

# Be Ye Thankful

by Dee Bowman

Ingratitude may well be the besetting sin of our society. Of all the people who have ever lived, we are the most blessed. And yet it may be that of all the people who have ever lived, we are the most ungrateful, the least appreciative. The world in general—and persons in particular—seem to feel that the affluence in which they luxuriate is to be expected, that in some way or the other, they deserve it.

Paul described the Gentiles as those that, “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God neither were they thankful.” I trust that the people of our age are not at the same level of degeneracy as those described by the apostle Paul in his scathing rebuke of the Gentile nations, but we certainly seem to be headed in that same direction. One of the most telling signs of such is our failure to recognize and give thanks for the lavish surroundings in which we live, the numberless array of blessings we enjoy, the peace and security of our environs. We are immersed in luxury—luxury for which we often forget to give thanks. Shakespeare called it “benefits forgot.”

Thank and think are akin to each other. They both have relation to thought. To think a good thought is what thanks is all about. In fact, the early meaning of the word had to do with kindly feelings for someone who has befriended or favored you. So when you say, “Thank you,” you are actually saying, “I think good thoughts about your favor to me.”

“Thank you” is a warm-sounding and expressive phrase. No one that I know of tires of hearing it. It is never out of order. In this simple expression is to be found one of the few remaining humble remarks made by people. In our age of pride and individuality, that’s needful. It puts things in order, makes me keep my place with respect to myself. It’s hard to be overly proud when you’re saying, “Thank you.” It adds flavor to every situation.

I think an attitude of thankfulness is best developed by getting close to God, by actually realizing how great He is and how He has, in spite of our unworthiness, favored us richly. When one comes to see the majesty of God, His creative power, His sustaining grace, you cannot but be impressed. Just the contemplation of His greatness sends your mind soaring toward gratefulness.

Another thing: we should be thankful for even the smallest things—things like the seasons so we can grow stuff, heat to keep us warm from winter cold and cold to keep us cool in the summer. Cars and washing machines; doctors, money, popcorn and peanut butter—all the things that make us happy. We even need to be thankful for periodic chastisement, knowing that it is a sign of God’s love for us. All blessings—even

the little ones—come from God. And actually, none of them are insignificant. Just try to get along without the simple, small things and see how soon you become unhappy.

And what about salvation? What about the sacrifice of Jesus? Can we take that so for granted that we are no longer thankful for it? When you consider what sin is and what are its consequences, and when you consider man's inability to deal with it for himself, that's when you really become thankful. No blessing ever given is so great, no gift so precious as the death of Jesus for the sins of man. What a blessed thought! Does it not make you thankful, or should I say thankful?

Listen: God has "given us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (1 Pet. 1:3). Think about that and be thankful. He has given us His Son for our salvation (John 3:16). Think about that and be thankful. He has given us access through prayer (Hebrews 6:19-22). Think about that and be thankful. He has prepared for us a heavenly abode (2 Corinthians 5:1-2). Think about that and be thankful. He has given us the days of our lives—even today (Acts 17:28). Think about that and be thankful.

Call to mind the simple and wonderful things God has provided for us. I hope you will find good reason to bow you head today, think about all your blessings, and be thankful.