

For What Are We Thankful?

by Wayne Goff

This past week I asked each person in my class to write down a list of five things for which they were thankful. Out of fifteen respondents, there were over 35 things for which to be thankful. The students graciously allowed me to write this article about those things. So if you need something to be thankful for, consider some of these:

- **Good Christian family**
- **Brothers and sisters in Christ**
- **Hope of heaven**
- **Forgiveness of sins**
- **Power of prayer**
- **Worship without fear**
- **Health and ability**
- **Every day of life**
- **Healthy children**
- **Caring husband**
- **Blessings too many to enumerate**

The answers leaned more toward the spiritual blessings, but there were many things pertaining to God's providential care for us in this life also which were mentioned.

If you ever get discouraged or depressed, then try this exercise: Sit down with a pen and paper in hand, and begin writing down all the many blessings, both material and spiritual, that you have received over your lifetime. Begin at birth and continue until the present time. If your life is anything like mine, then you will be humbled and appreciative of all the many blessings you have received in life. You will not feel worthy of 1/10 of them! It will change your perspective and you will be renewed in your spirit. Gratitude has a way of accomplishing what God intended. We are to be a thankful people, and we have much for which to be thankful.

New Testament Thanksgivings

Try now to look in the New Testament and see things for which thanks was given. Much can be learned from that as well.

Jesus taught us to give thanks for our **food** (Matt. 15:36; Mk. 8:6; Jn. 6:23). The apostle Paul demonstrated this on another occasion (Acts 27:35).

The apostle Paul was repeatedly thankful for **good brethren** (Acts 28:15; Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; Col.1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; etc.). Consider how important brethren are to our own spiritual edification and continuance! If we had to be faithful alone, without any edification, then how difficult would that be? God knew what He was doing when He established the church (a group of saved brethren) for further spiritual growth and development!

We are commanded to give thanks for **everything** (1 Thess. 5:18). Thirty-five items were listed in our class! Just think how many more things we could have listed in addition, and how many things you might have added to the list!

Every act of public worship is a form of thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15; Rev. 4:9; 7:12; 11:17). Just think how each of the five acts of worship on the Lord's Day involve demonstrating our gratitude to God. *Prayer* involves actually thanking God for our blessings (Phil. 4:6). We *sing* about the many things God has done for us (Eph. 5:19). The *Lord's Supper* is a memorial of the Lord's gracious death in which we offer thanks for the body and blood of Jesus Christ (Matt. 26:27; Lk. 22:17, 19). *Giving* is our way of demonstrating our dependence upon God (1 Cor. 16:1-2), but it is also an act of thanks for the blessings of God (see 2 Cor. 8:5; 9:10-12). *Preaching and teaching* the Gospel helps us learn the truth of God's love and grace in salvation (Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 15:57).

God's people are indeed a people of thanksgiving!