

3 Truths to Make Every Day Thanksgiving

Read Time: 3 Minutes 27 Seconds

Sometimes gratitude comes easily, and sometimes it requires discipline. Giving thanks is easy when a new baby is born. It's not as easy to give thanks when we lose a loved one. It's one thing to give thanks when the bills are paid, the sky is blue and the sun is shining. Giving thanks is another thing when you're sick and facing financial troubles.

But the Bible says that we should "give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever," (Ps. 136:1). We give thanks to the Lord because He is good. If God ceases to be good, then I suppose we could stop giving thanks, but because He will never cease to be good, we can continue to give Him thanks.

Paul writes in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always. And again. I say rejoice". When Paul wrote those words, he was in prison. Job is another biblical example. He lost everything dear to him, including his seven sons and three daughters. Yet the Bible tells us that despite these horrific circumstances, Job gave thanks, saying, "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

It all comes down to gratitude, not just because the Bible tells us we should have it, but because thankful people are happy people. Research shows that grateful people have fewer aches and pains than ungrateful people. They also report feeling healthier than other people.

Robert Emmons, Ph.D., a leading gratitude researcher, found that "gratitude blocks toxic emotions, such as envy, resentment, regret and depression, which can destroy our

happiness. It's impossible to feel envious and grateful at the same time."

You may ask, "But, Greg, what if I don't feel grateful."

I can assure you Job did not feel like praising God after such tremendous losses. But he offered what the Bible calls "a sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15).

When was the last time you let the Lord know you're thankful for what he has done for you?

Here are three truths that will help you continually give thanks:

1. God is in control of my life. We must first realize that God controls our lives to give thanks properly. When we say God is sovereign, God is in control. He can do what He pleases with whomever He chooses, whenever He wishes. Even when bad things happen, God is ultimately in control.

When He allows pain in our lives, we know that ultimately, God can bring good despite the bad because Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work together for good to those that love God, and who are called according to His purpose."

2. God loves me and is always looking out for my eternal benefit. If we only believe the first truth and not the second, we fall into the trap of believing God is harsh and angry. But God loves us, and He's looking out for our eternal benefit, even if what we are going through at the moment is difficult.

The apostle Paul writes, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

God takes the event of our lives—the good and bad things. He

puts them in the oven of adversity. And ultimately, we say, "This is good."

3. God is far wiser than me. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa 55:8-9).

We are almost always thinking of our material good. God always thinks of our eternal good; sometimes, even often, they are not the same thing. God is at work, working all things together for His glory and our good.

I love turkey just as much as the next guy. Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. It's a grand celebration and tradition.

But for Christians, every day should be Thanksgiving (minus a turkey). We should always be giving thanks to the Lord.

With these three truths in mind, we can take Paul's admonition seriously and "rejoice always." {eoa}

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