

# 16 Things I'm Thankful for in 2016

Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday when we pause to thank God for our blessings. This year I'm sharing 16 things for which I'm thankful in 2016. We take too many things for granted. I've found the act of writing a list helps me focus in a way I don't focus day-to-day. My list is a very personal one, but I encourage you to make your own. Maybe your list will encourage you to live with an attitude of gratitude.

1. I'm thankful for salvation, peace with God and living in the power of the Holy Spirit. As Mark 8:36 says, "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?"

2. I'm thankful for my family. My wife, Joy, enjoys being behind the scenes, so most are not aware of her enormous influence on our ministry and on my life. I'm thankful for 44 years of marriage and for her support she shows in so many ways.

3. I'm also proud and thankful for my sons, Cameron and Chandler, and my grandson, Cohen. We will be spending Thanksgiving together at Cameron's, and this year he's cooking. His mother and I are thankful for that!

4. I'm thankful for my 88-year-old mom, Amy Strang; my brother, Paul, and sister, Karen Whittington; and the rest of my extended family. I am indeed blessed.

5. I'm thankful Donald Trump won the 2016 election. It was an answer to prayer, and I believe it has given us a window to see some things shift in this country, as I've written before.

6. I'm thankful we may have had a small part in that election. The election was very close, but a shift among "evangelicals"

toward the end helped put Trump over the top. We devoted an entire issue of *Charisma*, as well as many of our online articles, to the election. I believe our coverage helped believers understand the stakes in this election and motivated them to get involved and vote for Trump, even though both candidates were very flawed.

7. We published one particular blog by Pastor Jim Garlow on Aug. 11. His breakdown of the important issues this election went viral and was shared more than 4.1 million times. I'll admit over the years I've felt like someone crying in the wilderness in terms of alerting Christians to get involved to change the downward spiral of our culture. I'm thankful that is beginning to change—perhaps because things have gotten so bad! But leaders like Garlow, Lance Wallnau, Frank Amedia and many others are stepping up and providing leadership, and I am hopeful the church is also beginning to wake up.

8. I'm thankful for the team at Charisma Media. I am blessed to enjoy coming to work every day. And I work along some wonderful people as well, including executive vice presidents Tessie DeVore and Dr. Steve Greene, who head up our book group and media group respectively, as well as my wife, Joy, who is the CFO, and Controller Ken Hartman. They all share the vision to minister to the Spirit-filled community with the materials we produce. That's our mission, but we do it as a business, which is not an easy balancing act. There are many others on the team (too numerous to mention) who work hard every day to help Joy and me fulfill the call of God on our lives. I'm thankful for each one!

9. I'm thankful Charisma Media is growing and profitable. In an environment where many media companies and ministries are having trouble shifting to the new realities, I'm thankful for the blessings of God.

10. I'm thankful for the many authors we have, especially Rabbi Jonathan Cahn. His latest release, *The Book of*

Mysteries, has already made the major best-sellers lists. He is such a blessing to us in so many ways. His books make such an impact, which is why we are in the publishing business.

11. I'm thankful for God's Word, and I'm thankful He opened the door for us to publish the Modern English Version. I believe the MEV is the most readable and accurate literal translation based on the King James Version. This year we have released *The Promises of God Creative Journaling Bible*, which has proven to be very popular right before Christmas.

12. I've heard if you have five really good friends when you die, you are blessed. I have more than that. First, the men in my CEO group of Christian executives are immeasurably valuable to me. I don't need to name each one—they know who they are—but we've met for the past 15 years. In addition, I have many buddies who enjoy what I enjoy—racquetball, boating, golf and just hanging out. Thanks Barry, Scott, Rodney, Bob and others.

13. I'm thankful to be in a healthy local fellowship called One Church, pastored by my longtime friend Ron Johnson.

14. I'm thankful for health. If you've followed me, you know I went through prostate cancer nearly three years ago. I'm thankful to be cancer-free and very healthy for my age. I never take my health for granted.

15. Some things came together financially this year for Joy and me. It's gratifying to work hard, focus, set goals and then see something accomplished. This Thanksgiving, I'm thankful that things can work out the way they should!

16. Finally, I've been blessed with mentors throughout my life. At a time in my life when I now mentor others, I am thankful for the impact and mentorship of Pastor Jack Hayford. I met him in my 20s, got to know him in my 30s, and have worked closely with him since my 40s. No one will ever know the blessing he has been to Joy and me. Jack took up the role

that Jamie Buckingham had played in our lives after he died too young in 1992. His work lives on through his books and website, and I was interested in the free online book that was being offered from Jamie on Thanksgiving. His book, Thanksgiving in the Pit, is available for free on Amazon until Nov. 27. I'll close by encouraging you to download and read this excellent book.