

What Praises of Thanksgiving Mean for Your Soul

We tend to think of gratitude as an obligation as opposed to a weapon of warfare. A nicety, not a ferocious force for transformation. We are wrong. From our earliest days we are trained that polite people say “thank you.” Certainly, this is true and proper.

Those of us who were raised correctly instinctively say “thanks” when the barista hands us our three-dollar cup of coffee or a stranger hands us something we unknowingly dropped. But a heart of gratitude toward God is far more than a requirement of polite social interaction. It wields enormous benefits to its beneficiary.

There is a large and growing mountain of secular research revealing the power of gratitude in the human soul. Study after study reveals that thankful people—individuals who focus on the many blessings they have been afforded rather than what they don’t currently possess—are healthier, happier and more successful. None of this is surprising to the faithful student of Scripture. Our Bibles overflow with exhortations and promises concerning a grateful heart and positive attitude.

And with good reason. Being mindful of and focused upon how good and gracious, how merciful and faithful our great God has been to you resets your posture, raises your expectancy and opens your heart to approach God’s holy presence and receive His abundant blessings—spirit, soul and body—and all that pertains to life and godliness. The psalms repeatedly suggest both our deep need for and the benefits of our coming to God with our hearts abounding generously with thanksgiving. Oh, that we might—with happy heads, hearts and hands uplifted—join with the psalmist in the 100th division and:

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations. –Psalm 100:4–5, emphasis added

The final half of that stirring lyric contains words that are repeated many times throughout Scripture. Again and again, we discover some variation of the ancient hymn of thanksgiving: “O, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever.”

We see the first recorded appearance of these Holy Ghost-inspired words in a song penned by King David to celebrate the return of the ark of the covenant (and therefore the holy presence of God) to the epicenter of the Israelites’ life. The incomparable warrior-poet placed them as the crescendo of a lengthy, exuberant hymn of praise. (See 1 Chronicles 16, particularly verse 34.)

In 2 Chronicles chapter 5 these awe-inspiring lines rise in effervescence from the combined harmonic voices of thousands singing aloud in resounding gratitude, resulting in the very glory of the living God of heaven and earth filling the room. So intense was His presence, so thick was the cloud, that those present could not remain upright upon their feet. In the twentieth chapter of that same book, the Israelites were called to go to battle to face an overwhelmingly superior enemy. The tiny army of Israel was preceded by the unmistakable sound of worshippers singing David’s Holy Ghost-anointed lyrics of thanksgiving. Without warning, the mighty armies of their adversary fell into a deep delusion of confusion and disarray, turning upon and slaughtering each other. The attackers were destroyed and the victory won without a single Israelite sword being unsheathed. Such is the weapon of thankful praise!

This same unparalleled song appears repeatedly in the psalms of David and in one of the weeping Jeremiah’s prophecies.

Little wonder that they may very well be the most frequently repeated phrases in all God's Word. Why are they so obviously important and so clearly powerful?

Surely it is because thankfulness is without exception the most appropriate posture when approaching the Most High God. Not fear. Not greed or selfish desire. Not even hopelessness. The humility of gratitude. David's anointed declaration then offers us two decisive reasons why this is without rebuttal.

First, we have access with a grateful heart "for He is good." A faith rooted in God's fundamental goodness is the foundation upon which all sound theology must rest. It is the presupposition, the underlying premise from which all accurate logic and reasoning concerning God is anchored. There is simply no more important revelation available to you than the absolute understanding that God is unceasingly and unwaveringly good. And it is the ultimate impetus for us to be thankful—to God, and for God.

Second, gratitude is of supreme importance because God's "mercy endures forever." When you contemplate the truth that God loves you with a love that is relentless, tenacious, and impervious to your frailty, flaws and wavering faithfulness, the heart has only one rational response: to cry out from every part and portion of your triune being, "thank You."

And when we shout that grateful cry together, it rends the very veil separating heaven from earth, allowing a deluge of glory like lightning flashing from a dark-throated storm cloud that causes the thunder to roll and releases an outpouring of refreshing rain upon our waiting hearts and parched souls.

*The preceding is an excerpt from **Rod Parsley's** book, *Revival If* (Charisma House, 2022). For more information, or to the order the book, please visit .*

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