

# Four Reasons To Give Thanks to God

The food was placed on the table. The family plus a guest sat down to eat and immediately began putting food into their mouths. Quickly the guest asked, "Aren't we going to give thanks for the food? You are just like my dog. He just starts eating too!" When I heard that comment in a movie, I was surprised. The truth is many people do not pray to give thanks for their food, even some who call themselves Christians. Since Thanksgiving Day will soon be here, I thought it would be helpful for Christians to know why they should pray and offer thanks before a meal. I believe God would like everyone to know. What follows will provide us with three reasons we should give thanks to God on Thanksgiving Day and every day of the year.

## THANK GOD

### FOR PROVIDING.

Thankfulness to our God is a theme throughout Scripture. In Psalm 65 God is praised for His great and awesome goodness. The psalm was written by King David and the lyrics were sung to music. Psalm

65 is a song of thanks. Early in the psalm in verse 2, David praises God for hearing our prayers and says that is why all men pray. He said,

O You who hear prayer,  
To You all men come.  
Psalm 65:2 (NASB)

As a child we looked to our parents to supply our every need. We did not pray to them. We asked, pleaded or screamed. But as adults, we finally understood that we cannot obtain everything we want. We cannot control everything. Most adults on this planet have a sense that God exists. That is the message of Romans 1:20-21. So we pray to God and ask Him to provide some things that only God can provide. That is the praise that David gives in verses 9-13.

You visit the earth and cause it to overflow;  
You greatly enrich it;  
The stream of God is full of water;  
You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth.

You water its furrows abundantly,  
You settle its ridges,  
You soften it with showers,  
You bless its growth.  
You have crowned the year with Your bounty,  
And Your paths drip with fatness.  
The pastures of the wilderness drip,



And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing.  
The meadows are clothed with flocks  
And the valleys are covered with grain;  
They shout for joy, yes, they sing.  
Psalm 65: 9-13

Here we are reminded that God provides us with rain, pas-

tures, meadows, grain and, yes, everything.

A shorter statement was spoken by the apostle Paul in Acts 14:17.

"... yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17 (NASB)

Paul's point was that God provides rain and food for believers and non-believers. He loves them both.

In Matthew 6:26 Jesus taught that God provides everything that the birds need. God also cares for the grass and provides beautiful flowers (v. 28-30). Jesus' point is that God the Father provides for both those who hate Him and love Him.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus urges us to pray that God the Father will supply our daily bread or needs (Matthew 6:11). Jesus teaches us that God supplies everything we need. We just think we can supply our own needs. That pay check we earn is actually God's provision. God is our actual employer and not the person we think of as our supervisor. Psalm 127:1-2 teaches us that ultimately it is God who supplies everything.

Unless the LORD builds the house,  
They labor in vain who build it;  
Unless the LORD guards the city,  
The watchman keeps awake in vain.  
Psalm 127:1 (NASB)

Personally, I am emotionally moved when I understand that God provides so much for everyone, even when most of the world rejects Him. Our God is truly a good and loving God. My heart cries out, "Thank you, Father!" This gives us the first reason to thank God. *God provides our daily needs.*

**EXAMPLES OF THANKSGIVING.** Have you ever wondered why Christians give thanks before every meal? The first part of the answer is that Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fish before He started multiplying the food at the feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:19-21; John 6:11). After He blessed the food, the people ate. Matthew 14:19

describes this incredible event,

... Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds... Matthew 14:19 (NASB)

At the feeding of the four thousand, Jesus gave thanks for the food again (Matthew 15:34-36). Now if Jesus gave thanks once, that should convince us to follow His example. But now He has done it twice. That gives us a principle—give thanks before you eat. We thank the host at a dinner for cooking and providing the food. We must not forget God the Father caused the plants to grow and provided the money to buy the food.

In Luke 22:19 Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper or Communion on the last night before He was betrayed. We are told in this passage that Jesus gave thanks before distributing the bread. Jesus gave thanks for a piece of bread!

Then Jesus gave another example of blessing food in Luke 24:30. On this occasion, Jesus gave thanks for the food before they ate. This occurred just after He met two of His disciples on the Emmaus Road.

Like Jesus, the apostle Paul also gave us the example of thanking God the Father for food before eating it in Acts 27:35. He gave thanks.

Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat. Acts 27:35 (NASB)

This gives us our second reason for giving thanks to God the Father. We should give thanks because of the examples of Jesus and the apostle Paul. They thanked God the Father before eating food.

**COMMANDED TO GIVE THANKS.** The third reason to give thanks is that we are commanded to give thanks! One example is Ephesians 5:20 which says,

... always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord

Can I ask, "When do you thank God? Do you thank once a year on Thanksgiving Day? How often do you thank God?" Some Christians forget to thank God until they read a command such as the one we just read. Before you "kick yourself," just remember we need to be reminded. We need to remember that our national government does not supply our needs.

Hebrews 13:15 is another command to be thankful.

*Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

Hebrews 13:15 (NASB)

But notice that thanks is actually praising God. So the next time that we want to praise God, thank Him and thank Him again.

**THANKING GOD INVOLVES YOUR HEART.** Most Christians pray before they eat. But I have discovered that some Christians do not pray when they eat at a restaurant or dining with non-Christians. Therefore, I have a question, "Are they not thankful enough to thank God the Father for the food He provided?" What appears to be missing is a thankful heart.

I have also heard some people recite the Lord's Prayer before every meal — some do it very quickly. They say it so quickly a person cannot follow the words. Others repeat a memorized prayer before every meal — fifteen seconds and they are ready to eat. Can I ask, What is the heart-attitude of such thanks?"

Psalm 9 was written by King David and in it he poured out his heart. This is not a short prayer. Listen to his heart,

*I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart . . .*

Psalm 9:1 (NASB)

And again,

*I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,*

*And will glorify Your name forever.*

These verses reveal that David had a grateful heart of thanks. We have discovered three reasons for giving thanks to God. *But only a thankful heart is truly thankful.* Only one who gives thanks from the heart gives thanks to God.

**CONCLUSION.** Let's join David and thank God with our heart. With a grateful heart, let us thank God the Father for our life, for His provision, a wife or a husband, our children, our parents, a job, and everything else. Without Him you have nothing!

If you are a Christian, we must thank Him for creating the plan of salvation. He implemented it to save us from our sins through the death of Jesus Christ. We must thank Him that Jesus was willing to die for you and me. We must thank Him that He then gave every Christian a ministry to spread the good news or the gospel. If you are a Christian, it is because God sent someone to share the good news that Jesus died and was resurrected for your sins. Thank you, God, for planning our salvation and providing our every need!

O precious Father, as we bow  
Before Thy throne today —  
We count the many blessings  
Thou hast showered on our way.  
The comfort of our humble homes,  
Our health and happiness,  
The strength provided for each day  
To meet the strain and stress.  
We thank Thee for thy precious Son  
Who brought salvation free,  
And for this mighty land of ours  
A land of liberty!  
So Lord, help us give Thee thanks  
For all that we hold dear —  
Not only on Thanksgiving Day,  
But each day of the year!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roy B. Zuck. The Speakers Quote Book. Kregel. 1997. p. 375.