have had far-reaching effects on traditional marriage in countries around the world. The trial launched last November to examine the various harms of polygamy and polyamory to women, children and society.

ADF Senior Legal Counsel Austin R. Nimocks noted although some organizations claim that same-sex 'marriage' won't open the door to polygamy and group marriage, that's what nearly happened in British Columbia.

"Had marriage never been attacked there in the first place, it's questionable whether this particular assault would have ever occurred," Nimocks said. "Canada just dodged a bullet for the moment; Americans should take notice because this country need not risk the same thing."

As ADF attorney Gerald Chipeur sees it, no government should experiment with a practice that has been clearly demonstrated as harmful to women, children, and societies around the world.

"The British Columbia Supreme Court recognized that marriage is about children and parents, and that Parliament has a very important role to play in protecting the family," Chipeur says. "The court also recognized that Parliament, not the courts, has the authority to define marriage. I am pleased that the chief justice accepted our argument that, under the Constitution of Canada, Parliament may define marriage as no more than two people."

Chipeur, an ADF allied attorney with the firm Miller Thomson LLP, called Dr. Shoshana Grossbard to testify before the court

during the that began late last year. Christian Legal Fellowship (CLF), which was allowed by the court to intervene in the proceedings, presented Grossbard to the court because of her extensive research and expertise on the cross-cultural effects polygamy has on women and society. The evidence she presented established that polygamy is human trafficking in disguise.

Grossbard is one of two CLF experts whose findings were submitted to the court and only one of many witnesses who were examined throughout the proceedings, known as the Constitutional Reference on Polygamy.

The Reference, brought by the attorney general of British Columbia, asked the court to determine if Parliament may prohibit polygamy and polyamory and at the same time uphold the Charter of Rights and Freedoms' guarantee of religious freedom. The court concluded that prohibiting polygamy and other forms of group marriage does not jeopardize religious freedom rights under the Canadian Charter.

Why the Church Needs a Change in Strategy

It doesn't take a prophetic voice to point out that our nation and our world are in trouble and the trouble we're facing won't go away any time soon. The body of Christ must prepare to stand in the midst of it to exert influence for the kingdom of God—and the clock is ticking. It remains to be seen whether we have adequately prepared spiritually, in attitude or materially for what must come.

At virtually every other crisis point in United States history

God has provided one or more great leaders who have helped the nation come out the other side victorious and ready to build on what has been won. George Washington led the colonies through the Revolutionary War to defeat the world's most powerful army and establish our nation's independence. By the grace of God Abraham Lincoln turned out to be the right man to carry us through the trauma of the Civil War and preserve the union. Beginning in the Great Depression we had Franklin D. Roosevelt to shepherd us through World War II and lead us to a victory that set the stage for the unprecedented level of prosperity and influence the United States has enjoyed since 1945. Clearly, the Lord has favored us. To fail to acknowledge the Lord's hand in these things would be inexcusable blindness.

Granted, historically we have not always understood or lived out the full implications of the godly values and concepts our founders articulated and we claimed to believe in. For example, as a member of the Osage Nation (Native American) I am well aware of the injustices perpetrated on nonwhite peoples over the years since Europeans first came to these shores. Neither have we always been a moral people by such a basic standard as the Ten Commandments. We did, however, always acknowledge God and His place in our nation at both cultural and governmental levels.

But no longer.

I hardly need to bore you with the litany of court decisions, laws and policies that now repudiate our historic acknowledgement of the Creator and His sovereignty. Nor do I need to explain what now constitutes a growing prejudice against the very Christianity espoused by virtually every one of the founding fathers.

Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them." The hard truth is that because we no longer truly fear the Lord, the angel of the

Lord no longer encamps around this nation to rescue it. This does not mean the Lord's judgment is falling upon us. That may come, but it is not yet. It simply means that we now stand on the same footing as every other nation on earth—neither more nor less favored; and therein lies the problem.

We now face a growing set of world crises that demand wise and strong leadership. Having forfeited the favor of God, no such leadership has emerged or will emerge. I am therefore deeply troubled concerning the coming election.

Pardon the harsh tone of the following statements, but we have a man of profound wisdom-deficit in the White House who will soon launch a re-election campaign. Obama could have been a great president. Even though I voted against him, I saw the potential when he was elected, and I said so. But humility, as well as the wisdom that would have come from humility, have not been in evidence.

A similar wisdom deficit can be seen in those who now vie for the Republican nomination to run against him. Unfortunately, as this election cycle unfolds, it has become painfully apparent that not one among the Republican field has the grace or wisdom to do any better than our president.

Rigid ideologies have mired both Congress and the White House in a legislative gridlock that will not soon be broken. No one really listens—not to one another and certainly not to the American people. Proverbs 12:15 admonishes, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel." This root of foolishness has taken deep root at the highest levels and has resulted in a government broken at every level, powerless to lead us out of the quicksand we find ourselves currently sinking into.

This is not the time for Christians to attempt to exert influence through shrill, judgmental and angry statements. This perpetuates the foolishness that wins no one's heart and

now destroys us. The time is long past for us to be thinking we can pull the country back to something we thought it once was. Too many shifts have occurred culturally, racially and ethnically for that to be possible.

We therefore need a change of strategy based in blessing, the servant heart and prophetic wisdom. Daniel and his three friends changed the hearts of the kings of Babylon and Persia by serving, not by pronouncing railing judgments. They did this for the government of the very empire that had brutally conquered their own nation and carried their population into exile. Why can't we do this for officials we ourselves have elected? Why not pray for opportunities to bless those in authority in any sphere of life with gentle and godly wisdom for the situations and problems they face?

Joseph in Egypt blessed the Pharaoh even while confined in a prison to which he had been unjustly condemned. And he not only interpreted the Pharaoh's dream but also proposed a solution to the looming famine the dream prophesied. He ended up ruling the country.

Why not pray for godly men and women to be strategically placed to earn influence by means of humble service, even in the face of persecution and prejudice, just as Daniel and Joseph were?

I know: This can seem a difficult thing for many who feel their most cherished values are being trashed due to a set of ideologies and resulting decisions that seem diametrically opposed to so much of what we stand for. But put yourself in Daniel's or Joseph's place. In a contest of dire situations—theirs versus ours—they win; and yet they served and changed the hearts of kings.

The difficulties of the coming days present us with unprecedented opportunities to demonstrate the love and power of the kingdom of God flowing from the heart of our Father

through Jesus His Son. We can be Daniels and Josephs wherever and at whatever level God has deployed us. Please, let's not miss the moment. Darkness cannot overcome light. The world may crash around us, but we get to win in the midst of it. The most powerful outpouring of the Spirit of God since Pentecost is upon us if we will choose to receive it and use it in the loving heart of our Father.

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