



# With Thanksgiving

By

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# Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day is a time set aside every year in the United States to consider the many gifts God has given us and to share words of Thanksgiving with Him and our family and friends.

I received a business call yesterday from Australia. The person calling wished me Happy Thanksgiving and said they wished their country had a similar holiday where everyone would be thankful for what they have. We do have a lot to be thankful for in the United States, but Christians can be thankful wherever they live. Being thankful as a child of God is a natural outgrowth of our new life in Jesus Christ. However, God knows and understands the many battles we have with our flesh and lovingly guides us toward this amazing Truth. It is important to be thankful.

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)*

Have you ever gone through some tough financial times? Ever had a deep concern about someone in your family? Ever struggled with sin? Ever faced a medical emergency? Have you ever thought your world was going to collapse beneath the weight of your problems? Sure you have. We all have. That's part of life in this world. Nobody escapes trouble. But there's a difference between how Christians and non-Christians deal with the trouble: Christ is in us!

Being a child of God is more than a name. It's an **opportunity** to share our lives with the God of Life, Jesus Christ. He's our Lord and Savior, He's our God, He's our Counselor, He's our closest Friend. Jesus understands the problems of this world thoroughly. He has walked in our shoes far more than a mile. He's been there ... done that.

He knows what it's like to be human and deal with human problems. He's the perfect Man and never sinned, but he still faced our problems.

Christ's answer to our troubles is, "Be anxious for nothing." Jesus knows how easy it is for the human heart and mind to worry. He knows how upset we can get. He knows how anxiety can destroy us over time. He knows how it clouds our thinking and feeling and causes us to lose focus about what's really important in life.

Jesus gives us four steps to deal with troubles that cause anxiety. This list starts with Philippians 4:4. That's the context for our study.

1. Rejoice in the Lord always.
2. Let your gentleness be known to all men.
3. Be anxious for nothing.
4. In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

I want to spend a few moments with you about the last part of Step 4: “**with thanksgiving.**” Why did God say that? Why do we need thanksgiving as part of our prayer requests?

Christians are human. We are sinners saved by God’s Grace. What makes us different from others in the world is our special relationship to God. He is our Loving Heavenly Father. We are His children, members of the Body of His Son Jesus Christ. We are co-heirs with Christ. We have lots of potential, but we still live in bodies of clay. We fight with thoughts of discouragement and anxiety. The Apostle Paul wrote about wanting to do one thing but doing the opposite. He wrote about dragging the old man around with him like it was a corpse. This is true. We are “between” mortality and immortality. We are “between” being sinners in this world and being “like” Christ in heaven. We are in a transition period. That’s tough because nothing is quite like it ought to be. We are alive in Christ, but we aren’t free of the physical death that surrounds us. We are aware of the spiritual light God has given us, but we still live in a world of spiritual

darkness. We have every spiritual blessing, but we still struggle in this world.

God wants us to **THINK** differently. He knows our “thoughts” can do us in. We “think” the wrong things, “believe” the wrong things, “do” the wrong things. Being **anxious** is the wrong thing. It’s evidence we’re not “relying” on Christ in us. What’s God’s advice for dealing with that? Pray! Okay, we pray but we still worry. Now what? Pray differently. Pray “**with thanksgiving.**”

Worry and anxiety are **negative** ways of thinking. Giving thanks is a **positive** way of thinking. Being negative is one of the major things sin did to mankind. Being positive is what the Holy Spirit wants to do for us. Adults have spent decades thinking negatively. Changing our way of thinking won’t happen over night. You’ll have a little victory and then suffer a big defeat. You’ll have another victory and another defeat. What should happen is that we trust the Christ Who lives in us.

One of the positive things giving thanks does for us is cause our minds to “rehearse” the good things Christ has done for us. The process of remembering the positives in our lives builds a reservoir of positive thoughts that can balance out the number of negative thoughts we have in a day. Think about that for a minute. You and I hear scores of negative things every day. We hear them at work, at school, at home, around the neighborhood. We think our own negative thoughts dozens of times a day. We have a huge storehouse of negativity built up in our minds. We have to do something to counter that. That’s where praying with thanksgiving comes in. We have to have some balance. If we think about 200 negative things a day, for instance, we need scores of positive thoughts to counter that.

What happens when you thank God? You begin to feel better. You become calm. You become less anxious. You worry less. You place things in proper perspective. You realize you’re pretty fortunate after all. You see things are better than you thought. You start the process of rejoicing. It begins with being thankful.



God takes our thankfulness and positive thinking and uses it to build a wall of peace around our minds. The more we thank God, the higher and thicker that wall gets. We stop thanking God for awhile and let the negative thoughts of worry and anxiety into our minds again and the wall of peace gets pretty thin. We must remember that we are “in” Christ and He is “in” us.

Do whatever it takes. Spend whatever time you need to be thankful each day to offset the worry and anxiety that can overtake you. Some days are tougher than others. What’s at stake here is your well-being and your enjoyment of Christ in you. God’s willing and able to guard your mind. He wants to give you a peace that transcends all understanding. Your part is to pray with thanksgiving.

You may want to begin by writing all of the things you are thankful for in life. The list should be long. Once you’ve written **everything** you can think of, think about it throughout your day. Get to the point that praying with thanksgiving becomes natural. Thanksgiving will be in the

front of your mind and on the tip of your tongue at all times. It will make a difference in how you think and how you speak to others. People around you will notice what a positive, thankful, gentle, joyful person you are. They will see that you are “in” Christ and He is “in” you.

May God bless you and your family richly is my prayer.

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