

Trusting God and Giving Thanks

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Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5: 20).

Scripture Reading: Psalm 138

Introduction

Trusting and thanking God go hand-in-hand. It's very obvious from Scripture that the Lord wants us to be thankful. The words **thank(s)**, **thankful(ness)**, and **thanksgiving** appear in Scripture more than **170 times**, and the largest cluster is in the Psalms. David wrote half of them.

Praising God is another recurring theme in Scripture. **"Praise"** is mentioned **332 times** along with its first cousins of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Giving thanks always involves praise of the Giver. Gratitude expresses deep, reciprocal appreciation for kindness received.

Does Gratitude Help Us? According to God's Word and research, yes, gratitude helps our spirits and health to flourish. Much research shows that an "attitude of gratitude" can immeasurably improve our overall well-being.

Giving Thanks for God's *Lovingkindness and Promises (Psalm 138: Verses 1-2): *The Hebrew word that expresses this steadfast kind of love is **hesed**. No modern word can fully capture the meaning, so we translate it as "loving-kindness," "mercy," or "loyalty." **Hesed** is a love that is based on a covenant commitment, loyal and faithful. Steadfast love is an integral part of God's character.

"Don't wake up grouchy, saying, 'Oh, no, another day.' Wake up saying, 'Today the Lord loves me, and His lovingkindness endures forever. God has my life in His hands.'" Warren Wiersbe, Prayer, Praise & Promises: A Daily Walk through the Psalms.

Giving Thanks for Answered Prayer (Verse 3): *In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you: Not only **for** everything but **in** everything. Not "be resigned" in everything but "give thanks"—not in a few things—but **in everything**. We trust God that "everything" contains for us a hidden blessing from God.*

The apostle Paul reminds us that *"in everything I can give thanks—not because of the situation but because of the One who directs and rules over it"* ~Kay Arthur.

Giving Thanks for God's Providence & Christ's Preeminence (Verse 4-6): *The Lord He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed'* (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Our God knows how much praise will do for us. It dispels self-pity, defensiveness, and pride. One cannot praise and sulk. Praising and complaining cannot coexist. Charles Spurgeon used to say that *we write our blessings in sand, and we engrave our complaints in marble*. Catch yourself when your internal conversation differs from what the Bible says about God. Be actively aware of your thinking.

Giving Thanks for God's Presence & Protection (Verse 7): We all have troubles. We need to thank God for walking with us through the troubles and trials. We can even cope with the storms of life when we know that God is doing a good work in us. We should not only thank God for walking with us through the trials but also for the troubles that missed us. God gave me a verse in **Psalm 118: 17** to claim: *"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD."*

Giving Thanks for God's Purpose (Verse 8): The New Testament counterpart of verse 8 is **Philippians 1:6**: *"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."* One of the most exciting things about being a child of God is that God is always up to something new in our life. And God not only does new things through us, but He also does new things within us. We know God is working behind the scenes and making things happen according to His plan.

Giving Thanks for God's Plan (Verse 8c): *Do not forsake the *works of Your hands.*
*That work was David—and that work is you. He will never forsake His good work in you.

Giving Thanks in the Seasons of Life: Solomon wrote, *"To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven."* Everything has its appointed time. Every season is hand-selected by God for a particular purpose in your life.

The Cliff Notes of Contentment: *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus* (I Thessalonians 5: 16-18).

Giving Thanks for People: *We give thanks for God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers (I Thessalonians 1: 2).*

I thank my God every time I remember you (Philippians 1:2).

Giving Thanks for Places

Giving Thanks for Things

Giving Thanks for Who God Is: *Let us come before Him with thanksgiving . . . for the LORD is the great God (Psalm 95: 2-3).*

Conclusion

*"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good [writes David]; His love [**hesed**] endures forever (Psalm 18:29).*

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3: 17).

Study Questions

1. The Bible narrative speaks abundantly about giving thanks. Read the following Scriptures and write the verses you'll want to recall:
Jonah 2: 9; Psalm 92: 1-4; Psalms 100; 118: 28-29; 103: 1-5; 136: 1-3; 147: 7; Colossians 3: 12-17; I Thessalonians 5: 18.
2. Read **Hebrews 4: 14-5: 3** and thank God that Jesus Christ was willing to suffer what you and I suffer so that He would be able to offer us grace in our time of need. Write below verses **15-16**.

Reflection Questions

3. Write down ways that the Lord's goodness is evident in your life.
4. What prayers of gratitude can you express as you consider the forgiving, empowering, and transforming grace of God in your life?
5. How has the Lord shown His lovingkindness toward you today, this week, this month, this year? Don't just look for the spectacular; His love is seen in the ordinary, everyday circumstances of life.