

Thankfulness in Prayer

by Wayne Goff

“At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes’” ~ (Matthew 11:25)

Jesus’ Example

While on earth Jesus prayed fervently and often. He gave thanks to the Father, in the above example, for revealing Divine truths to “babes.” We remember also that He gave thanks to the Father at the Last Supper for the bread and the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:27). Toward the end of His earthly work, He gave thanks to the Father for answering His prayer concerning the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:41). The example of Jesus’ thanksgiving is one that we should imitate. Are you thankful to God on a regular basis? Your **dependency** on God should always be foremost in your mind.

The Heavenly Host

In the Revelation of John we often see various characters around the throne of God giving thanks. *“All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen’”* (7:11-12). Read very similar things in Revelation 11:16-17. It would seem that there is endless worship of praise to the Father in heaven (4:8-11). What an amazing thought!

Is it easier to give thanks in heaven to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit when you can *actually* see them? I would think so, but we cannot be certain about that. We have no experience in that matter. But we can be sure that we are ever in God’s presence, and by faith we can also give *continual thanksgiving*. *“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). *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name”* (Hebrews 13:15). If being continually thankful to God seems difficult, or like a chore, then stop and reflect for a moment all the things for which you should be thankful. Realize also that thankful people are the happiest people and the most optimistic.

“Clinical trials indicate that the practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person’s life,” said Robert A. Emmons, professor of psychology at UC Davis. It can lower blood pressure, improve immune function and facilitate more efficient sleep.”

While this might be a bit surprising to us, it shouldn’t be. God **made** us to be *worshipful, thankful* creatures. So when we **recognize** our dependence upon God and actually **appreciate** that fact, then we can relax mentally and emotionally. As we sometimes sing, “This is my Father’s world.” Realizing that fact, that He is in control, takes a ton of pressure off of my mind! Doesn’t it yours? So tonight when you lay your head on your pillow to sleep, why not spend some reflective moments giving thanks to the myriad of blessings from God? It will calm your mind, ease your spirit, and allow you to drift off to a peaceful sleep. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God”* (Philippians 4:6).

Through Jesus Christ

We must **never** forget that today we have our familial relationship with God because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross! This is **why** we pray to God through Jesus Christ. *“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”* (Ephesians 5:20). Saying **“in Jesus’ name”** at the end of each prayer is not so much a magical formula as it is an *awareness* that all power belongs to Him and thus we must come to the Heavenly Throne through Him (Matthew 28:18).

Daniel’s Example

Finally, take the time to read about the young man, Daniel, who was a great prophet of God and a man of sterling character. He prayed habitually, Dan. 6:10.

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