



"God gave you 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say 'thank you'?"  
—William Ward

27-Nov-20

## Thanks for Everything

Thanksgiving Day is already a day in the rearview mirror, perhaps even all but forgotten in the annual Black Friday frenzy. We should not confine the giving of thanks to a single day of the year, but express it continually—in fact, every time we come before [God](#) in prayer. Thanksgiving is a vital part of a Christian's praise and worship of God both publicly and privately (see, for instance, [Ephesians 5:20](#); [Philippians 4:6](#); [Colossians 3:17](#); [4:2](#); [I Thessalonians 5:18](#); [I Timothy 2:1](#); [Hebrews 13:15](#); etc.).

So, we should thank God throughout each day for . . . what? If we have not developed a better habit of thanksgiving, we are probably thanking Him for the same things each time we pray, a practice that may stray into the "vain repetitions" Jesus warns about in [Matthew 6:7](#). Using filler thank yous is a sign of a rushed or thoughtless prayer, both of which show disrespect toward our—thankfully—patient and forbearing God.

A quick session of meditation should reveal that we have many things to thank Him for. In fact, we have Him to thank for everything! As the apostle Paul writes in [Colossians 1:16-17](#), referring to our Lord and Savior [Jesus Christ](#), "All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before

all things, and in Him all things consist." Everything we have, then, including ourselves, has its source in God, and He deserves thanks for His vital part in creating and granting it to us. We possess many things, so we have many reasons to express our gratitude to Him.

Of course, thanking Him for every doodad, thingamajig, whatchamacallit, and all the other bric-à-brac of which our lives consist seems silly and an exercise in futility. Perhaps we can combine these things into broader categories and thank Him for them in general. However, we definitely need to thank Him for the most important "things" in our lives: our very lives, our health, our parents, our spouses, our children, our jobs, our friends, our homes, and so forth. These major physical blessings provide a high level of satisfaction and abundance in life. We could add to this list such necessities as food, clothing, education, transportation, skills, and the like.

While these are valuable to us, many things are far more important even than these. Herbert Armstrong commented several times throughout his ministry that he always thanked God for being God. He thanked Him for His holy, righteous character that never wavers, allowing us to trust Him. As the Bible says, God does not change ([Malachi 3:6](#); [Hebrews 13:8](#); [James 1:17](#)), and He never lies ([Numbers 23:19](#); [I Samuel 15:29](#); [Hebrews 6:18](#)). If He says something, it is not said in vain; it will be done ([Isaiah 55:11](#)). We can cling to these foundational facts about Him and live before Him with confidence.

Have we ever thanked Him for His plan and for revealing it to us through His Word, which He has preserved for us? It is comforting to know both where God is leading [this world](#) and how it will get there. When we know God is in control and using His sovereignty to maneuver events to bring about the fulfillment of His purpose, we can view what we see on the evening news with a measure of calm that those ignorant of God's plan cannot. As David writes in [Psalm 56:11](#), "In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Speaking of trusting God, we have such [faith](#) because He called us out of this world, out of the billions of others He could have summoned to a relationship with Him. We need to thank Him for this rare gift! Though we may not be among the wise, mighty, or noble of this world ([I Corinthians 1:26](#)), we are among the elect of God, a far higher status than our present

circumstances may suggest. By calling us and giving us His Spirit, we now have access to Him and to all the spiritual help we need for eternal life in His Kingdom. Paul explains in [Romans 8:29-30](#), "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. . . . Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

We should be eager to thank Him for grace and forgiveness, which we need far more than we ought. Unlike Jesus Christ, our Model in godly living, we consistently miss the target of perfect obedience. So, because of our weaknesses, we must continually return "to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:16](#)). Through the blood of Jesus shed for us, the way to God's throne is always open to clear the repentant heart of its guilt ([Hebrews 10:19-22](#)). Not only does God readily forgive us, but He will also give us the aid we need to overcome the sins that trip us up so often.

On top of all that, He provides additional blessings and gifts by His Spirit to help us serve one another. As [Romans 12:4-8](#) and I Corinthians 12 explain, God gives each of His elect children some spiritual gift(s) to employ in His work or among church members. Everyone has something from God Himself to offer for the profit of all ([I Corinthians 12:7](#)). We should thank Him for giving us such talents and seek His help in putting them to use.

We need to think about our brethren and thank Him for them too. We are all in this spectacular divine project together, and God tells us that we need each other (see [I Corinthians 12:12-27](#)). The church needs, not just the ministry, but every widow, widower, senior, homemaker, youth, scholar, laborer, business person, and needy member among us! We should thank God for supplying all the parts that make the Body of Christ work for His glory.

We could come up with countless other things to thank God for. We can thank Him for the parts of His creation that make it possible for us to live on earth: sunlight, water, the atmosphere, plants, animals, and so forth. We can thank Him for the beauty He created in nature and for the physical laws He upholds by His tremendous power ([Hebrews 1:3](#)). We certainly would not want gravity or friction or momentum to fail, and they do not fail because He sustains them. The reasons to show Him our gratitude are endless!

During this season of the year, it may help to begin an annual habit of studying David's catalog of gifts we should bless and praise God for, Psalm 103. He lists about a score of benefits He bestows on His people, many of them spiritual in nature. We will find that we owe Him everything, and therefore, we need to thank Him for everything!

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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by John W. Ritenbaugh

God is involved in the minute details of every converted person's life just as much as He is in the major historical world events. As a new creation of God, we receive continuous, meticulous, detailed attention through the creative activity of His grace which never stops. God, as Creator, takes the initiative (as the potter over the clay) for the elect's salvation, enabling us to build the repertoire of habits called character. In this process, bringing certain things together in the lives of the called, both calamitous as well as positive, God fulfills His purpose. Even though we don't at times know where we are headed, we need to develop the faith or trust in God's vision for us.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

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by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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