

The Powerful Words God Spoke to Me During Thanksgiving Prayer

One morning during my prayer time as I was thanking the Lord, I heard Him say, “Brad, you could thank me every waking second of the day until you leave this world and it still would not be too much.” Now, He was not being critical or derogatory; He was simply and calmly stating the truth about the value and importance of being thankful.

I started thinking about some key “thankful” Scriptures, like 1 Thessalonians 5:18, where we are instructed to give thanks in all circumstances. The Amplified Bible reflects: “Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks].” The Message states “Thank God no matter what happens.” Or to put it another way: Give thanks in all things and at all times—live a lifestyle of thankfulness to God, and for others. In the Greek, this particular word is *eucharisteo* and per The Complete Wordstudy Dictionary, it means thankful, grateful and well-pleasing (to show oneself grateful, to be thankful and to give thanks).

Or how about the short and simple instruction in Colossians 3:15 (MEV) “...and be thankful”? The word used here is *eucharistos* and means “thankful or grateful.” Ephesians 5:4 tells us instead of foolish talking and jesting, we should give thanks. And in Ephesians 5:20, we are admonished to give thanks always for all things.

Thankfulness as a Lifestyle

What would it look like to live a lifestyle of thankfulness in this world? What if we said “thank you” and meant it every time our spouse does something “routine” for us or our family? Examples include when they purchase groceries, do the laundry,

wash the dishes, set the table, cook a meal, make us coffee, pick up clothes, buy you or your family clothes, pay the bills, keep the books, run errands, take the kids to school and pick them up afterward, coach kids' sports, plan a vacation, get the family ready for church, get up in the middle of the night for you or your children, buy and mail cards to both families on those special days, pray for us and our family, go to work every day, do yard work ... and on and on it goes.

Are we really aware of what our spouse does for us and our family? Are we thankful for each and every thing? Do we ever look them in the eye and say "thank you" from our heart? Paul made it a habit to thank God for others (see Eph. 1:16; Col 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2, 3:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1), and I want to make it my practice also: to personally thank the checkout person, server, clerk, attendant, teacher, coach, employer, employee, nurse, doctor, policeman, military, first responder, pastor, usher, worshipper and so forth. I choose to live a lifestyle of thankfulness.

I remember our pastor back in the mid-'80s saying that yearly, he would drive by where he used to live and the beach where he got into drugs, just to remember his old lifestyle and all that his Jesus did for him. It kept him mindful of being thankful throughout the year. We are reminded by the writer of Psalm 77:11 "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old." It's important to recall to mind all that our great God has done for us, and to muse on the many miracles He has worked in our lives and the lives of our family members (see Isa. 63:7, Jonah 2:7, 1 Chr. 16:12, Deut. 5:15, Lam. 3:21-24). I choose to remember all that my faithful Father has done for my family and me.

Thankfulness as a Weapon

There has been many a time when my wife and I were engaged in spiritual warfare for a person or a specific situation and we

seemed to be “stuck”—and then felt led to stop and start thanking God. We would begin to offer thanks that He is Lord of that person or situation (Ps. 24:1, Neh. 9:6, Deut. 10:14); that He rules and reigns in that person or situation (Luke 1:32-33, Ex. 15:18, 1 Chr. 16:31, Ps. 103:19, Lam. 5:19). We thanked Him that He is the revealer of secrets (Dan. 2:22) and that nothing is too difficult for Him (Gen. 18:14, Jer. 32:17, Job 42:2, Luke 1:37). His is an everlasting kingdom/dominion (Ps. 145:1, Dan. 4:3, Zech. 9:10, 1 Chr. 16:31, 2 Chr. 20:6).

I recall hearing a pastor once say of Moses’ song in Exodus 15:1 and Miriam’s song in Exodus 15:20 as “right song, wrong side.” He was admonishing us to go into life’s situations thanking and praising God, and not waiting for the breakthrough to thank and praise Him. Think King Jehoshaphat; when three armies (labeled a great multitude) came against Judah, they appointed worshippers to lead their army, and when they began to sing, the Lord sent ambushes against the attacking armies (2 Chr. 20:1-30). So, the next time we are in a battle and just cannot seem to get breakthrough, let’s remember to choose thankfulness as a weapon and begin thanking and praising the Lord and watch what happens.

Thankfulness as Worship

Recently I read a post on Facebook from a man battling cancer, stating gratitude is the beginning of worship. Think about that: Aren’t gratitude and thankfulness the heart of worship? Revelation 7:11-12 says, “All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures and fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.’” The Strong’s Concordance states this particular “thanksgiving” is *eucharistia*, which means “gratitude, grateful, thankfulness; giving thanks as an act of worship.” I love what Spurgeon writes of Psalm 50:14: “Thankful adoration before the Lord.”

Aren't we encouraged in Psalm 100:4 to "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful to Him, and bless His name"? Or "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving" in Psalm 95:2. Every time I read these Scriptures, I am overwhelmed with His desire for me to stop what I am doing and come into His holy presence with thanksgiving in my heart and on my lips. How can we separate thanksgiving from worship?

God created us and He knows what gratitude and thankfulness do for our soul, how thankfulness realigns our perspective and keeps our heart soft and sensitive to His voice. That is why He instructed the Israelites to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Him (see Lev. 7:12-15, Ps. 107:22). We read how God stirred Nehemiah's heart to appoint two large thanksgiving choirs to go in different directions on the recently completed wall to dedicate it with gladness and thanksgiving. They rejoiced so loudly, the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off (Neh. 12:27-43). I guess that is why we are instructed in Psalm 69:30 to "magnify Him with thanksgiving." It is interesting to note the word used in Nehemiah for thanksgiving is *todah*, which The Strong's Concordance defines as "an extension of the hand, adoration; specifically, a choir of worshippers." Oh, to be listed among His "choir of worshippers"!

So, let us choose to have a thankful worshipping heart like King David, a true worshipping warrior who lived a lifestyle of thanksgiving and praise as evidenced in Psalm 119:62 where he rose at midnight to give thanks to God. No wonder we find so many various tenses of "thanks" mentioned in Psalms.

Because He inhabits the praises and thanksgivings of His people, let us bring His presence into our lives, our homes, our neighborhoods and our cities by thanksgiving praise, so the "joy of Jerusalem" may be heard throughout the land (Neh. 12:27-43)!

Happy Thanksgiving! {eoa}

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