

Thanksgiving to God

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for Christians is that be thankful to God. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Colossian church, wrote, “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And **be thankful**. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **with thankfulness** in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:15-17, *English Standard Version*).

The Colossian church (near to Ephesus and Laodicea), was troubled with some of the same problems as Ephesus and the other congregations of Asia Minor. Yet, within the space of four sentences, Paul exhorts his readers to thankful living. Let’s look at several points here.

First, the context is that Christians **be thankful in the relationships with other believers in the Church**. We all fall short in so many ways (Romans 3:23), and the more we are involved in the Church, we become more conscious of our own failings, and unfortunately, the failings of others. We have the responsibility to bear with them, and encourage them and ourselves to higher living. We do that by being thankful for our brothers and sisters, and for the blessings they bring into our mutual relationship with Christ. We are to be people grateful for the grace that saves us, for the blood that has redeemed us, and for the hope that fills us and the presence of Christ that is with us. We should be people who are thankful to be part of the very best thing this side of heaven.

Second, **we deepen our thankfulness** through several means: a.) *We meditate on the Word of Christ*—that is, the Bible, especially the New Testament, to know how we are to think and act Biblically in this dispensation. We allow it to dwell in our hearts. b.) *We are to apply that Word daily* and encourage one another with it. c.) We are to sing our thanksgiving regularly. It is hard to be gloomy and dispirited when you are singing. Accompanying every Christian’s Bible in our devotions ought to be a good hymnal. Our corporate worship is also involved here—we turn to the Word of God, we seek to apply that Word, and we sing our joy at our very best.

Third, **everything we do is to be in thanksgiving**. That’s an arresting thought—whatever we say or do is to be done for the name and sake of Jesus Christ. When we do our work around the house, it is for

Christ. When we gather to worship, it’s not for us, it is to the honor and glory of Jesus. When we go into the world, it with thankful hearts that Jesus has saved us from sin and for good works. When we raise our children, it is for them to serve Christ. What is evident here is (as with the whole book of Colossians) is the excellency of Jesus Christ in every matter.

In other words, for the Christian, thanksgiving is a **natural part of our life in Christ**. It needs cultivated, even as the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is to be cultivated in our daily Christian life. Thanksgiving is a daily part of our life, and not merely reserved for the fourth Thursday in November.

We should as often share our thankfulness as we do our prayer concerns. We have time in personal and public worship to do this. Are we as quick to share thanks as we are to share our problems? Lest anyone think we are boasting in our thankfulness, we must recognize that our thankfulness is to God for His grace, mercy, and blessing, and our boasting is in Him.

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