

Why Give Thanks?

by Coty Pinckney 11/22/08

What does the Bible tell us about thanksgiving?

Not about the American holiday. Not about pumpkins and Indian corn and turkeys. But about the giving of thanks to God. How does the Bible emphasize the importance of giving thanks? When are we to give thanks? To what end? For what reasons? In what manner should we give thanks?

In preparation for the holiday, I read all the verses of Scripture that contain the words "thank," "thanks," or "thanksgiving." I encourage you to read a subset of these verses, available online at www.desiringgodchurch.org/dgcc/thanksgivingverses.pdf Here are a few key verses to answer these questions:

How does the Bible emphasize the importance of giving thanks?

People are assigned to give thanks:

1 Chronicles 16:4 ¶ Then he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel.

Scripture commands us to give thanks:

Psalms 30:4 Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.

Not giving thanks is a sign of hardness of heart:

Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

When are we to give thanks?

Always and forever!

Psalms 44:8 In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever. Selah

To what end should we give thanks?

To glorify God!

Psalms 50:23 The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me.
2 Corinthians 4:15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

For what reasons should we give thanks?

There are numerous reasons given; I encourage you to go through the verses and list more. Here are a few:

His steadfast, never-ending love for His people:

2 Chronicles 20:21 "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."

Because He is our God:

Psalms 118:29 You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.

Because He delivers us from death:

Psalms 56:12-13 I must perform my vows to you, O God; I will render thank offerings to you.¹³ For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.

Because He enables us to give generously:

1 Chronicles 29:13-14 And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.¹⁴ "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer

willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.

For provision of food:

Acts 27:35 And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat.

For victory over death:

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For breaking the bonds of sin:

Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,

For receiving the Word as God's Word:

1 Thessalonians 2:13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

For being appointed to God's service and granted the strength to fulfill it:

1 Timothy 1:12 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service,

For His spreading the Gospel through us:

2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

For God's election:

2 Thessalonians 2:13 ¶ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

For God's sovereign reign:

Revelation 11:17 saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

Indeed, for everything:

Ephesians 5:20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

In what manner should we give thanks?

With singing:

Psalms 92:1 It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;² to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night,³ to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

Out loud among other people:

Psalms 109:30 With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

With our whole heart:

Psalms 9:1 I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

May we all lead our families in offering thanksgiving to God during this next week, with hearts overflowing with gratitude to our Sovereign Lord and Savior.