

The Real Question You Need to Ask Yourself This Thanksgiving

Are you thankful? Are you thankful in the deepest place of your heart, or is thanksgiving just an expected reaction to the month of November?

I have found that this month of turkey, football and cranberry sauce presents an opportunity for me to examine my heart and the leftovers that reside within its overstuffed boundaries. The truth is that I might say I am thankful for a person, a tangible blessing or an event, but the evidence that lies dormant in my soul often does not shout a hearty “Amen!” to the lip service that I offer.

It is within my heart that the test of gratitude is either gloriously passed or abysmally failed. My lips can recite a long list of blessings while my heart refuses to participate in the annual thanksgiving parade.

As I spend time during the other 11 months of the calendar year studying the Word of God, I am convinced that the litmus test of thanksgiving is one that we all must confront on a daily basis. Choosing to worship the Lord and to lift one’s voice in sincere praise is a theme from the book of Genesis to the closing chapters of Revelation. Joseph chose to honor God in an Egyptian prison, and Daniel prayed in the lion’s den. David worshipped the Lord when his despondent soul was gripped with pain, and Esther fasted when her entire people group was about to be annihilated. Ruth declared the faithfulness of God in a season of deep grief and those three resilient Hebrew boys danced in the blazing fire.

Thanksgiving, at its core, is not about the blessings one possesses but about the one who blesses. To be truly and

thoroughly grateful, one must look past the gifts received in a given year to the Giver. Blessings, gifts and benefits are fleeting circumstances but the one who provides in all seasons of life is the one who is worthy of our highest praise.

I am learning this year, during these terrible yet praiseworthy days of my life, to be thankful for a God who loves me, who is with me and who has declared that every circumstance in my life will be worked together for good. I am attempting to learn during this difficult season in my life to focus on His promises rather than on my wish list.

I refuse to question His goodness—and isn't that a form of sincere praise? I will resist from ceasing to trust Him—and isn't that a hymn of gratitude? I will boycott any thought that dares to invite me to reject His sweet presence—and isn't that a prayer uttered with genuine worship?

So, on Thursday when you sit down to gaze at the feast after enjoying the televised parade, examine your heart. Are you thankful? Are you truly thankful? {eo}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written 10 books, including *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*; *Defiant Joy!*; *Holy Estrogen!*; *No More Ordinary*; *Refined*; *Joy For All Seasons*; *Let There Be Joy!*; *Pass the Joy, Please!*; *Guide Your Mind*, *Guard Your Heart*, *Grace Your Tongue*; and *Stormproof*, which releases on March 1, 2019. Her teaching DVD, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .