

Thanksgiving Day  
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# For What Shall We Give Thanks Today?

**1 Timothy 4:1-5** Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, <sup>2</sup> speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, <sup>3</sup> forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. <sup>4</sup> For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; <sup>5</sup> for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

It is common at the thanksgiving meal to go around and say what you are thankful for. This is not a bad thing to do. However after a whole year of God's gracious blessings people often struggle to name one or two things.

The ritual itself is a reminder of how bad we are at giving thanks for our blessings. We are good at whining and complaining and asking for more. We are terrible at appreciating and giving thanks for the many blessings God has given to us. Thankfulness is not something we are good at. It is something that God must teach us.

Paul speaks in our text about men who have seared their conscience with a hot iron and live in lies and hypocrisy. But what lead them to this end? Unthankful hearts. Paul says they forgot that all the gifts of God are good things that ought to be received with joy and thanksgiving.

The solution Paul says is a thankful heart. A thankful heart leads to joy before the Lord and in our lives, an unthankful heart leads to gloom and anger and bitterness and strife.

Let us begin by repenting of our failure to appreciate the blessing of God

**Heavenly Father you have indeed poured out your blessings upon us this day and every day of the last year and of our live, yet instead of thankfulness and praise our hearts are filled with selfishness and desire. But you alone can change the hearts of men. Grant us forgiveness for what we are and teach us through your word, that we may learn thankfulness and joy. We give thanks to you for You are good and your mercy endures forever.**

Kaylee has been having seizures this fall. Seizures were never really a problem before but now she has on average one a week. Seizures look scary but aren't necessarily a problem. Nevertheless, the question is what is causing those seizures? It is easy to worry about the seizures and in that worry forget all that God has done for her in the past.

If we learn to be thankful for all that God has done in the past, there really isn't any reason to worry about this one little problem now. But we often forget how to be thankful and instead fixate on the problems of this moment.

This happens often in a marriage as well. Fixated on the problem of this moment we forget all that we have to be thankful for in our spouse. We have all these things we should be thankful for, but all we can think about is the handful of things we want to be upset or angry about.

If that is true of our spouse, it is all the more true about our God. We have forgotten or never even noticed in the first place a year full of blessings and instead fixated on one or two things at this moment that God isn't doing.

Let us give thanks to all the blessings of God which we may have forgotten or not even noticed:

**Father of lights, from whom all good and perfect gifts do proceed, we thank You that You have graciously provided all that we need to preserve this body and life. May we receive and use these gifts with joy and never forget what you have done for us. As You have been generous with us, may we be liberal in our giving to others. Teach us thankfulness that leads to faith so that without worry or fear we may serve you. We give thanks to you for You are good and your mercy endures forever.**

Kaylee likes to laugh and laugh as she throws Cheerios all over the floor. She thinks something is good which is bad. Many kids refuse to eat their vegetables. They call bad that which is good.

The men Paul is talking about in our text call evil what God has called good, because of it they miss out on some truly wonderful blessings and think themselves righteous and holy when they are actually sitting in the den of demons.

Because we are born with a sinful and selfish heart, we often call evil what God has called good. There is much that is distasteful to us which is nevertheless a blessing from God. There is much in our lives that we do not like but which God sends for our good.

The prophet Job rebuked his wife for this attitude.

**Job 2:10** <sup>10</sup> But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"

We need to learn thankfulness from Job who said:

**Job 1:21** <sup>21</sup> And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

And from the psalmist:

**Psalms 119:71** <sup>71</sup> *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.*

Let us give thanks even for those things which we dislike, knowing that everything that comes from God is good.

**Heavenly Father how can we being children begin to understand what is good and what is evil? How can we know what plans you have or why you allow suffering and loneliness to enter our lives? We know only that you are good and that we suffer. Take such sufferings from us if it be Your will but in all things strengthen us to know that whatever You send is good, so that in all things we by faith may proclaim with Job, "blessed be the name of the Lord." We give thanks to you for You are good and your mercy endures forever.**

Finally, Paul reminds us of the one reason we have for joy and thankfulness no matter what else may be going on in our life

**Romans 8:32** <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

When selfish people are unthankful to generous people, often the generous stop giving. Yet despite our unthankfulness to God He has never stopped giving. He did not even withhold his only Son.

When we were kids my grandma knew exactly who had and who had not sent her thank you notes after Christmas and she would call our parents and let them know if we didn't send them.

God does not demand a thankful heart from us but grants his grace anyway. He doesn't sit up in heaven making lists of those who are thankful and those who are not In our sinfulness He showers us even more with His grace, even sending his only begotten son.

Let us be pray in thankfulness for what has been done, for what God has done for us.

**Heavenly Father, the depth of your love for us is beyond the reaches of our understanding. You would not allow us to die in our sin but sent your only Son to die in our place. Yet despite the greatness of this gift we fail to appreciate and return your love. Cause the light of Christ who is our morning star to swallow the darkness of our hearts, so that we may truly learn what it means that you are our Father, and learning thankfulness may also trust Your promise to give us every good thing. We give thanks to you for You are good and your mercy endures forever. In Jesus name we join to pray. Amen.**