

Heart-Felt Gratitude

by Wayne Goff

"As prayer is a recognition of our dependence upon God amid the darkness and uncertainties of the future, so thankfulness is a recognition of our indebtedness to Him for the blessings of the past"

[H.P. Liddon, 1892]

In the Bible, joy and thankfulness go hand in hand. That's because gratitude is offered for blessings. Paul wrote "For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God" (1 Thess. 3:9). The psalmist wrote "Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name" (Ps. 97:12). Read those two passages again, and note that it is the righteous who have hearts full of gratitude! We should be grateful for our salvation which came through the giving of Jesus Christ's blood to wash away our sins. We should be thankful for the salvation of all other brethren through the same avenue.

Some biblical reasons for thanksgiving include (1) national salvation, 1 Chron. 16:35; (2) God's goodness and enduring love, Ps. 107:8; 118:1; (3) answered prayer, Ps. 118:21; Jn. 11:4; 2 Cor. 1:11; (4) truth, Ps. 138:2; (5) faithful brethren, Rom. 1:8; Phil. 1:3; (6) grace, 1 Cor. 1:4; (7) victory over sin & death, 1 Cor. 15:54-57; etc., etc.

We show our thankfulness every week when we come to worship God in song (Eph. 5:19-20), study and prayer (Heb. 13:15), and communion (1 Cor. 11:24-25). We return a portion of God's blessings when we give lovingly from the heart (2 Cor. 9:7).

There is something terribly wrong when we do not remember God and give thanks to Him! "Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom. 1:21). Liberation from God is not freedom, but vile, futile slavery to sin and self! God forbid that we should ever become ungrateful. "For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness" (Isaiah 38:18, ESV).

Yes parents, teach your children to appreciate all the many blessings of life every day because it will make them happy people. But more importantly, teach them gratitude by your example of steadfast thanksgiving!

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