

# Be Thankful

by Jason Moore

Americans, above all citizenries, have cause to be grateful. Christians, regardless of citizenship, have above all peoples reason to give thanks. Being temporary inhabitants of a free country, permanent citizens of a better country, and members of a peaceful congregation making its pilgrimage toward that better land, we especially have every reason to be thankful and no reason to be otherwise. Gratitude alone befits the disciple. Ingratitude ought to be an unwelcome guest in his house. In fact, no guest at all, but a stranger and an enemy to his contentment.

Ingratitude is the custom of the backslider. Gratitude is the natural response to God's grace and goodness, so that ingratitude is the obvious and initial sign of a man's falling from grace. It's the posture of mind that causes him to lose his footing and fall away from God. When men leave God they start by not honoring him as God and by not giving thanks (Rom. 1:21).

Worship is one of the obvious times for giving thanks and so one of the first habits to be neglected by the backslider.

Busyness or embarrassment also prevents a man from giving thanks over his food. Looking down at his schedule or around at his peers, he neglects to look up and thank God for His gifts.

Furthermore, the ungrateful do not read their bibles because reading the bible makes a man think of God. Thinking of God makes men thankful. "Think" and "thank" are kindred terms. We "give thanks" when the sight or memory of someone is a "thought" we welcome. "Giving thanks" then begins with "giving thinks." A man who doesn't think much will not thank much. Such is the manner of those who leave God. Rarely or never pausing to worship, to pray or to read their bible they do not think of God enough to give thanks to Him at all.

On the other hand, giving thanks is the habit of the new man. It seasons the speech of the disciple. Filthiness, silly talk, and coarse jesting adorn the world's conversation, but they do not "fit" the Christian (Eph. 5:4). Having "put on the new man," the trademark of his conversation is the custom of being thankful. "Where never is heard a discouraging word" ought to be the slogan that describes the Christian's speech. Why would the Christian, confident in God's promises and enthused with the Christian hope, despair in his speech and be heard to complain over his lot in life? His speech is salted with gratitude not soured with bitterness.

That's only logical. If ingratitude is the sign of slipping, then thankfulness is the sign of standing fast. For reasons stated earlier, the thankful man is necessarily thoughtful of God. His habit of worship, of prayer, of study fills his mind with thinking of God and so his tongue with thanks toward God. His thoughtfulness is expressed in his thankfulness, inasmuch as "the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Matt. 12:34).

He orders his life to think of God by giving time for daily meditation on God's goodness and grace. His counting of his blessings and thus his gratitude is not a once-a-year, but an often-each-day occurrence. "In everything [he] give thanks, for this is God's will for [him] in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18).

Paul warned Timothy of "difficult times" when men, laden with other transgressions, would add ingratitude to the list (2 Tim. 3:2). Ingratitude is the characteristic of a people who know not God, or who knowing Him permit other cares to cloud their hearts from thinking of Him and thus being thankful. It is the "pure in heart" who "shall see God" both here and in eternity. They are blessed. And they are grateful to be so blessed. Let us be of that sort.