



"Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving."

—W.T. Purkiser

24-Nov-23

Thankful Forever

Distractions abound with all the commercials enticing us to buy this TV or that video game for [Christmas](#). Even auto manufacturers promote their cars as holiday gifts for the more affluent. The promotions seem to be endless. Christmas and Hanukkah decorations are going up everywhere—even earlier than in past years. And now other religions are demanding equal time to promote their paganism. Plenty of football and basketball games are available for those who wish to watch. As if that is not enough, long-anticipated movies came out this week preceded by the usual in-your-face marketing techniques.

With all this disruptive bombardment, you may have missed it, but the U.S. national holiday of Thanksgiving was on Thursday. Is it not a shame that a day set apart for thanking the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of the Universe is, on the one hand, over-hyped for secular purposes, or on the other, barely given a cursory glance—if not entirely ignored—in the rush to get to the next holiday on the calendar?

Is it not a disgrace that so many are just plain unthankful, ungrateful, unappreciative? According to the apostle Paul's warning to Timothy, those of

us living in the end time should not consider people's thanklessness as a small thing:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, *unthankful*, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without [self-control](#), brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of [God](#), having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ([II Timothy 3:1-6](#); emphasis ours throughout)

Wow! Thanklessness is included in a nasty list of evil attitudes.

Why does it matter if we are unthankful? A thankless person shows a core character flaw—self-absorption. We see this attitude in many who perfunctorily observe Thanksgiving. American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, best known for relating Christian principles to modern politics, observes:

The Thanksgiving proclamations of the American presidents for the last two decades have increasingly departed from the original rather purely religious spirit of Thanksgiving, and they have increasingly become congratulations to God for having such wonderful children in America.

With this attitude, Thanksgiving gets lost in the hustle and bustle of an over-commercialized and entertainment-driven society that refuses to take a little time to give thanks to a benevolent God for the blessings He bestows. Granted, it is not a God-ordained holy day, but it was designed as this nation's (and Canada's) attempt to acknowledge the Supreme Being's generosity. As a nation, we have failed miserably in this effort—or lack thereof.

In stark contrast, thankful people deeply appreciate their benevolent Creator and reflect His care for others' well-being. The thankful appreciate their efforts and let them know how much they are appreciated, not to gain advantage, but in a genuine show of gratitude.

Thankfulness to God for His mercy and abundant blessings, manifested in a bountiful Thanksgiving meal, goes beyond a basic recognition of special blessings received. It acknowledges with reverence the Source of true knowledge and wisdom—and [love](#), mercy, and many additional blessings. The tradition of Thanksgiving Day reminds us that thankfulness is not a one-time responsibility but a lifelong commitment to virtuous character.

It would behoove us to follow the Israelite King David's promise to his Creator and Sustainer:

You have turned for me my [mourning](#) into dancing;
You have put off my [sackcloth](#) and clothed me with gladness,
To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You *forever*" ([Psalm 30:11-12](#)
).

Thanksgiving is a tradition that promotes wholesome values, beginning with thankfulness to God for abundant blessings. It is also an opportunity to serve others.

Thank You, God, for the abundant blessings You have bestowed upon us.

Thank you, ladies, for your hard work preparing the Thanksgiving meal and all meals during the year.

Thank you, gentlemen, who prepared the house and carved the turkey.

Thank you, children, for helping your parents—your service is greatly appreciated.

- Martin G. Collins

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Thankfulness \(1986\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh (1932-2023)

Our Thanksgiving Day may be a parody of what God intended should be our understanding of thankfulness. Rather than something we do annually, we should be returning thanks several times daily. Thankfulness equips us to endure hard times. We need to give thanks for everything, blessings and trials, for it is God's will. Christianity ought to be an exhilarating experience, but it depends on our outlook on life. Rejoicing is every bit as obligatory as prayer. As we look toward the sun, our shadows are behind us; when we look away from the sun, our shadows are before us. The more we orient toward truth (symbolized by light), the less we will be dogged with fears (symbolized by shadows). If we constantly live our lives, mindful of the purpose He is working in us, mindful that He is Love and has our best interests in mind, we can rejoice with thankfulness in both sickness and health, as well as prosperity and financial hardship. In order to properly express thankfulness, we have to consciously direct our mind to the source and giver of every gift, a process that does not come naturally to us. Selfishness or self-centeredness is the father of thanklessness and the fountainhead of all sin. If we become resentful about what God has permitted in our lives, we are programming ourselves to sin. We need to continually thank God for what we are going through. Pride, a product of self-centeredness, refuses to acknowledge indebtedness. Thankfulness forces or directs us toward humility and toward a relationship with God, making us whole, but being unthankful separates us from God. Thankfulness is an outlook on life's circumstances. Like Christ, we must endeavor to learn from the things we suffer. Paul expressed gratitude for the trials he went through for the sake of the Gospel, giving him insights into God's purposes and plan.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Daily Thanksgiving](#)

by Staff

Too many Americans confine their giving of thanks to the one day on which the national holiday occurs - and many confine their activities on Thanksgiving to little more than eating and drinking too much, watching football, and planning their Black Friday shopping trip. Answering four vital

questions about thanksgiving will help us to evaluate our approach to this spiritual duty.

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