

## **Thanksgiving — Thankful**

The children of Israel had just been delivered from an extensive time of brutal slavery and bondage. They suffered and toiled in Egypt until God brought them out with a mighty hand. It was amazing to behold God's wonders and mighty works as He delivered them. Egypt was brought to its knees by the signs and miracles that God had done. After they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, Israel fell into an attitude of murmuring and complaining. Nothing God could do for them was enough. He gave them manna and water from a rock in the wilderness but they complained and despised God's provision. They preferred the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic they had in Egypt. God kept them cool in the day and warm at night and they complained. He sheltered them and kept them safe, and they complained. Since they were not thankful and did not trust in God's supply, they spent 40 years in the wilderness.

**If we are thankful only when we have everything we want, we don't know the joy of a Christlike character.**

Anyone can be thankful when they have everything they want and everything is going as they planned. When you have God's salvation and deliverance, you can be thankful even when things are not going as you planned. We still have hope, peace and joy in the Lord. We know that there is nothing God cannot fix. We don't wait until everything is fixed to be thankful. While we are in the middle of our drama and complexities, we go ahead and thank God. We have so many things in our lives that are working that we can thank God for. Think about all of the good things in your life. We have confidence that even when the enemy comes in to destroy, God is working all things together for our good, (Romans 8:28).

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NKJV** Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 AMP** Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus...

**Is something going wrong your life that you have been complaining about?**

Even in the middle of your worst situation, you can find several things to be thankful about. Consider the Israelites when they were camping before the Red Sea. All they could see was the impossibilities that had presented themselves. They were stuck in a valley with their enemies behind them and the sea before them. They did not know that God was in control.

**Here is the problem.**

We need to boost our confidence in the God who is able to turn every situation around for our good. Most of us can think of several things to be thankful and give thanks about.

**There is a big difference in being thankful and giving thanks.**

We need to be people who are thankful in everything no matter what the circumstances may be. I mean, we should be giving thanks to God for what He has done for us. Think about the many things God had already done to bring the Israelites to that place in the wilderness.

### **We must learn to be thankful.**

We need to be so full of thanksgiving that we are thankful to the people who have been a blessing to us. Don't take people and things for granted. 115 times in 55 verses the Bible says "give thanks."

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 AMP** Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], **for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus...**

### **"Being thankful" is the will of God for you who are in Christ Jesus.**

God wants you to live with an attitude of thanksgiving. You can be thankful in whatever you have gone through. You can be thankful.

### **What are you thankful for?**

### **We need to be aggressively and purposefully thankful for everything God is doing.**

Consider that God is doing so many good things for all of you every day. Pay attention to all of the good things that God is doing both for the just and the unjust. Many people have discounted the general blessings that God showers upon us every day.

**Matthew 5:45 NKJV** For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

### **Have you ever got caught in the trap of just thinking about all of the negative things that happen to you?**

There are several negative things that happen. It is terrible when all you can think about are those negative things. You lost something that was valuable. You were mistreated or abused. You suffered because something happened to your body or soul and you felt bruised and wounded. Some people have developed the attitude of a defeated person. "Nobody has it as bad as I do..." Every one could give a list of things that have happened to them. Jesus even said, "*In this world you will have trouble.*" (John 16:33) We could list several pages of information about things that have gone wrong and how we were mistreated. We could tell of all of our unmet expectations. We have testimonies of how something did not work out the way we wanted. Jesus said, "*Take heart! I have overcome the world.*"

### **If you want your life to change, you have to be thankful.**

### **Daniel was one of several young men who were taken captive into Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.**

**Daniel 6:10 NKJV** ...Daniel went home. And in his upper room, with his windows

open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

That was his custom since his early days. It appears that all of his life he practiced giving thanks to God three times every day. Even when the king's decree made it illegal to do so, he continued giving thanks to God as was his custom.

**Can you imagine giving thanks to God if you were held captive in a strange land?**

**Daniel had developed some habits of being thankful.**

We all need to develop a custom and practice of being thankful. Maybe you could be thankful three times a day. When we develop good habits it is hard to continue practicing bad habits. Someone said *"it is hard to complain and be thankful at the same time."* Instead of trying not to complain, try to increase your thankfulness.

**Three times a day Daniel opened his windows toward Jerusalem and knelt down on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God.**

He was in a strange land but he was giving thanks to God. He was given food he did not like, but he was thankful to God. He was a captive in a foreign land, but he was giving thanks to God.

**We gain added power in our lives when we become thankful.**

If you want to increase the anointing and blessing of God on your life, get thankful. The Bible tells us to enter into God's presence with praise and thanksgiving. If you want more blessings in your life, get thankful. If you want to be weakened, start complaining.

**Open your heart and mouth and intentionally give the Lord thanks.**

**Psalm 34:1–3 AMP** I WILL bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My life makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble and afflicted hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

**These words should not be strange to anyone who serves the Lord God almighty.**

*"I will bless the Lord at all times." "His praise shall continually be in my mouth." "Let the humble and the afflicted be glad." "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."*

**Remember what happened to the Israelites when they complained in the wilderness.**

**Numbers 14:1–2 NKJV** So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. <sup>2</sup>And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!"

**1 Corinthians 10:10 NIV84** was talking about that experience and said, *"And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel."*

When we complain, we are critically considering God and His goodness. That is

what they were doing. They were not giving God the credit for all of the things He was doing in their lives. God was doing them good and they were complaining. Many people died in one day because they were grumbling and complaining against God and Moses. We can learn something valuable from their experience. When we grumble and complain, we block some of the blessings that God has planned for our lives. We can change the atmosphere wherever we are by having an attitude of thankfulness.

### **Have you complained against God because things did not happen the way you planned?**

Many of us do not want to be **transformed**, we want to be **translated**. To be **translated** means we are here one moment and there another. To be **transformed** means we have to go through a lot of stuff. The circumstances that we go through cause us to have to trust God. They may cause us to be broken and rely on the Lord our God.

### **There was a short way into the Promise Land that would have taken 11 days of travel.**

They could have gone immediately into all of the blessings that God prepared, but they were not ready. God had fields and vineyards, cities and houses prepared for them. They did not trust Him enough to go into His blessings. All they could see were the difficulties and problems that were ahead. When they would arrive in the Promised Land, they were going to face many enemies and have many battles. They did not trust God enough to go into war so that He may bless them, destroy their enemies, and give them the land. They needed to develop an attitude of thanksgiving while they were in the wilderness. Do you remember when they crossed the Jordan River and defeated Jericho, the people shouted praise with a great shout and the walls fell down? We must learn to be thankful while we are still going through stuff. When your life is hard, you need to learn how to give praise and thanks to God. They did not realize that when they complained about the manna, and the water, and the journey, they were complaining about God. God had brought them to the entrance of everything He had prepared for them. They did not notice the seriousness of what they were doing.

### **While you are going through your test and trial, God may be preparing the greatest miracle you have ever seen.**

Joshua and Caleb could not believe those people. They knew that if God could get them out of Egypt, the enemies they were facing would be destroyed. They knew that if God could get them across the Red Sea, what they were facing was nothing.

### **God wants you to have an attitude of thankfulness and praise.**

You don't have to solve the problems that God said He would solve. God is much greater than the problems you are facing.